

The lands being prepared for settlement are: About 12,000 acres inland of Eltham and Hawera; about 20,000 acres adjacent to the head-waters of the Waitara River, and lying mainly between the Mokau Road (New Plymouth to Auckland) and the Ohura (Stratford to Auckland) Road. These will be for the greater part found upon survey to be second-class lands.

About 10,000 acres of the Maraekowhai Block, recently purchased by the Crown from the Native owners, and to be opened by the Ohura and branch roads, are at present under survey, and will in all probability be competed for, as some of the land is of very good quality, although about sixty miles from Stratford Railway-station.

I would urge, as in former years, the speedy acquisition of Native lands by the Crown, more especially in the Whitianga and the Mohakatino-Parininihi Blocks.

Office-work.—The letters dealt with, inward and outward, numbered 10,660; circulars to selectors and others, about 1,250; applications for land, 228; reports to the Advances Office, 77; cheques drawn, 1,412; vouchers, 1,541; transfers, 83; a subdivision under the Amendment Act of 1895; 2,022 receipts in duplicate, 158 provisional titles in triplicate, 148 cards forwarded to Auditor, the necessary calculations for 125 sections to be notified for selection. On the whole, the year's operations in this branch show only an increase of 874 documents dealt with in comparison with the previous year.

JOHN STRAUCHON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

Lands offered and disposed of.—Notwithstanding the increasing scarcity of Crown lands suitable for settlement the following blocks were placed upon the market, with the results indicated:—

Date offered.	Name of Block.	District.	Area offered	Number of Sections selected.	Area disposed of to 31st March, 1899.
May 25, 1898 ...	Raetihi Village Settlement	Makotuku ...	86	7	86
" ...	Taihape "	Ohinewairua	191	7	191
June 8, 1898 ...	Hawaenga "	Hautapu ...	164	4	164
Nov. 22, 1898 ...	Taihape Experimental Farm Block	Ohinewairua	876	9	876
Nov. 23, 1898 ...	Rangiwaea Block	{ Ngamatea ... Maungakaretu }	8,657	19	5,515
Dec. 7, 1898 ...	Mangaweka Village Settlement Extension	Hautapu ...	281	6	281
Jan. 24, 1899 ...	Awarua 2c No. 1 ...	Hautapu ...	3,409	3	1,121
Mar. 29, 1899 ...	Oraukura ...	Ohinewairua	3,534	12	3,534
" ...	Ruanui ...	Maungakaretu	1,545	1	362
" ...	White Rock ...	Kaiwaka ...	1,980
		Totals ...	20,723	68	12,130

The foregoing were supplemented by opening for selection 40,677 acres, comprising sections scattered throughout the land district, of which 21,800 acres were disposed of. Fortunately the remnants of Crown lands available from the preceding year attracted such attention that 34,409 acres more were disposed of; aggregating 68,339 acres, nearly. To this total must be added the area of deferred payment (7,463 acres) and perpetual-lease land (35,491 acres) made freehold, constituting a grand total of 111,293 acres selected or absolutely alienated from the Crown during the financial year; exclusive of 1,143 acres converted from the perpetual-lease to the lease-in-perpetuity system, as shown in the tables, and exclusive also of forty-seven unregistered improved-farm holdings, of an area of 5,948 acres.