

The operations where applicants have had choice of tenure under the cash, occupation-with-right-of-purchase, and lease-in-perpetuity systems for the last ten years are recorded in Table E, emphasizing the fact that where the selectors have had a choice the occupation-with-right-of-purchase system is the one most favoured.

TABLE E.  
LANDS OPENED ON "OPTIONAL" SYSTEM.—Table showing Preference of Tenure.

Year.	Occupation with Right of Purchase.		Lease in Perpetuity.		Cash.	
	Number.	Area.	Number.	Area.	Number.	Area.
		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.
1892-93 ... ..	161	54,271	126	55,320	325	35,785
1893-94 ... ..	461	108,133	447	151,324	249	33,200
1894-95 ... ..	398	75,477	336	87,374	174	33,323
1895-96 ... ..	431	84,967	415	89,144	169	26,030
1896-97 ... ..	277	59,647	278	62,229	90	9,835
1897-98 ... ..	380	81,414	299	76,953	65	6,680
1898-99 ... ..	458	109,949	362	99,262	114	17,824
1899-1900 ... ..	395	117,771	348	111,108	95	16,510
1900-1901 ... ..	673	262,729	295	97,138	127	37,862
1901-1902 ... ..	447	128,893	241	65,468	237	26,739
Totals ... ..	4,081	1,083,251	3,147	895,320	1,645	243,788

#### INSPECTIONS.

The Crown Land Rangers throughout the colony made inspections of 7,464 holdings of an aggregate area of 1,980,586 acres. The improvements effected amount to £1,147,495, the amount required by statute being £623,498. There were 826 selectors whose holdings were found deficient in improvements, 910 were not complying with the conditions of residence, and there were 146 defaulters from other causes, chiefly overdue rent, which necessitated special visits to ascertain the tenants' circumstances and requirements.

The following is a summary of the number of inspections made by the Rangers for three years from the 1st April, 1899, and demonstrates that the work of the Rangers last year was more general and comprehensive than formerly, and that the progress of the settlements has on the whole been substantial and satisfactory:—

RETURN of NUMBER of INSPECTIONS made by the Rangers for three Years from the 1st April, 1899.

Year.	Number of Properties visited.	Area.	Value of Improvements.		Number of Defaulters.			
			Required.	Actually made.	For Improvements.	For Non-residence.	For other Reasons.	Total.
		Acres.	£	£				
1899-1900 ...	5,926	1,159,202	369,627	887,998	447	695	54	1,196
1900-1901 ...	6,028	1,173,093	368,474	876,363	363	449	64	876
1901-1902 ...	7,464	1,980,586	623,498	1,147,495	826	910	146	1,882

#### CONDITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

##### Cash Purchases.

There are no obligations attendant upon holders under this system as regards occupation and improvements except selections under Part III. of "The Land Act, 1892," termed the "Optional System," which necessitates that certain prescribed improvements shall be effected within seven years from the date of purchase and before the issue of a certificate of title. The holdings thus affected comprise ninety-nine. In consequence of the failure of several of the purchasers to comply within the prescribed period, a question has arisen as to the relative rights of the Crown and selectors, which appears to require further consideration and possibly legislation.

##### Perpetual-lease and Deferred-payment Selections.

The holdings under these systems, which originated in the Land Acts prior to 1892, have been augmented to a slight extent by additional selections under the provisions of section 114 of "The Land Act, 1892." It may be said that, generally speaking, the holders under these old systems have complied with all the conditions of residence and improvements, and are now principally concerned in the payment of their annual instalments of rent and interest. Taking advantage of the right to purchase the fee-simple, these tenures are rapidly disappearing from the departmental ledgers.