

SOUTHLAND.

The total number of tenants now on the books in this district is 3,103, and the total area leased, including endowments, is 2,179,840 acres, while the annual rental amounts to £45,353. The gross revenue received for the year was £59,068, which is £6,178 in excess of last year's total.

LAND OPENED FOR SELECTION.

During the year an area of 53,087 acres was opened for selection. Of this area, 4,385 acres was offered for the first time; 23,139 acres, comprising mostly sections open for application in the Land Guide, was reclassified, valued and reoffered; and 25,563 acres of new settlements was opened under the Lands for Settlement Act.

LANDS TO BE OPENED FOR SELECTION.

I expect to be in a position to place about 9,000 acres of new land in the market this year. The surveys are being pushed on as expeditiously as possible. Most of the land is worked-out sawmill areas, situated in the Aparima, Jacob's River, Waikawa, Lillbūrn, New River, and Alton districts. The roading of these lands is a considerable item, and the want of access naturally retards the progress of bushfelling, grassing, fencing, &c. The legislation of last session, which provides for the constitution of roading districts and the expenditure of the rents received for roading purposes, should, however, prove to be of considerable advantage in providing access to newly opened sections.

ARREARS OF RENT.

The outstanding rents at the close of the year amounted to £259, owing by twenty-four tenants. This result shows that the Crown tenants are in a most satisfactory position.

FREEHOLD TITLES ISSUED.

	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Cash	35	1,752	3	6
Perpetual lease (ordinary)	4	507	0	12
Perpetual lease (village)	4	54	3	13
Occupation with right of purchase	30	3,991	3	31
Lease in perpetuity (ordinary)	22	7,460	0	5
Lease in perpetuity (village)	34	438	0	30
Lease in perpetuity (land for settlements)	4	616	2	17
Deferred payment	2	55	0	25
Renewable lease (land for settlements)	1	0	2	12
	136	14,877	0	31

Compared with last year's figures, this table shows an increase of fifty-two purchasers and 5,010 acres.

TRANSFERS.

	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Education-reserve leases (including perpetual leases and leases in perpetuity)	68	33,314	3	33
Lease in perpetuity (ordinary and village homestead)	34	7,597	0	10
Lease in perpetuity (land for settlement)	16	2,595	0	38
Occupation with right of purchase	14	3,688	2	39
Perpetual lease	8	597	2	32
Renewable lease (ordinary and village homestead)	5	77	2	25
Renewable lease (land for settlement)	2	352	2	20
Pastoral licenses	9	56,445	0	0
Occupation leases, mining districts	21	799	1	6
Cash (certificate of occupation)	2	263	0	6
Coal leases	2	229	3	38
Sawmill-areas	1	200	0	0
	182	106,161	1	7

GENERAL REMARKS.

Crown tenants continue to make steady progress. The early part of last season was unusually wet, which consequently retarded every description of outdoor work, such as cultivation, bush-felling, road-making, draining, &c. The usual spring growth was also affected by the same cause, resulting invariably in white crops threshing out from 15 to 20 per cent. below the average. Root crops have, however, done well, and there promises to be a plentiful supply of winter feed. Owing to an abundance of grass, the dairying industry has been well maintained. Six new factories have been established during the year, making a total of sixty-four cheese and four butter factories operating in this district. The output of cheese last year reached a total of 5,948 tons, valued at £340,000; but these results are expected to be materially eclipsed by the present season's figures. Never in the history of this district has the market value of stock and farm-produce (except oats) ruled so universally high as at present, with every prospect of such continuing for some time. At the same time, however, settlers will be wise not to offer too great a premium on the future, but rather let the present satisfactory outlook act as a stimulant to the adoption of up-to-date scientific methods in the art of farm-production.

DEPARTMENTAL.

All officers have worked well on the particular duties allotted them, and I have much pleasure in recording my appreciation of the cheerful and willing assistance I have at all times received from my staff.

G. H. M. McCLEURE.
Commissioner of Crown Lands.