

*Lands offered and disposed of during Year.*—The greater portion of the lands selected this year were opened for sale during the preceding year, comprising a large area in the Taumatamahoe Block, adjacent to the Ohura Road, which is the future coach-road between Stratford and the railway near Kawakawa. Of fifty-four sections opened for sale in this locality on the optional and small grazing-run systems, only eight remain unapplied for, the grazing-runs being all taken up. The lands opened for sale during the year comprised ten sections, Opaku and Kapara Survey Districts, 10,025 acres, but only three sections were taken up. In what was the Mangaehu Special Settlement, thirteen sections, 6,073 acres, were opened in areas from 200 to 1,000 acres, and only one section remains unselected. These were fairly well competed for. There were twelve miscellaneous allotments, mostly forfeited sections, 3,484 acres, also opened, and nearly all of them were taken up; one section in the Ngaire Block was eagerly applied for, no fewer than 169 applications being received for it. Twelve forfeited allotments in the Whangamomona Settlement were opened under the optional system, and six of them were selected.

*Deferred Payment.*—The freeholds acquired during the year are about the same as the previous year, the amount received from the freeholds alone being £2,847 12s., the yearly decrease in the annual instalments payable being £365 15s. At the present rate it would take four years to wipe out this item from the receipts.

*Perpetual Lease.*—Conversions from this tenure to freehold show a slight decrease, eleven less than the previous year's figures, the revenue losing £502 14s. 2d. per annum by the conversion.

*Optional Lease Systems.*—The selections during the year under both the occupation-with-right-of-purchase and the lease-in-perpetuity tenures show a very satisfactory increase—viz., by twenty-two selectors and 17,312 acres under the former tenure, and by thirteen selectors with 4,616 acres under the latter tenure. The lease-in-perpetuity tenure still holds the lead in number of selectors by thirty-seven. There were nine forfeitures and surrenders as against five last year under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenure, and four under the lease-in-perpetuity as against five last year. For ninety-eight allotments, 192 applications were received for the occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenure, and 126 for the lease-in-perpetuity tenure.

*Village-settlement Lands.*—Only one selection was made under this heading, that being for a section that had reverted to the Crown. Two selectors' interests were forfeited for non-payment of rent.

*Special Settlements.*—These are all held under the lease-in-perpetuity tenure, and of the eighty-seven selectors holding at the 31st March, 1900, it may safely be said that they consist of persons who intend to make the selections their homes. This is apparent by the fact that there were only seven forfeitures and one surrender during the year as against forty-six last year. Residence being due in all but three instances, the coming year's operations should show who are the *bonâ fide* selectors, and I do not think many of them will be found wanting in their performance of conditions. Of the ten surrenders dealt with in last year's report, it may be said that they have returned to the books of the department as ordinary selectors under the optional tenure, some of them having taken up their sections with the right to purchase the freehold.

*Small Grazing-runs.*—It is satisfactory to note that out of eight runs in new country put in the market, seven have been selected. Five are situate in the Taumatamahoe Block and the lands westward abutting on the Mangaowata River, and three are in the country lying some seven or eight miles south of Urenui Township.

*Miscellaneous Leases.*—The sale of some timber on Crown lands appears in this year's returns, and the leases disposed of comprise reserves in Opunake Suburbs, Huiakama Suburbs, a stock reserve at Mangamingi which requires clearing and fencing; two extensions of expired leases, Waihi Reserve; also some yearly tenancies of town sections not sold at auction.

*Revenue.*—The receipts are £910 less than last year, and £5,127 over the estimated revenue for the year. There is a decrease in the receipts from the cash sources and perpetual lease made freehold. There is, however, a very substantial increase in the occupation-with-right-of-purchase and lease-in-perpetuity systems. The estimate for territorial revenue was £19,967, and the receipts show £22,577. The disbursements to Government Loans to Local Bodies Account amounted to £3,460 11s. 8d., and to North Island Main Trunk Railway Account £903 14s. 4d., and the "thirds" credited to local bodies totalled £4,576 15s. 3d.

*Arrears of Rent.*—It is a sign of the progress of the district that the number of selectors in arrear has decreased during the year by thirteen, and the amount owing is £204 less.

*Lands reserved and alienated under Acts.*—The principal reservations were for State forest, there having been 52,127 acres so set aside. A recreation-ground was purchased at Eltham, the Government contributing part of the cost. Three reservations for public-school sites were made, and one resting-place for travelling stock. The areas alienated under Acts comprised closed roads and a piece of the Central Prison Reserve at Moturoa, which was granted to the New Plymouth Harbour Board as a site for dwellings of its employés.

*Selectors on the Books.*—There were 1,005 selectors remaining at the end of the year ended 31st March, 1899. From this number is deducted seventy-five conversions to freehold, one conversion to another tenure, thirty-eight forfeitures and surrenders, and twenty-two terminations and expiries of miscellaneous leases, leaving 869. Then, by adding the new selectors and conversions from other tenures, amounting to 120, there remain 989 selectors at the 31st March, 1900. In 1897 there were 191 selectors less than preceding year; in 1898, 190 less; in 1899, 116 less; and in 1900 only sixteen less: thereby showing that while forfeitures and conversions to freehold have decreased the number of selectors, the number of new selectors has been steadily gaining on this annual decrease.

*Ranger's Inspections.*—The year's operations compare very favourably with previous year's work, the number of properties visited having increased by 193, and the number in default—viz., 70 out of 294—is by no means an unsatisfactory state of things when the difficulty of access to