

1932.

NEW ZEALAND.

LAND TRANSFER AND DEEDS REGISTRATION.

ANNUAL REPORT OF DEPARTMENT, 1931-32.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Head Office, Stamp Duties Department, Wellington, 31st March, 1932.

The Hon. the Minister of Stamp Duties, Wellington.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the working of the Land Transfer and Deeds Registration Department for the year ended the 31st March, 1932.

The returns appended show—

- A.—The business transacted under the Land Transfer Act.
- B.—The fees received thereunder, including the fees received on account of Crown grants.
- C.—The mortgages and discharges of mortgages, and the amount remaining secured by mortgage under the said Act on the 31st March, 1932.
- D.—The arrears existing at the various Land Transfer Offices at the close of business on the same date.
- E.—The number of deeds received for registration and the number remaining unrecorded on the 31st March last, also the fees received in the Deeds Registration Offices.

Business transacted.—Registration business has suffered a sharp drop during the year owing to the prevailing depression.

Compulsory Registration.—The work of bringing under the provisions of the Land Transfer Act of titles not previously subject to those provisions was completed prior to the beginning of the year under review in all districts except the districts of Auckland, Nelson, and Otago. It is being proceeded with in those districts, and owing to the depression members of the permanent staff not required in the meantime for the ordinary work have been employed on this work, so that it has been carried on at a greater rate than previously. The District Land Registrars of those districts estimate that if present conditions were to continue—that is to say, without there being any material reductions in the permanent staffs and no great increase in ordinary registrations—the work would be practically completed in the following periods, namely: In Auckland, from three to five years; in Nelson, one year and a half; in Otago, eight years.

Reconstruction of Hawke's Bay Register.—Out of the total number of certificates of title and Crown leases of land in the Hawke's Bay district that were in existence at the date of the earthquake and fire, estimated at about twenty-seven thousand, twelve thousand have been copied, in addition to a large number of mortgages and other leases. The Land Transfer (Hawke's Bay) Act, 1931, appears to be reasonably sufficient for the purpose of providing a method of ascertaining the position of titles to land and reconstructing the register so far as possible. Hawke's Bay solicitors have suggested that the Act is unsatisfactory in one respect—that is to say, that it is extremely doubtful as to what is the effect, in view of the law as to novation, of a new instrument executed in substitution for an instrument destroyed in the earthquake and fire—but it has not been suggested, and I am unable to suggest, how the Act might be improved in this respect. The solicitors also contend that the work should be carried on with greater expediency than has been done, and that they should be allowed to assist by making copies of instruments held by them (they being paid for the work) as was done during the first few months after the reconstruction work was begun. The staff engaged upon the work consists of permanent officers of the Department (except typists and draughtswomen, who are nowadays mostly temporary officers), and comprises the pre-earthquake staff of the Napier Office, together with a large number of officers drawn from other District Land Registry Offices where, owing to the depression, their services are not in the meantime necessary.

Staff.—The personnel of the staff has been considerably reduced in numbers during the past two years, partly by the retirement of senior officers whose places it has not been necessary to fill, and partly by the services of temporary clerks engaged for the purpose of the “compulsory” work having all, except two, been dispensed with, the “compulsory” work now being done, as above stated, by permanent officers formerly necessary for the ordinary registration work of the Department, but whose services for that purpose are in the meantime not required owing to the depression. Although the temporary clerks whose services have been dispensed with were competent and satisfactory, I am pleased to be able to state that it has been found that the comparatively junior officers trained in the Department, as well as the more senior ones, that are now engaged on this work, give greater satisfaction and produce more work than the others did. The “compulsory” work is keeping fully employed a considerable number of officers that during the depression would have had insufficient of the ordinary work to do. They are earning fees that nearly, if not quite, cover the amount of their salaries.

As this is the last report of this kind that I shall personally have the honour of making, it may not be out of place for me to state that I am proud of the personnel of the Department, from District Land Registrars down to junior clerks and cadets, and in my opinion an administrative officer could not wish for the control of a more satisfactory body of officers.

Safety of Records.—Subsequent to the Hawke’s Bay earthquake a report was obtained upon the efficiency of the rooms, from an earthquake and fire resisting point of view, in which the records of the Department are housed. It appears that the Napier fire penetrated the Land and Deeds strong-room through the coke-breeze concrete ceiling, and the report shows that one or two of the strong-rooms in which the registers are kept in other districts are made of similar material. I am of opinion that in several cases at least records are not even reasonably safe from destruction in a fire of ordinary magnitude. This is notably the case in Wellington and Nelson, where I venture to think that the expenditure of perhaps £2,000 is urgently necessary.

The following table shows the amount of registration business under the Land Transfer and the Deeds Registration Acts transacted during the last five years:—

	Year ended 31st March,				
	1928.	1929.	1930.	1931.	1932.
Instruments	139,375	165,020	176,754	144,436	98,267
Searches (Land Transfer Act only) . .	40,254	42,568	46,613	41,240	27,727
Fees, excluding fees under Compulsory Registration Act, 1924	£86,604	£85,232	£90,482	£71,230	£44,945

Fees under Compulsory Registration Act, 1924—Paid for year ended 31st March, 1932, £4,522 ; outstanding, £27,199.

C. E. NALDER,
Registrar-General of Land, and Secretary for Land and Deeds.

A.—STATEMENT OF BUSINESS TRANSACTED UNDER THE LAND TRANSFER ACT DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1932.

District.	Applications.				Transfers.				Mortgages.							
	Town and Suburban.		Country.		Town and Suburban.		Country.		Town and Suburban.		Country.					
	Number.	Value.	Area.	Number.	Value.	Area.	Number.	Value.	Area.	Number.	Value.	Area.				
													Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Auckland	13	8,805	8	311	2,806	283	12,771	3,471	1,931	2,398,192	2,603	1,372	1,377,768	2,241	570,768	1,791,869
Taranaki	2	150	..	23	..	..	1,572	401	124	42,998	417	137	187,065	519	98,703	451,757
Wellington	2	..	..	92	..	..	843	2,755	555	1,664,092	784	869	1,682,331	1,220	358,367	1,674,501
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	10	..	..	4	281	4	46,164	207	626	450,140	327	113,770	539,201
Gisborne	..	..	..	16	..	..	114	223	139	62,674	121	96	103,676	151	161,819	302,938
Nelson	3	440	..	30	16,000	472	25	394	99	133,480	212	75	143,953	238	149,915	163,453
Marlborough	..	..	..	5	..	..	..	103	78	29,118	64	66	64,257	94	117,122	152,413
Canterbury	2	20	..	44	..	..	1,079	2,255	450	1,091,124	715	512	846,320	1,053	333,474	1,120,917
Otago	13	111,345	4	44	..	..	842	1,184	256	632,364	404	399	614,774	481	225,282	322,208
Southland	..	..	..	12	..	..	381	479	255	156,065	245	548	240,863	423	131,338	267,026
Westland	..	..	..	17	..	..	1,012	139	37	39,667	62	145	60,217	60	16,401	28,500
Totals, 1931-32	35	120,760	12	604	18,806	755	19,110	11,908	4,113	5,972,578	5,035	10,986	5,771,364	6,807	2,276,959	6,814,783
Totals, 1930-31	52	155,443	492	863	123,209	4,353	38,712	18,652	6,863	10,518,760	6,741	21,040	14,262,919	11,289	3,689,511	14,203,287

District.	Number.	Discharges.	Amount.	Certificates of Title Issued (other than Certificates in Lieu of Crown Grants).		Charging-orders.	Encumbrances.	Leases.	Crown Leases.	Maps and Plans deposited.	Orders of Court.	Orders in Council.	Powers of Attorney and Revocation Orders.	Proclamations.	Searches (Ordinary).	Searches (Statute Advances).	Searches (General).	Transmission and Notices of Marriage, &c.	Trust and other Instruments deposited.	Wages Protection and Contractors Liens.	Miscellaneous.	General Fees.		Assurance Fees.		
				Compulsory Registration.	Others.																	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	3,567	2,239,771	1	403	5,091	38	25	247	405	487	183	28	137	285	9,183	128	371	1,328	..	38	5,712	12,129	11	3	..	..
Taranaki	3,690	2,913,705	..	252	1,401	..	1	253	56	53	56	10	23	42	1,334	36	114	220	..	1	815	2,094	11	0	..	..
Hawke's Bay	252	532,786	..	46	671	4	..	53	21	59	12	8	22	30	152	16	16	903	..	55	3,563	8,780	8	0	..	..
Gisborne	445	285,034	..	20	199	2	..	44	40	27	82	8	17	26	534	3	64	248	..	7	1,374	1,589	12	0	..	..
Nelson	139	190,016	..	119	468	1	..	49	61	84	..	18	19	29	722	6	54	98	..	3	299	1,356	19	6	..	..
Marlborough	2,248	1,432,853	..	121	876	8	2	8	1	8	4	6	6	9	337	1	48	71	..	1	175	438	1	0	..	..
Canterbury	1,350	694,000	..	127	509	25	6	187	24	165	5	17	72	39	4,483	35	508	880	..	5	3,421	7,019	14	6	..	..
Otago	734	419,485	..	27	199	5	3	115	12	44	1	1	9	19	1,222	22	75	250	..	6	1,632	3,898	14	0	..	..
Southland	125	56,115	..	8	284	2	..	171	96	25	1	2	5	8	212	13	34	59	..	1	456	1,791	6	0	..	..
Totals, 1931-32	13,868	9,516,148	1	1,177	6,988	299	42	1,646	885	1,243	448	177	464	545	25,523	317	1,887	4,826	..	117	18,083	40,630	1	2	..	..
Totals, 1930-31	23,140	18,759,796	13	1,608	6,206	173	66	2,041	1,080	2,060	552	313	703	809	38,056	845	2,339	5,323	4	403	21,338	63,484	9	1	..	..

B.—RETURN OF FEES RECEIVED UNDER THE LAND TRANSFER ACT FOR THE YEAR ENDED THE 31ST MARCH, 1932.

District.	General Fees.			Assurance Fees.			Compulsory Registration Fees.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	12,129	11	3	..	..	..	2,173	15	0
Taranaki	2,094	11	0	..	..	..	168	15	0
Wellington	8,730	8	0	..	..	..	630	0	0
Hawke's Bay	1,589	12	0	..	..	..	205	0	0
Gisborne	893	18	5	..	..	..	8	15	0
Nelson	1,356	19	6	..	..	..	300	0	0
Marlborough	438	1	0	..	..	..	122	10	0
Canterbury	7,019	14	6	..	..	..	141	5	0
Otago	3,898	14	0	..	..	..	678	15	0
Southland	1,791	6	0	..	..	..	73	15	0
Westland	687	5	6	..	..	..	20	0	0
Totals	40,630	1	2	..	..	..	4,522	10	0
Corresponding period, 1930-31 ..	63,484	9	1	..	..	..	5,755	0	0

C.—RETURN SHOWING THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF MONEY SECURED BY MORTGAGE UNDER THE LAND TRANSFER ACT ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1932.

District.	Amount remaining secured by Mortgage on the 31st March, 1931.	Amount secured by Mortgage during the Year ended 31st March, 1932.	Amount of Mortgage paid off during the same Period.	Amount remaining secured by Mortgage on the 31st March, 1932.
	£	£	£	£
Auckland	77,649,184	3,169,637	2,239,771	78,579,050
Taranaki	21,158,229	638,822	521,159	21,275,892
Wellington	72,931,021	3,356,832	2,913,705	73,374,148
Hawke's Bay	22,015,178	989,341	532,786	22,471,733
Gisborne	11,424,030	406,614	285,034	11,545,610
Nelson	4,126,525	307,406	231,224	4,202,707
Marlborough	4,408,210	216,670	190,016	4,434,864
Canterbury	52,633,213	1,967,237	1,432,853	53,167,597
Otago	17,922,916	936,982	694,000	18,165,898
Southland	13,839,084	507,889	419,485	13,927,488
Westland	1,385,917	88,717	56,115	1,418,519
Totals	299,493,507	12,586,147	9,516,148	302,563,506

Return showing Number and Amount of Mortgages under Land Transfer and Deeds Registry released in each District from 1st April, 1931, to 31st March, 1932.

District.	Number.	Amount. £
Auckland	4,256	2,669,765
Taranaki	719	522,159
Wellington	3,692	2,914,405
Hawke's Bay	621	532,786
Gisborne	252	285,034
Nelson	471	247,423
Marlborough	139	190,016
Canterbury	2,248	1,432,853
Otago	1,607	853,454
Southland	734	419,485
Westland	125	56,115
Totals	14,864	£10,123,495

D.—RETURN SHOWING ARREARS IN THE LAND TRANSFER DEPARTMENT ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1932.

District.	Applications awaiting Compliance with Requisitions.	Applications detained for Examination in the Survey Office.	Applications (other than those already mentioned) received during the Month and not yet passed.	Unregistered Instruments awaiting Compliance with Requisitions.	Unregistered Instruments detained in the Survey Office.	Certificates of Title due but not issued.	Applications received previous to Current Month not yet passed.
Auckland ...	24	6	2	86	47	79	...
Taranaki ...	...	...	...	13	1	5	...
Wellington ...	2	1	...	95	52	28	...
Hawke's Bay...	...	...	...	148	...	12	...
Gisborne ...	...	...	...	3	...	6	...
Nelson ...	...	...	...	8	6	12	...
Marlborough ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...
Canterbury ...	2	...	...	55	9	3	...
Otago ...	5	...	...	39	2	35	1
Southland ...	1	...	...	2	...	12	...
Westland ...	...	...	...	13	3	3	...
Totals ...	34	7	2	462	120	196	1

Other Instruments unrecorded.

District.	Transfers.	Mortgages.	Miscellaneous.
Auckland ..	1	..	3
Taranaki ..	4	7	7
Wellington ..	..	..	..
Hawke's Bay ..	63	87	109
Gisborne ..	5	4	3
Nelson ..	1	3	17
Marlborough ..	1	2	..
Canterbury ..	9	10	26
Otago ..	8	6	12
Southland ..	1	3	4
Westland ..	1	2	..
Totals ..	94	124	181

E.—RETURN SHOWING THE NUMBER OF DEEDS REMAINING UNREGISTERED ON THE 31ST MARCH, 1931; THE NUMBER RECEIVED FOR REGISTRATION AND THE NUMBER REGISTERED DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1932; ALSO THE NUMBER REMAINING ON THAT DATE, AND THE AMOUNT OF FEES COLLECTED DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

District.	Unrecorded on 31st March, 1931.	Received for Registration during the Year ended 31st March, 1932.	Recorded during the same Period.	Unrecorded on 31st March, 1932.	Fees.
Auckland ...	27	3,515	3,434	108	£ 3,038 14 0
Taranaki ...	...	21	21	...	20 16 0
Wellington ...	...	7	7	...	11 12 0
Hawke's Bay ...	...	...	...	...	...
Gisborne ...	...	...	...	...	...
Nelson ...	21	122	141	2	99 19 0
Marlborough ...	...	4	4	...	4 2 0
Canterbury ...	...	1	1	...	1 12 0
Otago ...	83	1,174	1,137	120	1,136 19 0
Southland	1 0 0
Westland
Totals ...	131	4,844	4,745	230	4,314 14 0

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