

Swamp Drainage Act, 1915; authorizes the transfer from the Swamp Land Drainage Account to accounts out of which moneys have been provided in two or three cases for the carrying-out of drainage reclamation works on certain Crown lands prior to the passing of the Act; provides that reasonable expenses of administration incurred with respect to any of the foregoing works may be paid out of the Swamp Land Drainage Account, and that until such time as the Swamp Land Drainage Account is reimbursed the full amount of any moneys expended out of it in the manner above mentioned all proceeds derived from the sale or lease of Crown or national-endowment lands benefited by such works shall be paid into that account without any deduction of "thirds" to local bodies for the construction or maintenance of roads, or of "halves" of royalties derived from flax or timber.

Hauraki Plains Amendment Act, 1922.—The purport of this Act may be briefly stated as follows: Section 2 repeals the provisions of section 108 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1917, which provided that, unless and until Parliament otherwise directs, all lands described in the schedule to the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908, shall be exempt from any general rate made and levied by a County Council. Provision is made whereby such of these lands as are set apart as towns or villages, and such other lands when occupied within the meaning of the Rating Act, 1908, for a period of not less than three years, shall, on and after the 1st April, 1923, become liable for payment of general rates levied by a local authority. Section 3 provides that part of the Hauraki Plains rating-area, comprising an area of 960 acres, which has been included in the Hauraki Drainage District, is exempted from any rates levied for maintenance purposes by the Minister of Lands under section 3 of the Hauraki Plains Amendment Act, 1911. Section 4 provides that in the event of any lands in the Hauraki Plains rating-area being constituted a drainage district, or included in a drainage district, such lands shall also be exempted from payment of such rates. Under section 5 the proceeds of all rates made and levied by the Minister of Lands for maintenance of drainage works under section 3 of the Hauraki Plains Amendment Act, 1911, are made payable into the Hauraki Plains Settlement Account, excepting rates levied in respect of expenditure out of the Consolidated Fund, which rates shall be payable into that fund; and section 6 authorizes the Minister of Lands to sell to the Hauraki Plains County Council certain wharves, jetties, goods-sheds, &c., which have been erected by the Crown on Hauraki Plains area, subject to such conditions as may be mutually agreed on.

Tongariro National Park Act, 1922.—This Act sets apart an area of 145,000 acres in the neighbourhood of Mounts Ruapehu, Tongariro, and Ngauruhoe as a national park, which area exceeds by 82,700 acres the area of the park as previously constituted. The Act vests the control and management of the park in a Board specially constituted thereunder, prescribes the powers of the Board, restricts the issue of leases and licenses to certain purposes, and prescribes penalties for breaches of by-laws and other offences.

Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1922.—This Act, which contains a larger number of special enactments than any previous special-powers Act of a similar nature, comprises 158 sections and a schedule containing twelve items, all dealing with matters of purely local interest.

The Finance Act, 1922.—Section 17 of this Act authorizes the Minister of Finance to borrow such further amount as he thinks fit, not exceeding £100,000, for the purposes of draining, reclaiming, and roading of lands subject to the provisions of the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908. Section 20 abolishes the Waimarino Bush-fire Relief Account, originally constituted for the relief of sufferers by the Raetihi bush-fires, and transfers the moneys standing to the credit of that account to the General Purposes Relief Account, to be administered by the Minister of Finance. Section 49 confers on lessees of lands in Rotorua Township the right of having valuations (made for the purpose of fixing the price of the fee-simple) referred to the Assessment Court in the event of their objecting to the Valuer-General's valuations.

LANDS FOR SELECTION.

During the year 481,649 acres were taken up by 1,426 selectors, the average holding being about 337 acres. Except for the sections in most favourably situated localities, the demand for virgin lands is still somewhat restricted, although an improvement is apparent when the transactions are compared with the previous year.

The Government is still adhering to the policy of offering for general application practically all lands becoming available, but giving preference to discharged soldiers where such apply.

The following schedule shows the area at present available for selection. The great bulk of this area is virgin bush or rough pastoral country:—

Land District.	Area available for Settlement.	Area under Survey for Settlement.	Area to be put in Hand for Early Settlement.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
North Auckland	40,000	26,000	11,000
Gisborne	24,555	24,000	16,700
Auckland	225,000	170,000	128,000
Hawke's Bay	38,165	Nil	Nil.
Taranaki	22,000	33,600	25,500
Wellington	19,737	Nil	177,677
Marlborough	6,996	2,142	11,400
Nelson	59,100	4,000	Nil.
Westland	15,000	Nil	67,500
Canterbury	23,350	Nil	Nil.
Otago	18,500	128,000	47,821
Southland	16,000	14,000	Nil.
Totals	508,403	401,742	485,598