

The 2,813 selections are classified in Table No. 4 according to the area acquired; thus it will be seen that there were 432 selections or purchases under 1 acre each, and for the maximum area of 1,000 acres or over there were 166.

Deducting the cash sales, we obtain 2,368 lease selections, and though these include 630 miscellaneous leases, as well as pastoral runs relet, the whole represents a very substantial increase both in number and area.

Omitting the sales of town and suburban lands, pastoral and grazing leases, and miscellaneous leases, the average area selected is 225 acres, whilst the figures for the preceding two years were respectively 228 acres and 230 acres.

In regard to forfeitures and surrenders, which amount to 466, and include an area of 415,701 acres, it will be noticed that these figures exceed those of 1902-3 by fifty-six cases, and in area by 122,129 acres; yet the net result is to add no less than 2,347 transactions to the registers.

It is interesting to compare the volume of land business effected over a series of years. This is more readily shown in the following manner:—

TABLE D.—SUMMARY of LANDS SELECTED.

Year.	Number of Selectors or Purchasers.	Area taken up during Year.	Territorial Revenue.	Total Revenue collected.	Number of Leasehold Tenants on the Books.
		Aces.	£	£	
1891-92	2,519	1,453,082	320,483	324,470	12,735
1892-93	3,071	1,663,339	274,399	310,523	14,261
1893-94	2,876	1,393,918	282,067	347,343	15,081
1894-95	2,547	1,015,577	338,166	375,879	15,326
1895-96	2,865	2,662,344	291,673	345,331	15,683
1896-97	2,173	1,600,695	272,954	360,993	15,527
1897-98	2,058	2,451,062	263,296	359,086	16,365
1898-99	2,542	1,357,466	273,799	385,145	16,572
1899-1900	2,310	1,573,823	262,228	382,943	17,191
1900-1901	2,312	1,667,744	270,203	431,338	18,050
1901-1902	2,159	1,094,086	249,619	427,138	18,521
1902-1903	2,247	1,589,667	252,278	448,380	19,594
1903-1904	2,813	1,624,946	247,842	497,211	21,101

Notwithstanding the increasing shortage of land suitable for settlement, and the other difficulties to which attention has been drawn for several years past, it is submitted that the record of land operations for the year under review is satisfactory as regards the number of tenants, the area of lands taken up, and the amount of revenue collected. The total number of selectors upon the books of the Land Offices now number 21,101; they occupy an area of 16,885,868 acres under various tenures, and pay therefor an annual rent of £389,329. Of these tenures the only ones which may be considered permanent are all classes of lease in perpetuity, whether rural, village settlement, or improved farms, and the lease-in-perpetuity holdings and small grazing-farms of the Cheviot and Land for Settlements estates. In addition to these, occupation leases in mining districts, though not permanent, may be renewed for further terms, as may also the small grazing-runs of ordinary Crown lands.

The total revenue for the year, £497,211, shows an increase of £48,831 over that collected in 1902-3, whilst a comparison of the amounts for the past thirteen years discloses that there has been a fluctuating, though marked, decrease in the territorial revenue, due chiefly to less sales of land for cash and acquirements of freeholds under the perpetual-lease and deferred-payment tenures, and an equally gradual increase of amounts received under special Acts such as the Land for Settlements and Cheviot Estate Disposition. The increased number of tenants every year adds to the rentals payable, and in this manner counterbalances the falling-off of receipts derived from the former large sales of freeholds.

The following table has been compiled to show the selections during the past twelve years under Part III. of "The Land Act, 1892" (the optional system):—