

admitted to the ballot. A still greater demand was made manifest at the offering of lands formerly part of the Mount Peel country. Certain exchanges of pastoral country for freehold with the executors of the late Hon. J. B. A. Acland, and readjustment of two pastoral licenses held by them, enabled the Crown to offer on the small-grazing-run system an area of 21,242 acres in five runs at an aggregate rent of £1,351. The number of persons admitted to the ballot was 300.

An area of 33,600 acres to the west of the runs, being the higher and more out-of-the-way portion of the same country and unsuitable for smaller subdivision, was offered at auction as a pastoral run at an upset annual rent of £440, and realized £675. The total area of land disposed of, inclusive of settlement land, during the financial year aggregates 194,544 acres; besides which five settlements, comprising an additional area of 23,501 acres, have been prepared for settlement, and will be offered for selection during the months of April and May.

There has been, and still is, a keen demand for pastoral holdings capable of carrying from 1,000 to 2,000 sheep and upwards. The demand for agricultural land is also considerable, and all the farms offered have, with one exception, been readily taken up. In the exceptional instance the holdings are considered to be too small but numerous offers for two allotments, instead of one, have been received, and no doubt the Land Board will recommend their aggregation when it is satisfied that men of smaller means do not require them. There is not a large demand for holdings of from 20 to 50 acres except in the vicinity of the towns.

LAND-TENURES.

There has been very few changes in the tenures of lands held, with the exception of the substantial addition to the renewable-lease and small-grazing tenures. No exchanges from lease in perpetuity or other tenure to renewable lease have taken place, and only three holdings of any kind have been converted to freehold. These three were village sections in the Arowhenua Township, and aggregated only 2 acres 3 roods 6 perches, the total purchase-money being £126 18s. 9d. Owing to the control of the educational reserves formerly in the hands of the School Commissioners being handed over to this Department, 222 endowment leases were added to the ordinary roll, the additional area amounting to 71,184 acres, and the rent to £20,921 per annum. The control of the workers' dwellings was handed over to the Labour Department at the end of May, the Commissioner, however, being appointed a member of the Workers' Board.

LAND REVENUE: PAYMENTS OF RENTS AND REBATES.

The total revenue for the year was £172,570 15s. 10d., an increase of £16,322 6s. over that of last year. This increase was in part due to the educational endowment reserves taken over by the Department, and in part to the new selections under the Land for Settlements Act and Land Act, 1908. It may be noted that an amount of £7,246 paid in advance by pastoral runholders whose licenses dated from the 1st March, 1912, went to the credit of last year's revenue, none being consequently received this year. The total amount of rent in arrear at the 31st March, 1912, excluding current payments, was £3,381, or under 2 per cent. on the annual rent-roll. The total sum allowed for rebates for prompt payment of rent was £9,463 3s. 5d., the number of tenants who participated in this privilege being 2,317.

TRANSFERS.

The total number of applications to transfer submitted to the Land Board during the year was 275, of which twenty-one were declined. The total number completed, omitting temporary licenses, is shown on the following list:—

Tenure.	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity: Land for settlements	139	17,820	2	12
Renewable lease: Land for settlements	11	2,153	1	37
Village-homestead leases	25	937	1	29
Small grazing-runs	15	34,586	3	10
Pastoral runs	22	434,038	0	0
Education reserves leases (lately under control of School Commissioners)	11	2,380	1	0
Occupation with right of purchase	2	315	1	24
Farm-homestead leases	2	82	0	0
Totals	227	492,313	3	32

The numbers and areas of the holdings transferred during the year continue to increase, and as a rule the amounts paid for goodwill are considerable. The area transferred is exceptionally large owing to the addition of the pastoral transfers remarked in another part of this report.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

The total number of holdings forfeited and surrendered during the year was twenty, comprising an area of 7,766 acres and 8 perches. Fifteen of these were renewable-lease holdings in the land-for-settlements blocks opened during the last two years. It is found that occasionally people apply for these lands without previous inspection, and after seeing the section on its being allotted to them prefer to surrender rather than occupy. It is usually found, however, to be no fault of the section, but rather a matter of personal dislike, the section being as a rule disposed of readily when reoffered. One high pastoral run of 6,600 acres is included in the above figures. It was bought at auction one year for £60 above the upset of £100, and surrendered the next owing to the lessee having suffered heavy losses of sheep during the winter months.