

LAND OPENED AND TO BE OPENED.

The total area opened for sale and selection under the various systems during the year amounted to 150,802 acres. Of this total, 22,314 acres were opened for the first time, and the balance of 128,488 acres were previously opened. The Greenfield Settlement, of 21,779 acres, constituted nearly the whole of the area opened for the first time, leaving only 535 acres of ordinary Crown land so dealt with. Of the area previously opened, 122,670 acres were offered under pastoral lease, 5,256 acres were offered under optional system, for cash by auction or on lease in perpetuity only, while 562 acres previously dealt with comprised sections under the Land for Settlements Act. The demand for good land continues as brisk as ever, and the difficulty of meeting such demand is undiminished. The area open in the Land Guide is 63,715 acres, but unfortunately the whole of this area is either comparatively poor in quality or is difficult of access. As time goes on, the land that remains in the hands of the Crown available for settlement will comprise the inferior areas, consequently the selections may be expected to be yearly fewer and fewer. As pastoral leases fall in, the Land Board has sometimes opportunities of dissevering portions of the lower country for subdivision into small grazing-runs or sections of smaller size suitable for closer occupation. There is, however, as has been before pointed out, a risk that the separation of the low country may render the higher lands unprofitable for grazing purposes, if not altogether useless. The climate of Otago is such that severe snowstorms may be looked for periodically, and runs having no warm low-lying land attached to them are liable to be denuded of their stocks. The question of dealing with expiring runs is therefore one that requires very careful consideration. The area to be put on the market during the ensuing year (exclusive of estates purchased under the Land for Settlements Act) will probably be about 65,000 acres. The portion taken from Rocklands Station has been subdivided into small grazing-runs, the aggregate area being about 25,000 acres. These will shortly be opened, and will no doubt be eagerly competed for. The present lease of Run 186, Lee Stream, Waipori, and Hedgehope districts, will expire on the 1st March, 1907. This run comprises some 25,880 acres, and it is intended to subdivide it into small-grazing-run areas. The Blackstone Hill Station, of 16,354 acres, will also be subdivided for closer settlement during the year.

The summary of transactions shows that as compared with the previous year the volume of business has been rather less, while the revenue received was greater by upwards of £4,000. The gross number of transactions, taking into account leases made freehold, was eighty-nine less, and the acreage dealt with 77,062 acres less, than in 1904-5. The total number of holdings now on the books is, including land for settlements and endowments, 3,480, with an acreage of 5,580,344 acres, at an annual rental of £81,088 8s. 5d., being an increase over the previous year of [ninety-three holdings, 17,739 acres, and £3,723 13s. 3d. annual rental. Thus year by year the administrative work of the Department increases with marked rapidity.

Number of New Selectors and Area taken up, from 1st April, 1905, to 31st March, 1906, and the Total Amount of Revenue received during the Year.

Nature and Tenure of Lands selected.	Number of Selectors.	Area selected.			Cash received on Past and Current Transactions.		
		A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
Town lands sold for cash	19	9	1	31	232	17	6
Suburban lands sold for cash	10	13	1	16.9	91	10	0
Rural lands sold for cash	23	432	2	1	426	16	11
Perpetual leases made freehold ... ..	...	...	...	...	1,575	5	0
Occupation with right of purchase made freehold	...	...	...	...	19	0	0
Deferred-payment instalments ... ..	...	...	...	...	353	15	3
Perpetual leases ... ..	...	...	...	...	1,323	5	6
Occupation with right of purchase	11	1,885	3	19	1,123	17	1
Lease in perpetuity	26	4,773	1	37	4,761	14	4
Agricultural lease ... ..	...	...	...	...	23	4	5
Village settlement—							
Deferred payment ... ..	...	...	...	...	2	19	4
Perpetual lease ... ..	...	...	...	...	31	11	11
Occupation with right of purchase ... ..	...	...	...	...	0	10	6
Lease in perpetuity	4	56	0	14	144	4	1
Village-homestead special settlements ... ..	...	...	...	...	133	7	0
Special-settlement associations—Lease in per-	...	...	...	...	109	15	8
petuity							
Occupation leases, Mining Districts Land Occu-	15	531	0	27	390	4	2
pation Act							
Small grazing-runs ... ..	...	...	...	...	12,804	10	11
Pastoral runs	11	139,025	3	2	27,225	1	5
Miscellaneous leases and licenses	81	13,572	2	28	2,230	4	4
Miscellaneous ... ..	...	...	...	...	821	18	7
Land for Settlements Acts—							
Lease in perpetuity	44	21,081	1	19	21,567	15	8
(village) ... ..	...	...	...	...	298	3	4
Small grazing-runs	1	1,204	2	8	526	5	0
Pastoral runs ... ..	...	...	...	...	121	13	0
Miscellaneous leases	7	904	3	11	560	4	1
Totals	252	183,491	0	13.9	76,899	15	0