

The principle of the present Land Act and of the Land for Settlements Act is the lease-in-perpetuity system, and consequently the greatest number of selections take place on that tenure. A very considerable portion of the lands now offered to the public—whatever difference in detail there may be—must by law be selected under that system, hence it is seen that selections under that heading exceed the others. The various systems given in the tables above may be further classified under a few headings, which, whilst differing in detail, are in the main the same. Excluding the miscellaneous and temporary leases, and including Cheviot and other estates purchased under the Land for Settlements Act, we get the following summary, which at the same time allows of comparison with the results of previous years since the Land Act of 1892 came into force. It will be remembered, however, that the figures for 1893 include transactions under the previous Act up to November, 1892, at which date the Act of 1892 came into force:—

Tenure.	1893.		1894.		1895.	
	No.	Area.	No.	Area.	No.	Area.
		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.
Cash	627	36,882	500	34,999	415	38,719
Deferred payment	198	21,474	96	12,668	49	5,497
Perpetual lease	549	125,192	17	3,854	3	1,263
Occupation with right of purchase	161	54,271	471	108,499	428	75,500
Lease in perpetuity	964	212,701	1,228	255,348	1,032	166,037
Pastoral runs	119	1,104,226	227	898,945	123	568,293

The deferred-payment and perpetual-lease tenures are practically obsolete, but there are a few uncompleted transactions under these headings which will appear from time to time for a few years yet—especially as the 114th section of the Land Act still allows of selections under those tenures in cases where the selectors hold lands adjacent under those systems.

In order to arrive at some idea of the most popular system under the present Act, the figures relating to lands selected on the “optional system” must be referred to, with this qualification, however, that the cash sales include rural lands sold at auction; they are not very many, and generally consist of small areas on which valuable timber is growing. Taking ordinary Crown rural lands, the figures are as follow:—

Cash selections, 174, 33,323 acres, from 8s. 2d. to £1 12s. 5d. cash price per acre.

Occupation with right of purchase, 398, 75,477 acres, rent 8d. per acre.

Lease in perpetuity, 336, 87,374 acres, rent 7·7d. per acre.

It will thus be seen, so far as this method of testing the popular feeling is concerned, that the desire to obtain leases with a purchasing clause preponderates slightly over that for a lease in perpetuity.

A reference to Table B will show that up to the 31st March last there were 2,547 selectors or purchasers of Crown lands under all systems during the year, to which may be added 68 selectors of endowment lands dealt with by the department, and 16 under the Mining Districts Land Occupation Act; making 2,631 in all. The total number the previous year was 2,876, showing a decrease of 245 selectors; but 491 selectors in ten association blocks, whose lands were not finally allotted on the 31st March, are not included in the figures 2,547. For the same reason some 86 selectors under the improved-farm system are omitted. All of these properly belong to next year's returns. In order to arrive at the number of people who may be considered as having taken up lands for the purpose of making homes thereon, and residing within a short time, it will be necessary to deduct from the above figures the selectors of pastoral runs, town sections, and miscellaneous leases, which number 704. This leaves the number of selectors 1984. The decrease in the number of selectors is due in a great measure to the want of accessible lands—settlement having in most districts extended beyond the roads—and also to the scarcity of really good lands. The recent acquisition by the Crown, however, of some good lands, and the extension of roads to them, will enable the department to offer during the coming season some desirable blocks, which it is believed many people are waiting for.

The following table shows in brief form the land selected, the number of selectors, and the revenue received each year for the seven years from 1st April, 1888, to 31st March, 1895. It includes Cheviot and other estates:—

Selectors during Year.	Area selected during Year.			Territorial Revenue.			Territorial Revenue collected.			Number of Crown Tenants.
	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
1888-89—2,529	2,313,611	3	8	310,061	16	0	Not given.			Not given.
1889-90—2,653	4,155,472	1	32	304,842	4	3	322,885	12	2	12,164
1890-91—2,420	2,154,138	3	37	352,417	19	5	364,938	2	5	11,995
1891-92—2,519	1,453,082	0	21	320,483	10	1	324,470	1	1	12,735
1892-93—3,071	1,663,339	2	20	274,399	12	2	310,523	15	3	14,261
1893-94—2,876	1,393,918	3	24	282,067	9	3	347,343	11	8	15,080
1894-95—2,547	1,015,577	2	28	338,166	13	9	375,879	13	6	15,326

The average size of farm allotments taken up during the year is 161 acres, town, pastoral, and miscellaneous leases being excluded, which is 31 acres less than the average for last year.