

crops, 65 acres: total, 1,466 acres. The total receipts for the year amounted to £1,817 9s. 8d. The prospects of this estate are also encouraging.

(7.) Makareao Estate: This estate, which is part of the late Colonel Kitchener's Waihemo Grange property, was opened for selection on the 26th June, 1896, and has all been taken up, 893 acres and 33 perches being held on lease in perpetuity by thirty selectors, at a rental of £241 11s. per annum; and 1,214 acres 2 roods 3 perches as a small grazing-run, at £129 1s. per annum. The portions reserved for limestone quarry, railway, and other purposes have also been let under five temporary licenses, at an annual rental of £20 6s., the total area being 208 acres and 21 perches. Value of improvements on the land before selection, £274 11s. 9d.; effected by selectors, £522: total, £796 11s. 9d. Cultivation for oats, 211 acres; wheat, 54 acres; root-crops, 6 acres: total, 271 acres. Total receipts during the year, £304 3s. 3d.

In addition to the transactions hereinbefore mentioned as having taken place during the past financial year, it may be as well that I should offer a few observations with regard to the three other estates purchased in this district, and which have been disposed of since the 31st March last, and which will, of course, form part of the current year's operations, to be more formally referred to in next annual report. I refer to the Estates of Makareao Extension, Momona, and Tokarahi, as follows:—

(1.) Makareao Extension: This additional purchase of portion of the late Colonel Kitchener's Waihemo Grange property was opened for selection on the 14th April. The area purchased was 2,535 acres 3 roods, and the area offered for selection, which included portions of closed road-lines, was 2,570 acres 2 roods 9 perches, and was disposed of in two small holdings on lease in perpetuity, 117 acres 2 roods 22 perches; and two small grazing-runs, over 2,452 acres 3 roods 27 perches: the total annual rental being £296 15s. 4d.

(2.) Momona Estate: This purchase, of 218 acres 2 roods 36 perches, partly in Mangatua Survey District, including also parts of river sections in West Taieri Survey District, and to which 5 acres 1 rood 34 perches of Crown lands has been added, was opened for selection on the 10th instant, and has all, excepting River Section 41, been taken up by fourteen selectors on lease in perpetuity, at an annual rental of £184 18s., with £25 5s. per annum additional for buildings for a period of fourteen years. River Section 41, containing 5 acres, has been reserved for a school-site, and has been let on temporary license at £4 5s. per annum till required for school purposes.

(3.) Tokarahi Estate: The purchased area of this estate is 11,051 acres 2 roods 9 perches, to which has been added a few small pieces of Crown lands, amounting to 26 acres and 28 perches. Out of this, an area of 291 acres 3 roods 14 perches is occupied by roads and reserves, leaving 10,785 acres 3 roods 23 perches for selection. Of this, an area of 1,481 acres and 10 perches has been allotted to seven tenants on the estate, at an annual rental of £710 9s., with £25 9s. 6d. additional in the meantime for buildings, and £3 9s. 10d. for an area of 35 acres 2 roods 25 perches of reserves on temporary license. The remainder was opened for selection on the 11th instant, and of this an area of 9,299 acres and 33 perches has been taken up by forty-one selectors, at an annual rental of £3,294 14s., with £70 12s. 4d. additional in the meantime for buildings, and £18 for an area of 159 acres 2 roods 9 perches of reserves on temporary license. The immediate gross total annual income will therefore be £4,122 4s. 8d.

In concluding this report I have to state that the increased work of the office could not have been overtaken without extra clerical assistance. It would not be any exaggeration to say that the correspondence, book-keeping, and clerical work generally of the department has increased at least 20 per cent. during the year; and I am glad to be able to report the continuance of faithful and satisfactory services rendered by all the officers and clerical assistants employed.

J. P. MAITLAND,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

CROWN LANDS RANGERS' REPORTS.

We have the honour to report for the year ending the 31st March as follows:—

The work of inspecting the numerous holdings under the various tenures of the Land Act and the Land for Settlements Acts has been well attended to during the year. About 1,025 inspections have been made, 275 reports and sixty-two statutory valuations of improvements have been made, besides a large number of reports of a miscellaneous character.

Much of the Rangers' time has also been taken up in reporting on applications for mining and other reserves.

We herewith forward reports of the progress on the various settlements under the Land for Settlements Act—viz., Pomahaka Estate, Teanaraki and Tahawai Settlements, Maerewhenua Estate, Ardgowan Estate, Puketapu, and Makareao—from which it will be seen that good progress has been made during the year, and that the conditions of the Act are being fairly complied with.

On ordinary Crown lands held under the settlement conditions of the Act the conditions both with regard to improvements and residence are fairly well carried out. The results of the different tenures are as follow:—

Deferred Payment.—There are very few holdings now held on this tenure, as they have been greatly reduced by purchase or exchange to lease in perpetuity. Conditions of the Act are fully complied with.

Perpetual Lease.—The number of holdings under this tenure has greatly diminished, lessees having exchanged for lease in perpetuity, owing to the rentals being 1 per cent. less under the latter tenure. The conditions under this tenure are mostly complied with. In many cases lessees reside on adjoining land.