

taken up during the year—it is situated in the Mohaka district; and one run has been subdivided: thus making an addition of two selectors.

Pastoral Runs.—One run, of 18,866 acres, has been forfeited, leaving sixteen selectors on our books, holding 123,359 acres, with an annual rental of £625.

Miscellaneous Leases, &c.—Two mining leases have been granted, with a total area of 313 acres, at an annual rental of £39. They are situated at Maharahara, on the slopes of the Ruahine Range. In addition, two temporary occupation licenses have also been issued.

Revenue.—The total revenue this year has been £18,507 12s. 6d.,* as against £21,363 5s. 5d. last year. It is £1,000 under the estimate, but this was due to the delay in acquiring the freeholds of three perpetual leases until a week after the termination of the twelve-monthly period. With the large blocks which I hope to bring into the market during the present year our revenue should be increased.

Arrears.—Seventeen selectors were in arrears, to the amount of £82 7s. 2d., but in all cases an extension of time has been granted, and the selectors will pay when the time expires, and already half of the amount has been paid. Considering that we have 714 tenants on our books, the small amount of unpaid rent is satisfactory and creditable to them.

Improvements.—One hundred and forty-one inspections have been made by the Crown Lands Rangers, covering an area of 105,129 acres. The total value of improvements effected is £90,079 8s., as against £16,726 required by the Land Acts, thus showing that improvements to the amount of £73,353 have been made in excess of what was necessary. Thirteen selectors are behindhand in their improvements, but not to any extent, while eight require to reside on their selections.

Lands available for Settlement.—At present we have 400,947 acres available for settlement, a large portion of this being broken forest country, which cannot be taken up until opened by roads. The gradual extension of our road system is, however, making the back country more accessible. I hope during the year to have 40,000 acres of the Ngapaeruru and other blocks opened for selection, as there is a large demand for land suitable for selection. This will be seen when it is stated that during the past year we had 2,316 applications for sixty-one sections opened for sale, thus showing that there is a good demand for suitable country.

General.—The past twelve months have been hard ones for the settlers generally in the Hawke's Bay District. At the commencement we had the Easter floods, which swept away houses, fencing, stock, and destroyed crops, &c., and caused damage to the estimated value of £100,000; and about Christmas large bush-fires started, and raged for over three months in the southern portion of the district, causing destruction to homesteads, crops, stock, bridges, &c., to the estimated value of £22,000. They also destroyed a large quantity of valuable timber, which, being situated in country easy of access, is a serious loss.

ERIC C. GOLD-SMITH,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

TARANAKI.

The land transactions for the year ended 31st March, 1898, are shown at a glance in the sub-joined summary:—

Class of Selection.	Transactions during the Year.			Area held at 31st March, 1898.			Revenue received during the Year.		
	Number.	Area.		Number.	Area.		£	s.	d.
Cash	43	A. 59 R. 0 P. 29		...	...		1,007	19	0
Deferred payment ... ..	...	...		184	20,570	1 24	1,728	1	2
Deferred payment made freehold	58	9,290 0 34		...	...		5,306	9	0
Perpetual lease ... ..	...	...		210	54,072	2 18	2,661	0	2
Perpetual lease made freehold	36	7,486 0 0		...	...		7,291	15	0
Occupation, right of purchase	31	7,650 3 0		116	29,409	1 25	1,599	16	10
Lease in perpetuity	31	8,189 2 30		145	41,680	1 32	1,713	1	11
Lease in perpetuity, exchanged from other tenures	2	960 0 0							
Village settlements—									
Deferred payment made freehold	1	31 3 17		...	...		240	4	7
Occupation, right of purchase	1	0 3 0		17	13 2 0		5	11	3
Lease in perpetuity ... ..	...	...		9	68 0 8		7	5	1
Special settlement ... ..	...	...		154	29,654	1 7	863	3	7
Improved-farm settlement	15	885 0 20		169	12,656	1 29	176	1	11
Small grazing-runs ... ..	...	...		14	14,043	0 0	174	15	2
Miscellaneous licenses	6	51 0 24		88	968	3 7	211	12	11
Survey-fees ... ..	...	...		...	...		42	6	8
Lease, &c., fees ... ..	...	...		...	...		318	11	0
Totals	224	34,604 2 34		1,106	203,136	3 30	23,347	15	3
Endowments	3	53 2 31		15	7,301	2 14	667	10	2
Gross totals	227	34,658 1 25		1,121	210,438	2 4	24,015	5	5

* This includes £313 12s. 5d. received on account of endowments.