

Besides these completed purchases there were eight estates, with an area of 17,778 acres, the purchase of which was arranged for at a cost of, say, £134,944, payment for which will come into 1906-7.

There were purchased thirteen estates of under 200 acres each, and nine estates over that area. The smaller properties are near towns, and are partly intended for workers' dwellings. The distribution is as follows:—

Estates.						containing	Acres.
Auckland,	5	...	...	...	...		159,574
Wellington,	11	...	...	...	...	"	26,529
Marlborough,	1	...	...	...	...	"	45,368
Canterbury,	3	...	...	...	...	"	15,993
Otago,	2	...	...	...	...	"	21,929
Southland,	...	...	...	...	...	"	6
	<u>22</u>						<u>269,399</u>

A statement of the present condition of the various settlements will be found in the Report of the Lands and Survey Department. The usual tables required by the Act are appended.

The number of properties inspected on the ground was 111, of which nine were in Auckland, twenty-four in Hawke's Bay, thirty-nine in Wellington, twenty-three in Canterbury, fourteen in Otago, and two in Southland. These properties range in area from 5 acres to 30,000 acres, the total area inspected being 469,000 acres.

The Land Purchase Board held forty-five meetings during the year—viz., five in the Auckland District, five in the Hawke's Bay District, one in Taranaki, twenty-three in the Wellington District, six in Canterbury, three in Otago, and two in Southland.

The purchase of 311 estates, containing 911,118 acres, was considered at these meetings, and of these estates sixty-one, containing 241,103 acres, were recommended for purchase. The Government approved of the recommendations concerning fifty-four of these estates, having an area of 236,584 acres.

The total area now owned by the Crown in the Land for Settlements Account is contained in 158 estates, of a total area of 985,623 acres. Within the 142 estates opened for selection there are 754,887 acres leased to 3,556 tenants. They have 579,833 acres in new grass, 61,670 acres in white crop, 35,980 acres in green crop, and there are 177,404 acres in native grass, bush, scrub, orchard, swamp, gardens, &c. The number of live-stock amounts in all to 709,645 sheep, 49,995 cattle, 10,781 horses, and 2,643 pigs.

Proposals for the purchase of some large estates in Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Otago, Nelson, Marlborough, Wellington, and Canterbury are now under consideration.

The following is the usual summary:—	Number.	Acres.	Prime Cost. £
Estates purchased at 31st March, 1905	136	716,224	3,342,015
Estates purchased during year 1905-6	22	269,399	780,633
	<u>158</u>	<u>985,623</u>	<u>4,122,648</u>
Acquired but not paid for nor prepared for selection	8	17,778	134,944

I have, &c.,

A. BARRON,

Land Purchase Inspector,

Chairman of the Board of Land Purchase Commissioners.

The Right Hon. Richard John Seddon, Prime Minister.

P.S.—Since the above report was put into type the Minister whose effective policy directed the operations of the Department ceased from his labours.

As the administrative successor of John McKenzie, Richard John Seddon displayed in this part of his government equal vigour and foresight in a wider range. He was prompt in his dealings and steadfast in his purpose to meet the wants of the people of New Zealand.

Some of the results of the administration by the Government of which these two Ministers were powerful members are given in this report.

14th June, 1906.