

TARANAKI.

The land transactions for the year ending the 31st March, 1902, are shown in the subjoined summary:—

Class of Selection.	Transactions during the Year.			Held at 31st March, 1902.			Revenue received during the Year.				
	Number.	Area.		Number.	Area.						
		A.	R.	P.		A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
Cash	43	3,137	1	2	...	...	...	...	4,253	12	4
Deferred payment ...	...	...	...	...	31	4,244	3	0	400	16	8
Deferred payment made freehold	12	1,570	3	20	...	...	...	...	784	13	11
Perpetual lease ... ..	...	...	...	...	43	11,880	1	6	844	17	10
Perpetual lease made freehold	28	7,301	0	38	...	...	...	...	6,369	13	11
Occupation with right of purchase	24	12,407	1	0	302	120,194	0	3	4,804	1	4
Lease in perpetuity ...	9	3,299	2	0	256	74,181	1	12	3,222	4	3
Lease in perpetuity, land for settlements	8	878	1	35	6	653	1	35	577	12	6
Village settlements—											
Occupation with right of purchase	...	...	...	...	16	13	0	0	3	6	9
Lease in perpetuity ...	...	...	...	...	8	65	0	13	6	14	6
Special settlements, lease in perpetuity	...	...	...	...	74	16,565	2	0	898	2	2
Improved - farm settlements, lease in perpetuity	...	...	...	...	127	11,959	2	13	953	12	8
Small grazing-runs ...	1	4,220	0	0	24	29,530	0	0	318	8	3
Miscellaneous leases ...	8	342	3	4	81	1,175	2	31	371	11	11
Transfer and other fees ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	103	16	0
Miscellaneous receipts ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	156	1	7
Crown-grant fees ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	85	14	11
Survey liens, &c. ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	145	2	1
Endowments ...	...	...	...	...	14	7,965	3	4	348	0	7
Totals	133	33,157	1	19	982	278,428	1	37	24,648	4	2

Lands offered and disposed of during the Year.—The total area of land open for selection at the close of the last financial year was 58,451 acres, and during the year 23,322 acres was put on the market, making a total area of 81,773 acres available. Of this area some 22,096 acres was taken up, leaving about 59,677 acres open on the 31st March, 1902. All these lands comprise mostly country only suitable for pastoral purposes, and can only be taken up by men with means enough to put large areas into grass to get sufficient returns to pay for the expense. Added to this is the difficulty of access, which is met with in almost every instance, and in itself is a great handicap to the settler. As a reason for only a third of the area being opened that was put up last year, it may be mentioned here—and it was referred to in my predecessor's report last year—that the Land Board is adverse to opening blocks of land for selection until the roadworks to give access to them are sufficiently advanced to enable the people to get to their lands, at least by a horse-track, and make some use of them in return for the rent paid.

Cash Lands.—The principal sales of town lands for cash were in Stratford, Hairoa, and Mangaehu. In the former, all the nineteen sections except one were quitted at advances on the upset prices. At Hairoa seventy-one sections were offered and sixteen disposed of, some at advances on upsets. This town is near to the projected line of railway from Stratford to Whangamomona, and buyers were probably attracted by the prospects of its proximity. Mangaehu is a recently surveyed village and suburban site, about four miles from the Ohura Road, between Toko and Strathmore; thirty-seven sections were offered and fourteen disposed of, there being fair competition also for these. In the Village of Makaka ten sections were offered and six quitted at the upset prices, and in Mangamingi Village the remaining three sections were disposed of at the upsets. Rural lands sold for cash comprised six sections, with a total area of 2,909 acres, they having been opened on the optional system.

Deferred Payments.—The number of conversions to freeholds is only twelve, as against twenty-seven last year. The yearly loss of revenue by the conversions is £143 5s. 4d.

Optional Lease System.—On account of the comparatively small area opened for selection, this year's figures show only thirty-three new selections, against 145 last year, the majority of them being under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenure. A large proportion of the selections were taken up without a ballot being necessary.

Special Settlements.—All these are held under the lease-in-perpetuity tenure, and the year's operations show no variation, except in regard to rents received, which amount to £140 less than last year's receipts. Those non-resident have been dealt with by the Land Board, and they have either transferred to persons willing to reside or have been granted time in which to carry out the conditions.

Small Grazing-runs.—The area held has been increased by one new selection during the year, and there are no other changes to report. There are at present only two runs in the market,