

## TRANSFERS.

A very large number of applications to transfer came before the Land Board, 624 being approved and sixteen refused. There were also thirty-five additional transfers under the Thermal Springs Act. It cannot be expected that there will be a diminution in these transactions whilst the general prosperity and the demand for land in the district continues. In any case, the approval of transfers is provided for by law, and the changing circumstances of settlers in such an extended district as this will always result in a very large number of dealings being submitted for consideration.

## CONVERSIONS OF TENURE TO RENEWABLE LEASE.

Applications under this heading are restricted almost entirely to those made by selectors on Hauraki pastoral and mining district land-occupation tenures. There has been a falling-off in the number lodged this year. The Warden has not approved of some, on account of their conflicting with mining interests, and want of access has prevented the Land Board from approving of others. Most of the applicants under the tenures referred to have as an ultimate object the conversion provided for by the statute.

## PURCHASE OF FEE-SIMPLE OF LEASE IN PERPETUITY.

Transactions of this nature have almost entirely ceased, for, notwithstanding the very large number of lessees under lease in perpetuity on the books, only six applied to acquire the freehold during the year.

## "THIRDS," "FOURTHS," AND "HALVES."

The amount paid over to the local bodies was this year £5,000 greater than during the previous year. Some discussion arose between the Board and a local body in regard to the amount of "halves" to be paid over, but in regard to "thirds" and "fourths" no hindrances to payment have arisen, beyond the neglect in a few cases to show in the proposals where the money was to be spent with sufficient accuracy to enable the proposed works to be located.

## LAND BOARD.

Nineteen meetings were held during the year. Of these, three were special meetings, held at Rotorua, Tauranga, and Whangarei respectively. Special meetings at centres outside Auckland City were decided on as a convenience to settlers who are unable to come to town. From the views expressed by deputations which interviewed the Board, it is evident that the innovation is appreciated by settlers. The Board found that it had a better opportunity of disposing of grievances which existed chiefly in the imagination of the Crown tenants. Since these meetings were initiated, applications to have similar meetings have been received from other centres.

## LAND REVENUE.

The gross revenue for the district amounted to £130,795 11s. 7d., being an increase of £22,750 12s. 7d. over that of the previous year.

## OFFICE-WORK.

In the first place there is the preparation of details for the disposal of lands put on the market. The despatch of a very large number of posters and the necessity for a great deal of correspondence must be apparent when it is noticed what a large area was dealt with during the year. There were 30,259 letters, 1,297 packets, and 1,541 telegrams received during the twelve months, and 33,984 letters, 11,501 packets, and 1,325 telegrams despatched, comparison showing a great increase on the previous year's work. Then, following the disposal of the land is the collection of revenue. This necessitated the issue of 11,643 receipts, in addition to which there were 4,000 operations on the Deposit Account, which entailed the issue of 2,313 receipts, and represented an additional 5,400 entries in ledgers, &c. But with the disposal of large areas and the collection of revenue the office-work is not ended, as there is the preparation, signature, and registration of selectors' titles. This work involved the writing of forty-one warrants, 180 leases in quadruplicate, 324 licenses in triplicate, fifty-four certificates of occupation in duplicate, and six single copies of certificates for registration, also three Crown grants in duplicate and two in triplicate. Finally, after placing applicants in legal possession, there is the work which arises in the supervision of the holdings in regard to fulfilment of obligations, and the perusal of dealings by transfer and otherwise, which are lodged for the approval of the Land Board. The vast interests of the district in regard to timber, coal, and mining transactions, domains and reserves generally, and questions of roading and drainage, cause a volume of work the variety of which makes it almost impossible to appreciate when making an analysis of the year's operations in the administration of the Department.

## CONCLUSION.

I am glad to be able to report that my labours have been lightened by the loyalty and assistance rendered me by the officers of the Lands Department.

ERIC C. GOLD SMITH,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.