

a valuation, and, further, under "The Land Act Amendment Act, 1895," the exchange of a small-grazing-run lease to a lease in perpetuity is provided for under certain conditions. Numerous applications of the latter class have been received by Land Boards, and their consideration leads to the conclusion that the relative position of the Crown and the tenants requires clearer definition.

*Pastoral Licenses (Table 17).*

This tenure is specially applicable to the vast areas of pasture lands for which Canterbury, Otago, and Southland Land Districts are noted. During the past financial period the system was extended to 531,566 acres in the Auckland District; to 100,301 acres in the Wellington District; to 550,640 acres in the Westland District; and to 33,180 acres and 14,500 acres in the Otago and Southland Districts respectively. In addition, considerable areas of runs were reopened for competition, with the result that 129 runs were disposed of, containing a total of 956,581 acres, with an annual rent of £7,414. Auckland heads the list with 46 sales, Westland claims 43, Otago 20, and Canterbury 10; but the largest addition to the revenue resulted from the disposal of the runs in the Otago, Canterbury, and Wellington Districts.

The pastoral-license tenure, of course, exceeds all others in the magnitude of the area and annual rentals. The figures for the 31st March last stand at 872 licenses, covering 11,583,324 acres of ordinary Crown lands, on which the State receives £73,626 annually. Roughly speaking, Canterbury and Otago combined are credited with a little less than seven-tenths of the gross area, and with more than eight-tenths of the total revenue.

Under the Hauraki Pastoral Regulations 36 selectors took up 8,701 acres during the year, for which £165 is payable as annual rental. These figures are included in those for the Auckland Land District. There were no selections under similar regulations in the Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland Districts.

*Miscellaneous Leases and Licenses (Table 18).*

Special attention was given to the remaining Crown lands, and also to public reserves, with a view to leasing them. This is usually effected by putting the lands up to public auction or tender, for terms ranging from one year to fourteen years, at upset rentals; another method is to allow contiguous landowners to obtain leases on fair terms. The result for the year shows 593 leases, embracing 111,623 acres, and yielding an annual rental of £1,977. The lands held in this manner, as recorded in the Land Office books, comprise 2,765 lots, of a total area of 552,026 acres, which return £11,354 per annum to the Crown.

In addition to the foregoing, there were 33 selections of miscellaneous leases within Land for Settlements estates, aggregating 22,045 acres, for which an annual rental of £3,066 is payable; together with 2 holdings in the Cheviot Estate, comprising 6 acres, and yielding a yearly rental of £1.

The gross figures for the year under all conditions, therefore, total 628 selections, with an area of 133,674 acres, and a rental of £5,045 per annum.

The conditions usually prescribed for the leases, in addition to payment of rentals, provide that the lands are only to be used for depasturing purposes, rabbits have to be destroyed, and noxious weeds eradicated. There are no limitations or disabilities in regard to applicants, no conditions as to residence, and rarely as to improvements to be complied with.

The occupation of such lands by responsible persons is a convenience to the adjacent owners with respect to fencing, &c. As the position and interests of tenants under these licenses have not always been satisfactorily provided for the question is under consideration.

*Native Townships (Table 23).*

The following townships were opened under the provisions of "The Native Townships Act, 1895," during the year under review: Parawai, Te Puru, Karewa, all near Kawhia, on the west coast of the Auckland District; and Waipiro, in the Poverty Bay portion of the Hawke's Bay Land District.

There was a good demand for sections in the three latter townships, and the results of the sales were satisfactory. There was a total number of 101 sections, comprising 426 acres, leased for an annual rental of £440, whilst the gross number of leases under the Act from the commencement of the system is 281, totalling 988 acres, for which the lessees pay £1,199 per annum.

The Lands and Survey Department acts as agent for the Native owners of the lands comprised within the 14 townships which have been established, and has carried out the surveys, prepared and published the sale plans, and conducted all the business connected with the sales and subsequent collection of the rentals. The expenses are recouped the Department by instalments extending over a series of years.