

Tenure.	1895.		1896.		1897.	
	Number.	Area.	Number.	Area.	Number.	Area.
		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.
Cash	415	38,719	492	26,584	392	28,489
Deferred payment	49	5,497	6	455
Perpetual lease	3	1,263	7	1,427	19	9,106
Occupation with right of purchase	428	75,500	434	84,970	281	59,652
Lease in perpetuity	1,032	166,037	1,461	199,093	966	139,571
Pastoral runs	123	568,293	188	2,156,378	156	1,256,706
Occupation and agricultural leases, Mining Acts	72	2,967	50	2,830
	2,050	855,309	2,660	2,471,874	1,864	1,496,354

In comparing the total number of selectors for the past period with those of previous ones a considerable falling-off will be noticed. Taking the selectors under all headings shown in the first table there are 2,173, as against 2,865 in 1896, and 2,547 in 1895. An examination of the foregoing table will show that the decline in numbers is general, but, at the same time, principally in the lease-in-perpetuity selections. The reason for this is that there has been less land of good quality thrown open under the optional clauses of the Act, and, further, that the eagerness to obtain blocks of land under the association system has declined. Deducting from the total number of selectors (2,173) those who took up town, suburban, pastoral, and miscellaneous lands, we get 1,391 selectors who may be said to have selected homesteads or farms, greater or smaller, in most of which residence and improvement are compulsory. Of this number 389 were selectors of lands acquired under the Land for Settlements Acts.

Excluding the pastoral and village holdings, the average size of the farms selected during the year is 138 acres, or 24 acres less than the average for the previous year. If the selections under the optional clauses of the Act alone are considered, in which the selector himself determines the size of his farm, it is found that the average area is 220 acres.

The following table summarises the lands of all descriptions selected for the last nine years to the 31st March last:—

Year.	Number of Selectors or Purchasers.	Area taken up during the Year.	Territorial Revenue.	Total Revenue collected.	Number of Crown Tenants on the Books.
		Acres.	£	£	
1888-89	2,529	2,313,611	310,061	Not given.	Not given.
1889-90	2,653	4,155,472	304,842	322,885	12,164
1890-91	2,420	2,154,138	352,417	364,938	11,995
1891-92	2,519	1,453,082	320,483	324,470	12,735
1892-93	3,071	1,663,339	274,399	310,523	14,261
1893-94	2,876	1,393,918	282,067	347,343	15,081
1894-95	2,547	1,015,577	338,166	375,879	15,326
1895-96	2,865	2,662,344	291,673	345,331	15,683
1896-97	2,173	1,600,695	272,954	360,993	15,527

From the above table it will be seen that the number of selectors on the books of the department is one hundred and fifty-six less than at the 31st March, 1896, notwithstanding that 1,848 selections other than for cash were made during the year. The reason of this is that some of the terminating tenancies are running out. Deferred payment and perpetual leases, for instance, are gradually disappearing by the properties becoming freehold, when they cease to appear on the departmental books. The deferred-payment lands made freehold during the year were 507 in number; area, 67,480 acres: perpetual leases, 190 in number; area, 64,174 acres: homesteads, 10 in number; area, 1,607 acres. The forfeitures, surrenders, and expiries, which have been numerous during the past year, also tend to reduce the number; they amount to 1,076, covering an area of 2,015,986 acres. Consolidated leases under the Pastoral Tenants' Relief Act reduce the number by 12, and 209 miscellaneous and temporary leases expired.

A large amount of land has been thrown open for selection or offered for auction during the past year; it amounts to about 477,000 acres more than in the previous year, due to the large amount of pastoral country reoffered. The figures given below include all classes of land, whether ordinary Crown lands, lands acquired under the Land for Settlements Acts, Cheviot Estate, &c., but exclude endowments. A good deal of this land represents forfeited and surrendered sections again thrown open for selection. It also comprises both surveyed and unsurveyed lands:—

	Acres.
For Optional selection	261,522
Perpetual lease	9,753
Lease in perpetuity	35,207
Village allotments	1,931
Cash lands offered at auction	12,554
Leases of Crown lands and reserves	6,217
Small grazing-runs	156,435
Pastoral runs	1,348,673
Total	1,832,292