

## APPENDICES.

### APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS ON SETTLEMENT OPERATIONS DURING THE TWELVE MONTHS WHICH ENDED ON THE 31st MARCH, 1912.

##### AUCKLAND.

###### LANDS OPENED FOR SELECTION.

THE number of sections (612) and area (164,968 acres) made available under all classes of tenure are very much in excess of figures for former years. The number of applications received and dealt with has been well maintained, the opening of special areas, such as the Hauraki Plains, attracting many applicants from all parts of the Dominion and resulting in heavy balloting. In the case of the Hauraki Plains the Land Board required all applicants to appear for personal examination, in order that only those with experience and a minimum capital should compete in the ballot. Of the total number of applications received during the year, 622 were approved and 280 rejected for various reasons.

The question arises whether, in view of the diminishing quantity of our Crown land and the unsatisfied demand, all applicants should not be personally examined as to experience, suitability, &c., before balloting. It may involve extra expense for the applicant in travel, but it would result in the Crown securing the best-qualified selector and the one most entitled to select.

During the year fourteen ballots and nine auction sales (or tenders) have been held.

It is worth while to draw attention to the fact that out of the total area of 164,968 acres opened for selection, 96,752 acres, or nearly 60 per cent. of the total, was offered under the optional system, giving selectors the right of acquiring the freehold. The area opened under renewable lease only, consisting of national endowments, land for settlements, and areas within mining districts, was 63,750 acres, or about 38 per cent. of the total.

###### THE VARIOUS TENURES.

The total number of Crown tenants of all classes on the books of the office at the close of the year was 7,136, occupying an area of 2,021,498 acres and 24 perches and paying an annual rental of £86,977 18s. 5d. Exclusive of the 570 tenants of education-endowment reserves who were taken over from the School Commissioners at the beginning of the year, the net increase is 262 tenants. The largest number of new selections was under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase system, but this increase has been to a very large extent counterbalanced by the number of freeholds acquired, as well as by a number of forfeitures, principally at selectors' own requests, so that the actual increase is comparatively small. The lease-in-perpetuity tenure shows a small decrease, resulting from acquisition of freeholds, and forfeitures in a few cases. The renewable-lease tenure has received a considerable increase from selections under the national-endowment and land-for-settlements classes, though the total number of holders is less than one-fourth of those under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase system. Of the remaining tenures, the largest increase is noticeable under pastoral licenses in mining districts (Hauraki pastoral leases). The other tenures show little variation from the figures of the preceding year.

###### RANGERS' REPORTS AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

The reports received from the Crown Lands Rangers disclose on the whole a very gratifying condition of affairs in connection with the occupation of lands held under the various forms of Crown tenure. Excellent work is in the majority of cases being done in the clearing of bush, draining, laying down in pasture, and erection of fencing and buildings, and with few exceptions settlers comply readily with the conditions of their leases, even though considerable difficulties and hardships may be endured in the early stages of settlement. Holdings generally are improved at a much greater rate than is required by law—a satisfactory indication that lands are not held for speculative purposes. Residence conditions are not always so satisfactorily fulfilled, this being due generally to difficulties of access, and sometimes to lack of educational facilities for families. New schools are being provided where the required number of scholars can be obtained, but in isolated localities this is difficult to secure. In various parts of the district the means of access are still very bad, making the carriage of produce, &c., difficult and costly; gradual and steady improvement is however taking place, often under considerable difficulties owing to scarcity of metal. Railway-extension, especially in the northern part of the district, is facilitating the development of the country, and is helping to bring the hitherto unknown