

SOUTHLAND.

During the year the number of Crown holdings has increased by ninety-one. The total area held is 1,730,737 acres, as against 1,745,651 last year, the annual rent payable being £24,509 7s. 6d., as compared with £23,797 13s. 5d. last year. The gross revenue received shows an increase of £4,797 over last year's receipts.

THE VARIOUS TENURES.

Under the heading of "Lands sold for Cash" the area purchased from the Crown and the revenue derived therefrom show an increase of 873 acres and £1,313 as compared with the previous year. Under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase system eighty-one persons selected 14,073 acres, at an annual rental of £709. The total number of holdings under this system has been increased during the year from 376 to 434, and the area held from 83,835 acres to 91,694 acres, and the annual rent payable from £2,393 to £2,772. The freeholds acquired during the year show a slight increase. Under the renewable-lease system thirty-five holdings, representing an area of 3,480 acres (national-endowment lands) were taken up, at an annual rental of £137. The total number of holdings under this tenure has been increased from fifty-four to ninety-three, and the area held from 5,327 to 8,969 acres, and the annual rental payable from £214 to £360. Under the perpetual-lease tenure seven tenants exercised their right to acquire the freehold, while seventeen tenants did likewise under the lease-in-perpetuity system. There are not any material changes under the remaining systems.

ARREARS OF RENTS.

The lessees in arrear with their rents, inclusive of current half-year, show a decrease of fifty-two, and the amount owing is less by £280 as compared with last year.

FREEHOLD TITLES ISSUED.

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

Tenure.	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity	15	1,220	2	30
Occupation with right of purchase	6	3,351	2	14
Perpetual lease	6	500	1	5
Cash	12	191	1	22
Auction	8	514	1	38
	47	5,778	1	29

TRANSFERS.

Owing to the Land Board's strict investigation of all transfers the speculative element is decreasing. The total number of transfers completed during the year is made up as under:—

Tenure.	Number of Leases.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity	48	6,813	0	3
Occupation with right of purchase	21	4,138	1	17
Lease in perpetuity (land for settlements)	7	1,602	2	37
Perpetual lease	12	278	0	26
Renewable lease	5	528	3	16
Pastoral licenses	6	47,863	0	0
Occupation licenses (miscellaneous)	23	618	0	38
Small grazing-runs	2	9,113	3	21
Certificates of occupation	2	380	1	30
Mining districts land-occupation lease	1	7	0	18
Sawmill areas	5	1,000	0	0
Coal lease	1	19	0	38
	133	72,363	0	4

SAWMILLING INDUSTRY.

During the year sixty-four out of sixty-six mills were working, producing 48,000,000 ft. of timber. With the exception of 250,000 ft. shipped to Australia, one-half the timber was delivered between Gore and Christchurch and one-half consumed in Southland. About 35 per cent. of the total output was dressed up at the local mills and 15 per cent. supplied to town mills for manufacturing purposes. Although the industry has improved somewhat during the year, the mills in Southland have turned out little over half their producing-capacity. During the year about £100,000 in wages was paid to 1,000 employees. Even with the lesser output from the mills, the limit of time that the industry will last seems to be not far off.

LANDS PROPOSED TO BE OPENED FOR SELECTION DURING THE YEAR.

The survey of a considerable area of bush land, which has been withdrawn from the operations of the State Forest Act and has been worked out by the sawmills, is now completed, and the land will be opened to selection during the year. Of this area, 1,364 acres are situated in Spar Bush, 1,665 acres in Forest Hill, and 800 acres in Blocks V, VII, and XII, Longwood. In addition to this, I expect a block of a few thousand acres in Aparima Hundred to be completed and opened to selection. Another block of 700 acres in Block XVIII, Jacob's River Hundred, and about