

REPORT OF THE SURVEYOR-GENERAL TO THE MINISTER OF LANDS.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 6th June, 1898.

In compliance with section 39 (2) of "The Land for Settlements Act, 1894," I have the honour to report as follows on "the condition and settlement" of the lands acquired under the above Act and its amendments, and which have been handed over to this department to deal with.

The following table shows those new estates which were handed over and dealt with during the twelve months ended the 31st March last, whilst the accompanying table shows, in addition to these, particulars respecting the whole of the estates that have been offered for selection, from the commencement in 1894.

ESTATES OFFERED for SELECTION during the TWELVE MONTHS ending 31st March, 1898.

Land District and Name of Estate.	Area of Estate.			Number of Selections.	Area unselected on 31st March, 1898.			Annual Rental.		
	A.	R.	P.		A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
Auckland—										
Okauia	5,920	0	0	2	3,463	2	0	19	16	0
Hawke's Bay—										
Pouparae	337	3	4	9	...			405	8	0
Tomoana	111	3	38	13	...			135	2	0
Wellington—										
Paparangi	322	3	32	19	85	3	11	194	17	2
Canterbury—										
Horsley Down	3,982	3	35	25	...			1,072	3	0
Albury	19,539	1	24	76	114	1	0	3,447	4	7
Rural Section 36469, Cannington (R.S. 1862)	20	0	0	1	...			3	7	4
Marawiti	2,028	2	33	13	...			748	15	10
Hekeao	2,254	2	11	9	40	0	0	614	2	0
Otago—										
Makareao Extension	2,535	3	0	4	...			296	15	4
Momona	218	2	36	15	...			210	3	0
Tokarahi	11,051	2	9	78	19	3	7	4,127	17	6
Southland—										
Otahu	6,044	0	29	3	4,525	3	4	75	14	10
Beaumont	4,322	3	20	2	3,682	1	30	129	1	4
Total	58,691	1	31	269	11,931	2	12	£11,480	7	11

The above figures show the results, so far as those estates are concerned which were thrown open for selection during the year; but, in addition to the figures given, several selections were made in the estates previously acquired, for details of which reference should be made to the accompanying table. The forfeitures for non-compliance with conditions amounted to eighty-seven, but a considerable number of these were reselected by fresh settlers. The arrears of rent on the 31st March amounted to £1,363 3s., which is largely owing to the unprecedentedly dry season that has been experienced, in the Middle Island more particularly. This sum was owing by fifty-seven selectors.

In summarising the reports of the Commissioners on the improvements made, and on the compliance with the conditions of the leases (which are given at length in the annual Report on Lands and Survey), the conclusion must be drawn that a large measure of success has attended the operations of the Land for Settlements Acts so far. On the 31st March last there were 2,252 persons residing on the properties; the houses number 653, whilst the improvements effected amounted to £94,789.

Of the 58,697 acres offered for selection during the year, the considerable amount of 11,931 acres remained unselected on the 31st March last, of which 11,670 acres are comprised in three estates: Okauia in Auckland, Otahu and Beaumont in Southland. With regard to these, the Commissioner at Auckland anticipates that most of Okauia will be selected in the spring; whilst the Commissioner for Southland reports that many inquiries are made as to the two latter, and he is of opinion that most of the land will be taken up during the year.

The total area within the whole of the estates acquired (154,623 acres) that remained unlet on the 31st March was 15,314 acres.

The total cost of the estates purchased to the 31st March is	...	£668,531
Roads, surveys, administration, and preliminary expenses	...	37,197
		<u>£705,728</u>
The lands disposed of are let at an annual rental of	...	£33,935
The miscellaneous leases during the year	...	357
The lands unlet (exclusive of roads and reserves) are valued at a rental of	...	1,718
		<u>£36,010</u>