

the meantime, have been transferred to one or more persons by the original selector

Crown grants are sent to the Real Property Office, the fees of which, viz., the cost of preparation of deeds in the Lands Department, together with the Assurance Fund, are collected at the Land Office.

There are no accounts kept in the Land Office of the pastoral runs. The rentals for these are paid into, and all accounts are kept in, the Treasury. There are 6,446 runs paying a rental of £167,171 8s. 4d. a year. The colony is divided into pastoral districts, not conterminous with, and fewer in number than, the land districts; and to each district one ledger in the Treasury is allotted, in which the runs are recorded, and the annual rentals as paid. A printed list of the run-holders and rentals for the current year is made and gazetted about the month of June in each year, and the rent is payable in the following September. There seems to be no sufficient reason why, when all other accounts relating to land revenue are kept in the Land Office, the accounts of the pastoral rents only should be kept in the Treasury.

The difference between the system of conditional purchase in New South Wales and in Queensland is this: in the former, the payment of one ls. an acre per annum is taken, part of which is taken to be a payment of interest on the outstanding debt, and the balance only is used as payment of the price of the land. The result is that the period within which the whole debt will be extinguished is largely extended, and the number of selectors indebted to the Government is largely increasing year by year. In Queensland, on the other hand, there is no interest payable, the annual rental goes to extinguish the debt. Debts are paid off almost as rapidly as fresh debts are created, and the period of final payment is limited to a moderate time.

Thus, whilst in the one a class is rapidly growing up which threatens to influence, if not some day to command, the electoral roll, in the other the class of those still in debt to the Government is counterbalanced by another class, also increasing year by year, of those who have completed their payments, and who have therefore a strong interest in insisting that others shall not obtain land upon more favourable conditions than those which they have themselves been compelled to fulfil, in other words that the value of their own land shall not be depreciated.

Whatever opinions may be held on the general question of the wisdom of selling the public lands on deferred payments, it will be admitted that the Queensland system possesses an element of stability which is wanting in that of the older colony.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

The modes in which lands are disposed of in South Australia are perhaps more numerous than in any other colony. Speaking generally, the several methods may be classified as lands sold by auction, lands sold at upset price after being put up to auction and failing to find a purchaser, lands sold on deferred payment, lands leased for pastoral purposes, and rights of commonage let on yearly rental.

The general rule as to receipts is that all deposits, that is to say all first payments on land transactions, are paid to the Receiver of Land Revenue at the Land Office at Adelaide. All subsequent payments are made at the Treasury, which is kept informed by the various returns made to it by the Land Office of the payments from time to time due. All auctions are held in the Land Office at Adelaide by an officer of the department, the specific sections to be offered by sale having been previously published in the *Gazette*. Twenty per cent. of the purchase-money is payable on the fall of the hammer, and the balance within a month afterwards.

The Receiver pays his collections into the Bank daily, he operates on the account for the repayment of refunds such as are ordinarily payable out of a deposit account, and pays the balance weekly by cheque into the Treasury. The refunds do not appear in the Treasury accounts.