

ANNUAL REPORT.

The UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LANDS.

SIR,—

Department of Lands, Wellington, 1st June, 1908.

I have the honour to submit herewith the thirty-first annual report of the Department of Lands, and shortly to touch upon its cognate branches, the full reports on which you will lay before Parliament in their ordinary sequence.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. Robert McNab, Minister of Lands.

WM. C. KENSINGTON,

Under-Secretary for Lands.

RESULT OF "THE LAND LAWS AMENDMENT ACT, 1907."

As a preliminary to the recording of statistics showing the progress of settlement during the year, it may not be considered out of place to briefly state what was the result of the passing of the above Act. I mean by this, what additional labour did it entail upon the Department—(a) in the withdrawal of lands already open for selection, and enumerated in the several Land Guides; (b) in the reopening of the same under the altered conditions imposed not only by the Act of 1907, but also by those enacted by the National Endowment Act of last session; (c) in the framing and gazetting of fresh regulations to suit the altered circumstances.

The lands necessarily withdrawn from selection soon after the 1st December, 1907 (the Land Laws Amendment Act only becoming law on the 20th November), amounted to 2,118,188 acres, as more particularly enumerated in the attached.

Table A.—Area of land in each Land District advertised in Land Guides at time of passing of "The Land Laws Amendment Act, 1907," and which had to be withdrawn and reopened.

	A.	R.	P.
Auckland	633,791	0	0
Hawke's Bay	19,797	0	0
Taranaki	35,974	0	0
Wellington	5,982	0	0
Nelson	254,576	0	0
Marlborough	138,132	0	0
Westland	881,199	0	13
Canterbury	45,673	0	32
Otago	49,024	0	0
Southland	54,040	0	0
Total area	2,118,188	1	5

The lands readvertised for opening for sale or selection (including national endowment lands) in the short time left before the close of the financial year on the 31st March, 1908, amounted to 1,277,072 acres, specified in Table B. This, I venture to submit, was a most creditable performance, more especially as the new regulations (set forth in Table C) all had to be carefully thought out, submitted to yourself for approval, then sent to the Crown Law Officers for perusal and revision, forwarded to His Excellency the Governor and (in most cases) the Executive Council for execution, and finally published in the *Gazette*. These regulations embraced eight different subjects, contained in 163 different clauses and eighteen schedules, and dealt with various matters enacted by the new Land Act, but not set forth in detail in that statute.

Table B.—Area of land in each Land District advertised for sale or selection from passing of "The Land Laws Amendment Act, 1907," to 31st March, 1908.

	Area.			Remarks.
	A.	R.	P.	
Auckland	94,732	1	11	Includes 2,583 acres, national endowment.
Hawke's Bay	21,754	0	12	
Taranaki	23,516	2	15	Includes 9,537 acres 3 roods 24 perches, national endowment.
Wellington	28,272	1	21	Includes 370 acres 1 rood, national endowment.
Nelson	70,801	0	33	Includes 42,530 acres, national endowment.
Marlborough	295	0	00	
Westland	859,102	0	00	Includes 17,701 acres, national endowment.
Canterbury	47,038	3	29	
Otago	105,884	2	30	
Southland	25,674	3	21	
Total area	1,277,072	0	12	Includes 72,722 acres and 24 perches, national endowment.