

LAND for SETTLEMENTS COMPULSORILY ACQUIRED, from 1st April, 1893, to 31st March, 1903.

Land District.	Name of Settlement.	Date when Taken.	Area Taken.		
			A.	B.	P.
Otago	Ardgowan	9/1/1896	4,273	0	0
Hawke's Bay	Hatuma	23/8/1900	25,868	3	10
"	Kumeroa	20/3/1902	3,748	0	0
"	Forest Gate	27/2/1902	8,756	3	38
"	Argyll (Milbourne)	2/3/1903	28,857	0	0
			71,503	3	8

The SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS and SURVEYOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 23rd July, 1903.

During the year the Land Purchase Board transferred to the control of this Department 91,724 acres 2 roods 4 perches, comprised in twelve estates, one homestead site, and portions of the Birch Hill and Awatere freehold properties. The latter were acquired in exchange for Crown lands. Of these, eight estates, one homestead site, and the Awatere and Birch Hill lands, containing in all an area of 49,162 acres and 14 perches, were opened for selection, together with ten other estates comprising an area of 29,639 acres and 15 perches, which had been handed over prior to the 31st March, 1902, but were not ready for settlement on that date. The properties were all surveyed, subdivided, valued, and submitted for lease on carefully considered and designed schemes, and were readily quitted, except the areas noted in the fourth column of the table hereunder.

The five Auckland hamlets were opened as "Workmen's Homes," and are situated in the vicinity of the City of Auckland. The Kumeroa and Forest Gate Estates were acquired under the compulsory provisions of "The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900," and, notwithstanding, the result may so far be classed as satisfactory. The small Linton Settlement, near Halcombe, was all selected. The Kokatahi Settlement, in Westland, is in a better position than shown, inasmuch as the balance of 1,246 acres have been taken up since the 31st March last. The five Canterbury properties constitute a large proportion of the whole; and of the Lyndon Estate (Amuri) and the Chamberlain (Opawa) Settlement, near Albury, not an acre has been left on the Land Board's hands. The Windsor Park Estates (Otago) all went off.

Given a continuance of the present favourable conditions affecting farming and grazing, it is anticipated that these later acquisitions under the Land for Settlements Act will prove as beneficial and satisfactory to the colony and tenants as the majority of the previous purchases have been.

Reference to Table No. 33 in the report of the Lands and Survey Department will afford full information as to all the estates which have been opened for selection and administered by the Lands and Survey Department. Since the initiation of the policy under "The Land for Settlements Act, 1892," it will be seen that, including special purchases to provide homesteads and low country for a few Crown tenants, the number of settlements, exclusive of the Birch Hill and Awatere exchanges, is 116, comprising in all 475,223 acres, and the result is that 2,335 tenants—or 7,200 souls in all—have been placed upon 447,334 acres, for which they are liable for an annual rental of £116,979. The area absorbed by roads and reserves is 8,338 acres, and on the 31st March last the total area still in the hands of the Land Boards, inclusive of forfeited and surrendered sections, amounted to 19,544 acres, with an estimated annual rental of £3,401, whilst 278 lessees, holding 61,680 acres, were in arrear £10,489. This amount has been since greatly reduced. The holdings which fall back into the hands of the Crown are reopened as expeditiously as possible, and are as a rule promptly taken up, but difficulty is still experienced in quitting portions of some of the Auckland hamlets, the Waipapa Settlement (Marlborough), the Pomahaka and Barnego Settlements (Otago), and the Beaumont and Glenham Settlements (Southland). The Northbank Estate (Marlborough) was held back for mining.

J. W. A. MARCHANT,
Surveyor-General.