

be paid within one month of the date on which it was due in advance, provided that the tenant was not in arrear with any instalment accruing due after the coming into operation of the Act. There is little indication in the Act of motive to guide these officers in exercising this discretion, beyond that it is to encourage the punctual payment of rent; they are left free to decide each case equitably, without precedents to guide them. Their decisions are, as might be expected, unequal. In Auckland it was anticipated that each tenant would apply for the rebate, and until he did there was no need to give it. In Hawke's Bay a discount was considered unnecessary, as the Crown tenants paid promptly without it. In Taranaki it was considered that between the passing of the Act and the end of January, on which the first half-yearly payments became due, there was not time to examine every lease and to decide if it was meritable. In Westland the Commissioner and Receiver did not think any discount was called for by the Crown tenants.

With regard to those tenants who were in arrear before the Act was passed, it should be made more clear if the Legislature intended them to get advantage of the Act when making payments due after the coming into operation of the Act. It would be better also if in the Act some directions were given of principles on which the Commissioners and Receivers should use their discretion.

The effect of the Act generally has been to bring in the rents about six months earlier than they would otherwise have come, and as it becomes better known it will diminish the arrears.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS ACTS.

During the present year ten estates, containing 43,942 acres, were dealt with. The cost of the land purchased was £168,193. Besides these, five estates were purchased, but not in time to put them in the market before the end of the year—viz., Earnscliffe, in Otago; Maungaraki, in Wellington; Tarawahi, in Canterbury; Northbank, in Marlborough; and Hatuma, in Hawke's Bay. The area of these estates is 41,015 acres, and the cost to date £157,666.

The Northbank property, in Marlborough, containing 13,000 acres, which cost £6,750, is retained for a year to test its auriferous quality, but was leased in one run to the former owner at £300 per annum, the goldfields revenue also being payable to the account.

The Waipapa freeholds, of 3,655 acres, were utilised as homesteads for a portion of the high-lying pastoral country behind them.

Of the ten estates opened for selection 41,546 acres in 127 farms and two small grazing-runs, the areas varying from 50 to 2,000 acres, were leased at a rent of £8,174 per annum, equal to 5 per cent. of the purchase-money, survey, administration, and road-formation.

For country lands the demand is very good, as will be seen from the following table, all the lands having been taken up as soon as offered, with the exception of 2,395 acres, part of which is withheld and the remainder hill pasture.

The Hatuma Estate, in Hawke's Bay, offered since the end of the year, containing 25,737 acres, was divided into fifty-eight farms of from 110 to 1,510 acres each, and they were every one leased the first day it was placed in the market. Similarly, Kohika, 3,820 acres; Raincliff, 530 acres; and Mangawhata, 1,226 acres, have all been taken up with the exception of one section in the latter.

The workmen's hamlets were not so readily disposed of, but were taken up after a time, so that now only a few of them contain unlet sections. As a recent instance, the Hamlet of Epuni, within one mile and three-quarters of the Lower Hutt Railway-station, and almost in the neighbourhood of a manufacturing suburb of Wellington, consisting of land of the finest quality for gardens and residences, which was opened for selection on the 25th June, was little competed for, only ten lots out of forty-three offered being selected on the first day. These lots were from $\frac{1}{2}$ acre to $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres.

The Tarawahi Hamlet, about two miles and a half from Cathedral Square, in the City of Christchurch, and only a few chains from a tram-line, was, on the first day, taken up by only eight persons, when thirty-seven families might have founded homes on rich alluvial land fit to grow any garden crop.

The following table gives the several estates offered for the first time, and how they were disposed of:—

ESTATES OFFERED FOR SELECTION DURING 1900-1.

Land District, and Name of Estate.	Area of Estate.			Number of Selectors.	Number of Original Applications.	Area unselected, 31st March, 1901.			Annual Rental payable on Lands leased.			Date when offered for Selection.
	A.	R.	P.			A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	
Auckland— Whitehall	8,959	0	0	7	14	1,285	2	0	361	4	6	9 April, 1900.
Wellington— Aorangi	1,785	0	0	37	363	Nil			1,342	16	10	5 April, 1900.
Langdale	9,405	0	0	23	45	104	0	3	1,526	10	4	19 March, 1901.
Marlborough— Waipapa	*3,655	0	0			25 Feb., 1901.
Canterbury— Rautawiri	122	3	7	6	68	Nil			135	6	4	19 April, 1900.
Papaka	1,561	2	25	9	385	Nil			947	6	0	19 April, 1900.
Punaroa	7,029	3	5	17	293	Nil			1,681	16	6	19 April, 1900.
Lyndon	4,243	3	28	8	50	Nil			849	19	2	5 March, 1901.
R.S. 36228	100	3	23	1	..	Nil			12	11	4	17 May, 1900.
Otago— Barnego	7,078	2	1	21	65	1,006	0	0	1,316	5	6	15 May, 1900.
Totals	43,941	2	9	129	1,283	2,395	2	3	8,173	16	6	

* Taken up as homesteads for five small grazing-runs.