

The details of the territorial revenue proper, given below, as compared with the previous period, shows a falling-off of £18,719 16s. 1d.

It cannot be expected that the revenue derived from the disposal of Crown lands properly so called will maintain its volume; there are several reasons which will cause it to be a yearly decreasing quantity, amongst the chief of which are the less area sold for cash, the decreasing quantity of land available, and the gradual acquisition by the holders of lands held under deferred-payment, perpetual-lease, and other tenures that allow of the purchase of the freehold, towards which the Government Advances to Settlers Act is largely helping.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF THE RECEIPTS ON ACCOUNT OF LAND REVENUE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEARS 1895-96 AND 1896-97.

| Land District. | 1895-96. | 1896-97. | Excess, 1896-97. | Deficiency, 1896-97. |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. |
| Auckland ... | 24,799 6 2 | 29,723 17 6 | 4,924 11 4 | ... |
| Taranaki ... | 31,928 5 9 | 23,911 12 3 | ... | 8,016 13 6 |
| Hawke's Bay ... | 20,938 14 6 | 17,100 14 4 | ... | 3,838 0 2 |
| Wellington ... | 60,537 11 4 | 52,751 0 4 | ... | 7,786 11 0 |
| Marlborough... | 8,993 3 7 | 9,399 4 4 | 406 0 9 | ... |
| Nelson ... | 17,026 18 10 | 14,454 15 1 | ... | 2,572 3 9 |
| Westland ... | 1,042 12 10 | 1,199 4 9 | 156 11 11 | ... |
| Canterbury ... | 48,287 10 1 | 48,999 8 6 | 711 18 5 | ... |
| Otago ... | 61,215 2 9 | 61,333 19 10 | 118 17 1 | ... |
| Southland ... | 16,904 4 0 | 14,079 16 10 | ... | 2,824 7 2 |
| | 291,673 9 10 | 272,953 13 9 | 6,317 19 6 | 25,037 15 7 |
| | 272,953 13 9 | | | 6,317 19 6 |
| Net deficiency ... | £18,719 16 1 | ... | ... | £18,719 16 1 |

The Auditor of Land Revenue states that the deposits lying at the credit of the Receivers on the 31st March amounted to £18,205 6s. 2d.; but just at that time they were inflated by a sum of about £12,000, being deposits with applications for lands which were at the moment awaiting decision. The amount has since been reduced to its normal state of about £6,000.

It is somewhat worthy of note that at the same date there was to the credit of local bodies the large sum of £34,107 18s. 9d., being accumulated "thirds," &c., of land revenue which the local bodies had not applied for. These amounts are often small, and no doubt are not applied for in such cases until they accumulate to a sufficient sum to make them useful. There are 203 local bodies concerned in these deposits.

As has been stated, last year's territorial revenue was less than that of the previous year, and is likely to fall still further through causes which have been mentioned. At the same time the extra territorial revenue is likely to increase somewhat, mainly due to the operations of the Land for Settlements Acts. Against this revenue as a whole—viz., £360,993 8s. 9d.—may be placed the cost of the Lands and Survey Department, amounting to £119,141 7s. 8d., for the same period. In this latter amount is also included a considerable part of the cost of administration of the roads and other works carried on by the department, all but the cost of surveyors, inspectors, foresters, overseers, clerks, &c., which is a charge on the votes themselves.

The number of selectors on the books of the department is 15,527.

ARREARS.

The following table shows the arrears due under all headings for the past nine years:—

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|----------------------------|---------|
| 31st March, 1889 | ... | ... | 3,862 selectors were owing | £44,533 |
| " 1890 | ... | ... | " | 52,891 |
| " 1891 | ... | ... | " | 37,341 |
| " 1892 | ... | ... | " | 25,256 |
| " 1893 | ... | ... | " | 28,875 |
| " 1894 | ... | ... | " | 32,205 |
| " 1895 | ... | ... | " | 37,514 |
| " 1896 | ... | ... | " | 15,708 |
| " 1897 | ... | ... | " | 12,807 |

It is satisfactory to see that such a considerable reduction in numbers and amount has been made during the last two years.