

6,721 applications received for the land open for selection, of which 148 only were successful at ballot. This, of course, includes the applications for the Ardgowan Estate, reference to which was made in last year's report.

Transfers, Surrenders, and Forfeitures.—The year's transactions also include eighty-eight transfers, sixty-five surrenders, and fifty forfeitures, as tabulated in the subjoined return, being twenty-nine transfers less, one hundred and twenty surrenders and exchanges less, and twelve forfeitures more than during the preceding year:—

SUMMARY of TRANSFERS, SURRENDERS, and FORFEITURES during the Year 1896-97.

Tenure.	Transfers.		Surrenders (including Exchanges).		Forfeitures.		Totals.	
	Num- ber.	Area.	Num- ber.	Area.	Num- ber.	Area.	Num- ber.	Area.
		A. R. P.		A. R. P.		A. R. P.		A. R. P.
Deferred payments ..	10	2,257 1 29	4	810 3 28	..	..	14	3,068 1 17
Perpetual lease ..	30	3,897 2 8	28	7,784 1 12	9	2,307 2 8	67	13,989 1 28
Occupation with right of purchase	3	798 1 37	2	264 3 8	8	1,398 3 32	13	2,462 0 37
Lease in perpetuity ..	14	2,573 2 33	3	603 3 14	13	3,042 2 8	30	6,220 0 15
Land for settlements ..	2	245 1 34	2	157 1 29	3	358 0 34	7	761 0 17
Village settlement, lease in perpetuity	1	9 3 20	1	12 3 30	6	67 0 23	8	89 3 33
Village - homestead special settlement	5	116 2 7	1	21 3 28	5	66 2 25	11	205 0 20
Farm-homestead association	1	205 1 0	..	..	..	..	1	205 1 0
Improved-farm settlements ..	..	..	1	99 0 8	..	..	1	99 0 8
Small grazing-runs ..	8	12,048 1 7	11	39,040 0 20	2	790 3 0	21	51,879 0 27
Pastoral licenses ..	7	157,770 0 0	10	62,569 0 0	1	340 0 0	18	220,679 0 0
Occupation leases ..	2	50 0 0	..	..	..	..	2	50 0 0
Miscellaneous ..	5	48 0 29	2	9 2 0	3	1,111 3 23	10	1,169 2 12
	88	180,020 3 4	65	111,373 3 17	50	9,483 2 33	203	300,878 1 14

Mining Districts Land Occupation Act.—The applications for leases under this Act have been less numerous than previously. Eighteen leases, over an aggregate area of 877 acres 3 roods 30 perches, have been granted during the year, after careful inquiry in each instance to insure that mining interests were not injuriously affected on the one hand, and that no unnecessary injury was inflicted on pastoral tenants on the other. It is not expected that the transactions in this class of tenure will increase in number, but the system will doubtless continue to afford a means of small holdings being acquired by miners and others where no lands are available under the ordinary methods of selection.

Arrears of Rent.—The arrears of rent due by Crown tenants amounted on the 31st March to £2,160 19s. 6d., owing by 184 tenants, holding 77,089 acres 3 roods 36 perches, including land for settlements, which I think must be considered remarkably small, and an evidence of the improved position of many of our settlers, especially in view of the fact that there are now 2,718 Crown tenants on the books of the department, in addition to fifty-six holders of endowment lands. The arrears at the date of last year's report amounted to £3,614 0s. 8d., owing by 255 selectors, holding 169,934 acres 2 roods 22 perches. Thus the present arrears are less in amount by £1,453 1s. 2d., the selectors in arrear by seventy-one in number, and the area represented by those in arrear by 92,844 acres 2 roods 26 perches.

Pastoral Tenants' Relief Act.—I stated in my last report that there were still a few small cases to be dealt with under this Act. There have been, as shown below, fifteen of such cases, in which the estimated total loss of stock was £592 14s., and in which remissions of rent to the extent of £293 9s. 8d. were granted by way of relief.

"THE PASTORAL TENANTS' RELIEF ACT, 1895."—Leases dealt with between 1st April, 1896, and 1st April, 1897.

Tenure.	Number of Holdings.	Area.	Estimate of Net Loss of Stock.	Reduction allowed in Annual Rents.	Remission of Rent allowed.	Remission of Sheep-tax.	Approximate Cash Value of Relief.
		A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Pastoral runs ..	2	10,150 0 0	17 0 0	..	7 15 0	..	7 15 0
Small grazing-runs	6	19,965 0 0	383 14 0	..	200 19 4	..	200 19 4
Perpetual leases ..	1	232 2 19	*	*	*	*	..
Leases in perpetuity	6	2,650 1 19	192 0 0	..	84 15 4	..	84 15 4
Totals ..	15	32,997 3 38	592 14 0	..	293 9 8	..	293 9 8

* Taken into consideration with lease-in-perpetuity holding.

Settlement Conditions and Rangers' Reports.—Each of the Crown Lands Rangers has been very fully occupied during the year in the work of general inspection, valuing lands to be reopened after surrender or forfeiture or expiry of title, and reporting specially on the many miscellaneous applications and matters that are constantly requiring their attention. I append a general report