

The total number of sections selected during the year out of estates newly offered and from those remaining for selection from previous years is 232.

The arrears of rents due by 280 tenants under the Land for Settlements Act is £8,271, and is £1,078 greater than at the same time in the previous year.

The prime cost of eighty-one estates, containing 331,128 acres, repurchased is £1,710,541, and there was £88,073 expended in incidental expenses, and expenses incurred in incompleting negotiations, in road-making, and in preparing the land for occupation in the smaller areas into which the properties were divided, making a cost to date of £1,798,614.

The lands disposed of are let to 1,789 tenants, at an annual rental of £82,718, and the lands unlet represent an annual rental of £1,910. The yearly value is therefore £84,628.

As a whole, the rent actually received during the year is equal to 4.0 per cent. on the total cost at the end of the year. This yearly rent is, however, really derived from an expenditure of £1,656,431, the sum of £142,183 which was paid for Hatuma just at the close of the year, yielding no rent for that period. This, being a large sum, materially affects the apparent earning-rate, and if it is deducted from the total cost of the estates the rent paid is equal to interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and the letting-value of the land offered for selection is 5.1 per cent. It must, however, be considered that there has yet to be expended on roads on these estates about £8,361.

Of rural lands open for selection 12,503 acres in forty-one farms are still undisposed of, and there are 233 acres of workmen's hamlets, or land intended for small holdings, in seventy-nine sections which were not taken up at the end of the year.

The exchanges effected under the Act of 1894, and under section 7 of the Act of 1900, are given in Table No. 33. It shows that 29,295 acres were acquired by the Crown in exchange for 51,434 acres of freehold lands and a sum of £783. These exchanges were of lands in the Marlborough District chiefly, and were arranged to give both parties better boundaries, and also land for home-stations for the utilisation of the high pastoral country in the neighbourhood.

SUMMARY OF THE CONDITION AND SETTLEMENT.

Land District.	Selectors.	Residents	Condition.
<i>Auckland—</i>			
Opouriao	72	62	Fairly prosperous.
Okauia	9	6	Pasture not good.
Rangiatea	19	17	Dairy farms, good pasture.
Karapiro	17	10	Dairy farms.
Fencourt	34	22	Dairy farms.
Whitehall	7	6	Dairy farms.
<i>Hawke's Bay—</i>			
Raureka	18	18	Prosperous, lease conditions complied with.
Elsthorpe	46	28	All occupied for pasture.
Waimarie	17	14	Satis-factory, so far as the lands let.
Pouparae	8	6	Cropped with maize, pumpkins, and potatoes.
Tomoana	13	11	In oats, barley, mangolds, potatoes, gardens, and orchards.
Mahora	32	24	
Willows	22	12	Chiefly "maize and potato" crops—sheep and "cattle.
<i>Wellington—</i>			
Paparangi	37	35	Progress of older settlements satisfactory, dwellings being rapidly erected.
Ohakea	15	10	
Te Matua	13	13	
Aorangi	37	34	
Langdale	23	12	
<i>Marlborough—</i>			
Blind River	17	19	Better progress than last year.
Omaka	13	11	Season good.
Pubipuhi	2	1	Leased with Crown lands.
Starborough	112	52	Harvest good, well garnered, improvements well done.
Richmond Brook	11	8	Improvements considerable.
<i>Westland—</i>			
Poerua Settlement	18	8	Not much progress made, season unpropitious.
<i>Canterbury—</i>			
Pareora	28	25	Satisfactory, and settlers prosperous.
Studholme Junction	4	3	Satisfactory progress.
Kapua	10	10	Satisfactory; floods troublesome.
Rosebrook	14	14	Improvements well done.
Otaio	9	9	Doing well.
Patoa	4	3	"
The Peaks	12	1	Doing fairly well.
Roimata	26	26	Prosperous; drainage troublesome.
Kereta	4	4	Satisfactory.
Braco	14	14	Condition improved.
Epworth	2	1	Satisfactory.
Ashley Gorge	10	10	Doing fairly well; comfortable houses.
Omihi Valley	1	..	Stock paddock.
Orakipaoa	27	18	Improving.
Highbank	70	62	Making good progress.
Otarakaro	5	7	Tenants working their holdings well.
Wharenui	26	24	Very prosperous.
Rakitairi	21	18	Both doing well, especially Rakitairi.
Waiapi	15	15	
Horsley Downs	25	24	Prosperous.
Albury	74	64	Tenants doing well.
R.S. 1862	1	..	Let as homesteads for other lands.
Part R.S. 2682	1	..	
R.S. 36469, Cannington	1	..	
R.S. 36231	1	..	
R.S. 36056 and 36057	1	..	
R.S. 36228	1	..	