

FREEHOLD TITLES ISSUED.

The subjoined table shows the number of provisional titles issued by the Receiver of Land Revenue under the various tenures :—

Tenure.	Selectors.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity	9	2,709	1	11
Occupation with right of purchase	4	759	3	39
Perpetual lease	3	366	3	6
Cash under the Land Act, 1908	13	224	2	3
Auction sales	14	265	0	3
	43	4,325	2	22

TRANSFERS.

All transfers are examined very closely, the Land Board being very careful in dealing with cases that show too great a difference between improvements and purchase-money, though the hard-working pioneer settler has the fullest sympathy. The total number of transfers completed during the year is made up as under :—

Tenure.	Number of Lessces.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity (ordinary)	50	4,729	3	29
Lease-in-perpetuity land for settlements	19	4,221	3	5
Occupation with right of purchase	26	4,831	1	37
Perpetual lease	7	289	0	11
Mining districts land-occupation leases.. .. .	3	53	3	29
Miscellaneous licenses	14	1,378	1	13
Pastoral licenses	3	12,940	0	0
Small grazing-run	2	5,528	2	0
Certificate of occupation	2	229	0	26
Coal leases	2	59	0	38
Sawmill areas	2	400	0	0
Renewable lease (ordinary)	2	3	2	3
	132	34,664	3	31

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

A reference to the tables will give full details of dealings under this heading. It may be observed that the area which has reverted to the Crown is somewhat in excess of last year's figures. Several holdings on occupation with right of purchase were forfeited, with the object of obtaining a revaluation of the land. In other instances various reasons are assigned, such as the cost of improvements on the land to enable the selector to make a living being too great for the people of insufficient means to stand the first few years of the pioneer life, especially on the less favoured lands; but very few cases have been caused by non-compliance with the conditions.

SAWMILLING INDUSTRY.

There are sixty-four sawmills working, with cutting-capacity of about 85,000,000 ft. per annum. Owing to the depressed state of the timber trade the mills have not worked full time. There are now indications of a greater demand for timber, so sawmills are more hopeful. The means of access for getting timber to market has improved so much of late years that this enables the trade to be more concentrated. The waste in dealing with the cutting of timber is still considerable, and, combined with the limited areas of timber lands available, makes the end of the life of the industry in sight. The birch, however, is gradually proving a valuable timber, and this will help to prolong the industry and output, and at the same time make country valuable that hitherto has been considered of very little use.

LANDS PROPOSED TO BE OPENED FOR SELECTION DURING YEAR.

An area of about 30,000 acres of worked-out sawmill areas in various parts of the district has been withdrawn from the operations of the State Forest Act, and is now available for settlement, and only awaits subdivision to enable it to be opened for selection. Of this area a block of 4,600 acres in Blocks III and IV, Oteramika Hundred, has already been surveyed, and will be opened early in the year. The survey of another block of about 4,000 acres in Blocks V and VII, Longwood, is almost completed, and it will also be available for selection shortly. I propose to have a further block of about 800 acres in the Mabel Hundred subdivided, and this should also be in the market during the year. The subdivision of another large block, containing about 10,000 acres, to the west of Otautau, will be commenced, and it is hoped that at least one block will be available before the close of the year. All this land is of fair quality, and should be readily taken up. It is very desirable that it should be selected as soon as possible, as the Canadian thistle has already gained a good hold in some parts of it. In most of these cases the land will be loaded under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, for the purpose of providing internal road-access.

LANDLESS-NATIVE BLOCKS.

Of the lands set aside under the South Island Landless Natives Act, 1906, the claims in the Waiau, Wairaurahiri, Waikawa, and Lord's River Blocks have been completed. This has entailed a vast amount of extra work, and has involved the preparation of 80 warrants for the issue of certificates of titles, representing 1,947 claims of an aggregate area of 67,694 acres.