

The lands dealt with in the above table comprise both areas offered for the first time, and areas which became available for reoffering through various reasons. The figures for *entirely new* rural areas selected during the year are as follows :—

Class of Land.	Number of New Rural Sections selected.	Total Area selected for the First Time.
		Acres.
Crown and national-endowment land	206	35,309
Settlement land	68	12,488
Education reserves, &c.	13	1,420
Grand totals	287	49,217

The year 1930–31 promises to be a brisk one from the land-selection point of view. A number of purchased estates will be offered, and arrangements are being made for the opening of large areas of Crown lands at present lying idle in various districts. The demand for certain classes of land may be affected to some extent by the fall in the prices of primary products, but already there are signs of an improved demand for the poorer classes of Crown land since the inception of the scheme for advances for development purposes under the provisions of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1929. The work of making all suitable lands remaining in the hands of the Crown available for disposal is being speeded up a great deal. Survey parties have been increased where required, and road-location and engineering works put in hand where extensive roading is necessary.

CROWN LANDS AVAILABLE FOR FUTURE DISPOSAL.

For many years a return has been published as Table 1 of the annual report showing the approximate position with respect to all lands freeholded, reserved for public purposes, leased by the Crown, and available for future disposal, &c. Some revision of this table has been carried out during the year, with the result that a considerable area of Crown lands previously returned as available for future disposal has now been placed under what on fuller investigation is considered to be the more correct classification of land unfit for settlement. It is probable that following on the careful investigation that is now being made of all idle Crown lands in connection with the land settlement and development legislation of last year further areas will later be classified as unfit for disposal for settlement purposes.

LAND-DEVELOPMENT.

The great importance of bringing many areas of Crown lands at present lying idle into a state of productivity is fully recognized, and with this end in view it is intended to utilize the provisions of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1929, for the development and settlement of such areas in all suitable cases.

Before the close of the year under review a great deal of preliminary work was carried out. The necessary regulations and forms of application were prepared and printed, accountancy instructions issued, and other arrangements completed. The personnel of the Lands Development Board established under the Act was completed by the appointment by the Governor-General of Mr. J. R. Franklin, of Wanganui, a gentleman possessing extensive experience both in the farming of ordinary land and the breaking-in of undeveloped areas. The Board now comprises the following: the Minister of Lands (Chairman); the Under-Secretary for Lands; the Permanent Head of the Department of Agriculture; the Financial Adviser to the Government, who acts as a member pursuant to the provisions of the Finance Act, 1929 (section 29); and Mr. J. R. Franklin.

Advisory committees were appointed in December as follows :—

North Auckland: The Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland (*ex officio*); Mr. A. Faithfull; and Mr. G. S. B. Morrison.

South Auckland No. 1: The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland (*ex officio*); Mr. H. Poland; and Mr. W. F. Woodward.

South Auckland No. 2: The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Auckland (*ex officio*); Mr. H. M. Martin; and Mr. W. J. Parsons.

The duties of the advisory committees will be briefly as follows :—

- (1) To inspect all Crown lands in their districts with a view to determining what particular areas are suitable for settlement, and with respect to such areas to advise—(a) Whether such lands should be partially developed by the Crown prior to offering same for selection; or (b) whether such lands should be subdivided and roaded by the Crown and thereafter offered for selection on terms providing that advances be made out of the Land Development Fund to approved settlers to enable them to effect the necessary improvements.
- (2) To advise generally as to how development should proceed, and to furnish opinions of minimum and maximum areas of proposed sections into which the block under report might be subdivided.
- (3) To report generally on any particular matter referred to the committees by the Lands Development Board.