

Cash Lands.—The area shown under this heading is made up principally of some land on the Stonyhurst Estate, North Canterbury, which was sold in pursuance of an arrangement for the acquisition of other more suitable areas for occupation under the Land for Settlements Acts. The remainder of the area consists for the most part of small portions of unused tramway reserves, which, being now quite useless for their original purpose, were sold to the adjoining owners in whose properties they lay.

Deferred Payments.—The number of holdings under this system has been diminished during the year from forty to twenty-seven, twelve holders having completed the purchase of their selections and obtained freehold titles thereto, while one holder exchanged his license for a lease in perpetuity.

Perpetual Lease.—The number of leases under this tenure has been reduced from 135 to 120. Three holders exchanged into the lease-in-perpetuity system, and twelve exercised their right of acquiring the freehold of their allotments. The conversions into freehold under both this tenure and the deferred-payment system during the period were very considerable, due, no doubt, to the favourable season experienced last year.

Occupation with Right of Purchase.—Two selections only of quarter-acre village lots took place during the year, and the number of holders remains stationary. The area held has been reduced by 203 acres, owing to the transference to the Otago District of one holding at Lake Wanaka comprising that area.

Lease in Perpetuity.—Only two selections of ordinary Crown lands took place under this system during the year (the bulk of the selections on this tenure falling under the head of "Land for Settlements"), and the area held at the end of the year differs very little from that at the corresponding period last year.

Village-homestead Settlements.—The new selections under this tenure numbered only four, comprising twenty-five acres, and the total number of holdings and area held is practically the same as last year, the reinstatement of a few forfeited leases having effected a slight apparent increase.

Farm Homesteads.—The area under this tenure remains practically unchanged.

Small Grazing-runs.—The two new selections under this heading merely represent areas which had been previously held under the same tenure. The total number of leases and area held is reduced by two leases, comprising 9,309 acres, representing runs which remained undisposed of at the end of the year.

Pastoral Licenses.—Nine runs, of an area of 239,717 acres, were leased during the year, and these, together with some runs newly added to the district by the transference from Nelson to Canterbury of the greater portion of the Amuri County, have increased the number of pastoral run-holders from 103 to 118, and the area from 3,128,841 acres to 3,427,070 acres.

The lands disposed of and the present position of holdings in the Cheviot Estate and the land-for-settlements estates are dealt with specially under those headings.

Crown Lands opened for Selection.—The lands offered for disposal during the year may be briefly summarised as follows: Pastoral licenses—Eight runs, comprising 231,444½ acres, situated in the Amuri, Ashley, Ashburton, and Waimate Counties. Small grazing-runs—One run of 3,208½ acres, near Hakaŕamea. Optional selection under Part III. of "The Land Act, 1892"—Eight sections, totalling 1,720 acres 2 roods 12 perches, in different parts of the district. Town lands for cash at public auction—174 sections in different townships, comprising an aggregate area of 43 acres 2 roods 27 perches, were offered, but only a small proportion were sold. Village homestead—Two sections, including an area of 14 acres 3 roods 38 perches, situated at Chertsey and Orari. Temporary-occupation licenses—Forty-two blocks, of an aggregate area of 2,631 acres, in various parts of the district, were offered, principally by public tender, and were let in most cases very satisfactorily.

Arrears of Rents.—The arrears of rents owing at the 31st March, 1900, amounted to £1,889 14s. 5d., due by 156 selectors of all classes. This amount is, in round figures, £103 less than at the corresponding period last year, and, as it represents only 1.88 per cent. of the total annual rent-roll of £100,500 6s. 11d., the result may be considered satisfactory.

Transfers, Exchanges, Forfeitures.—The transfers of lands held under settlement conditions numbered sixty-nine, representing an area of 12,208 acres. The following are the principal items:—

Leases in perpetuity	...	...	...	41, comprising 6,100 acres.
Village-homestead leases	...	...	...	19, " 716 "
Perpetual leases	...	...	...	3, " 83 "
Small grazing-runs	...	...	...	3, " 4,842 "

Sixteen holdings, comprising an area of 1,558 acres, have been exchanged during the year from the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems to the lease-in-perpetuity tenure.

The forfeitures and surrenders of Crown leases have been few in number, as, in the majority of cases, tenants have complied satisfactorily with the requirements of their leases, both in respect of occupation and payments. The figures are as follows:—

	A.	R.	P.
Forfeited
Surrendered
Total

9 leases, comprising 9,762
11 " " 7,279
20 " " 17,042 1 13

Two forfeited and two surrendered small grazing-runs, comprising a total area of 14,512 acres, and one surrendered leasehold in perpetuity of 1,600 acres, represent the bulk of this area.