

*Small Grazing-runs.*—For this class of holding there seems to be an increasing demand; and it is somewhat noticeable that the average rental per acre of the land taken up during the year is 1s. 0½d., while for perpetual-lease land the average rental per acre is only 8½d. This may be accounted for, possibly, by the land being put up to competition. The average rental per acre over the whole area of small grazing-runs held at the 31st March, 1892, is 8½d., and of perpetual leases 8½d. With regard to the arrears on these runs, see remarks on “Summary of Arrears.”

*Pastoral Runs.*—The receipts from pastoral runs, £58,218 6s. 4d., have exceeded the estimate by £218 6s. 4d., coming up to within £142 1s. 6d. of last year's receipts. The average rental per acre of the land taken up during the year is 3½d., and the average rental per acre received during the year over the whole area of pastoral runs as at 31st March is 3½d. The number of runs taken up during the year was less than during the previous year by thirteen, while the area exceeded that of the previous year by 195,427 acres.

*Summary of Arrears.*—This table shows a decrease, as compared with last year, of 245 holders or selectors in arrear, of 650,506 acres, and £3,592 in amount of arrears, and this in face of the fact that the number of holdings on the books of the department has largely increased, as will be seen on reference to the return of the number of selectors, Table S. Omitting payments for the current half-year—namely, those due in the case of deferred payments, perpetual lease, and agricultural lease on the 1st January, and in the case of small grazing and pastoral runs on the 1st March—the total amount of arrears does not exceed £3,375, and the number of selectors or holders in arrear 212. Thus the arrears of the two principal classes of settlement—viz., deferred payment and perpetual lease—would stand as follows: Deferred payment, thirty-eight selectors, owing £270 10s. 3d.; perpetual lease, forty selectors, owing £407 11s. 9d. I pointed out in forwarding the quarterly returns that the reason for the comparatively large amount of arrears in respect of agricultural leases was that the holders had been keeping back their payments pending the passing of a Revaluation Act to apply to their holdings; and, in the case of small grazing-runs, that the lessees do not consider themselves bound to pay before the sixty days mentioned in section 216 of “The Land Act, 1885,” have elapsed.

*Number of Selectors on the Books.*—This return shows a total number of the classes therein mentioned of 1,542 in respect of Crown lands, and fifty-three of endowment lands; but, beyond that, there are 392 pastoral runs (Crown lands) and five endowment, besides, approximately, 180 holders of coal, mineral, and miscellaneous leases and licenses: making a grand total of 2,170 on the books of the office, an increase of 164 for the year. I need scarcely add that the constantly-increasing number of selectors on the books materially adds to the clerical work of the department.

It will be found, I think, that the results of the year's transactions amply justify the remarks I made last year to the effect that the whole of the land then ready for notification would be taken up, and that the previous year's transactions were limited only by the quantity of land of suitable quality available. With reference to revaluations of those in hand at the date of last year's report, there have been approved during the year—of Crown lands, forty-nine holdings, with an area of 12,666 acres, and a decrease in capital value of £5,038 4s. 10d.; and of endowment lands, one holding of 214 acres, and decrease in value of £160 10s. There still remain about twenty holdings to be approved, with an aggregate acreage of 5,000 acres, and decrease of £2,000. For several years past I have represented in my annual reports the inadequacy of the Ranger's staff for the proper inspection of the many and fast-increasing number of holdings on settlement conditions; and during the past year that fact has become so abundantly self-evident that it is in every respect satisfactory that I am now able to record the recent appointment of an Assistant Ranger to remedy the defect hitherto pointed out. During the year I have had books prepared containing details of all holdings on settlement conditions, in order that the Rangers may systematically inspect the various holdings, and with better method and greater facility record the results of their inspections. These books, which have taken a good deal of trouble to prepare, will, I believe, be found extremely useful both to the Rangers and the department; and I am glad to be able to state from the particulars already entered in them, and from the Rangers' reports generally, that the selectors are, with few exceptions, complying satisfactorily with the conditions under which their respective allotments are held.

Of transfers during the year there have been—of perpetual leases, 40; deferred payments, 12; village homestead special settlements, 6; small grazing-runs, 10; pastoral and miscellaneous licenses, 43: total, 111.

*The Land Office Work.*—It is impossible to define on paper the amount of work involved in the administration of Crown lands during a single year; nevertheless the under-mentioned approximate enumeration of the past year's transactions in this district—to say nothing of the work thereby implied in the manifold cash-books, ledger accounts, and registers of the various systems of tenure, local bodies and endowment accounts—may serve as affording some little idea of its scope and magnitude: Applications received, 1,452, dealing with 438 sections of land; letters—inward 4,015, outward 4,167—total, 8,182; circulars and notices sent out, 1,813; meetings of Land Board, 56; numbered entries in minutes of Land Board, 906, dealing with 1,420 cases; bills and posters sent through post, 7,184; money receipts issued, 8,578; goldfields receipts, miners' rights, certificates, &c. (Hindon), 269; cases of arrears reported to Land Board, 470; transfers of leases and licenses, 111; leases prepared in triplicate 138, leases and licenses prepared in duplicate 85—total, 584 copies; certificates of title and Crown grants, 109; returns of various kinds, periodical and special, 150.

There were also four auction sales during the year, at which 40 pastoral licenses, 46 small-grazing-run leases, and numerous rural and town sections were offered and disposed of. Further, there were numerous entries and indorsements in connection with transfers, surrenders, forfeitures, capitalisations, revaluations, and other matters not included in the foregoing list. And the fact must not be overlooked that, besides the ordinary clerical work of the office, there is necessarily a