

1 homestead site, and the Awatere and Birch Hill lands, containing in all an area of 49,162 acres and 14 perches, were opened for selection, together with 10 other estates, comprising an area of 29,639 acres and 15 perches, which had been handed over prior to the 31st March, 1902, but were not ready for settlement on that date. The properties were all surveyed, subdivided, valued, and submitted for lease on carefully considered and designed schemes, and were readily quitted, except the areas noted in the fourth column of the table hereunder.

The five Auckland hamlets were opened as "workmen's homes," and are situated in the vicinity of the City of Auckland. The Kumeroa and Forest Gate Estates were acquired under the compulsory provisions of "The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900," and, notwithstanding, the result may so far be classed as satisfactory. The small Linton Settlement, near Halcombe, was all selected. The Kokatahi Settlement, in Westland, is in a better position than shown, inasmuch as the balance of 1,246 acres has been taken up since the 31st March last. The five Canterbury properties constitute a large proportion of the whole; and of the Lyndon Estate (Amuri) and the Chamberlain (Opawa) Settlement, near Albury, not an acre has been left on the Land Board's hands. The Windsor Park Estates (Otago) all went off.

Given a continuance of the present favourable conditions affecting farming and grazing, it is to be anticipated that these later acquisitions under the Land for Settlements Act will prove as beneficial and satisfactory to the colony and tenants as the majority of the previous purchases have done.

Reference to Table 33 will afford full information as to all the estates which have been opened for selection and administered by the Lands and Survey Department. Since the initiation of the policy under "The Land for Settlements Act, 1892," it will be seen that, including special purchases to provide homesteads and low country for a few Crown tenants, the number of settlements is 116, comprising 475,223 acres, and the result is that 2,335 tenants (or 7,200 souls in all) have been placed upon 447,334 acres, for which they are liable for an annual rental of £116,979. The area absorbed by roads and reserves is 8,338 acres, and on the 31st March last the total area still in the hands of the Land Boards, inclusive of forfeited and surrendered sections, amounted to 19,543 acres, with an estimated annual rental of £3,401; whilst 278 lessees, holding 61,680 acres, were in arrear £10,489. This amount has been greatly reduced since. The holdings which fall back into the hands of the Crown are reopened as expeditiously as possible, and are as a rule promptly taken up. But difficulty is still experienced in quitting portions of some of the Auckland hamlets; the Waipapa Settlement, Marlborough; the Pomahaka and Barnego Settlements, Otago; and the Beaumont and Glenham Settlements, Southland. The Northbank Estate (Marlborough) was held back for mining.

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

TABLE G.—ESTATES OFFERED for SELECTION during the Year ending the 31st March, 1903, under "The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900."

Land District and Name of Estate.	Area of Estate.			Number of Selectors	Area unselected, 31st March, 1903.			Annual Rental payable on Lands leased.			Date of Opening.
	A.	R.	P.		A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	
<b>Auckland—</b>											
Cradock Hamlet .. .. .	33	0	9	3	22	0	25	17	14	0	22 April, 1902.
Hetana " .. .. .	451	1	34	7	377	1	6	14	5	4	22 April, 1902.
Kitchener " .. .. .	26	3	35	1	20	3	14	5	12	0	22 April, 1902.
Methuen " .. .. .	77	3	14	7	45	2	7	33	17	9	22 April, 1902.
Plumer " .. .. .	74	0	0	3	54	2	12	10	10	2	22 April, 1902.
<b>Hawke's Bay—</b>											
Kumeroa .. .. .	3,774	2	38	14	726	0	0	1,425	9	10	12 May, 1902.
Forest Gate .. .. .	8,822	0	13	28	81	2	13	2,587	17	6	19 May, 1902.
<b>Wellington—</b>											
Linton .. .. .	551	1	36	5	..	..	309	13	6	17 Sept., 1902.	
<b>Westland—</b>											
Kokatahi .. .. .	1,894	2	20	3	1,246	1	30	100	17	10	4 Nov., 1902.
<b>Canterbury—</b>											
Lyndon No. 2 .. .. .	15,887	0	0	10	..	..	2,281	10	2	21 April, 1902.	
Maytown .. .. .	391	3	32	12	..	..	286	16	2	28 April, 1902.	
R.S. 30791 (part) .. .. .	100	0	0	1	..	..	17	0	0	23 April, 1902.	
Eccleston .. .. .	1,246	1	5	4	..	..	569	11	2	12 May, 1902.	
R.S. 36226 .. .. .	46	1	26	1	..	..	5	3	0	16 Oct., 1902.	
Mead .. .. .	5,914	3	17	21	..	..	975	18	0	21 Jan., 1903.	
Chamberlain .. .. .	10,500	1	9	21	..	..	2,169	19	10	9 Mar., 1903.	
<b>Otago—</b>											
Windsor Park .. .. .	3,821	2	16	38	..	..	1,655	8	2	28 May, 1902.	
Windsor Park No. 2 .. .. .	2,179	2	17	10	..	..	875	16	8	28 Oct., 1902.	
Duncan .. .. .	633	2	3	5	210	0	22	181	16	8	29 Dec., 1902.
<b>Totals</b> .. .. .	<b>56,427</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2,784</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13,524</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	

Total, 19 estates opened during year.