

The principal blocks of Crown lands thrown open for disposal and selection during the year are as follows :—

Date.	Name of Block.	District.	Area offered.	Number of Sections selected.	Area disposed of up to 31st March, 1898.
<i>Surveyed.</i>					
Feb. 28, 1898 ...	Paparangi ...	Belmont ...	310	19	212
<i>Unsurveyed.</i>					
March 23, 1898...	Awarua 2c No. 1	{ Pukeokahu ... Ohinewairua }	10,900	14	6,647
March 23, 1898...	Awarua 4c No. 2	{ Tiriraukawa Hautapu ... }	5,788	4	918
Totals ...			16,998	37	7,777

A large number of sections in the Wanganui United East and West, Clifton No. 1, Waimarino, Hunterville Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Sommerville, Palmerston North Knights of Labour, Marton Nos. 1 and 2, Salisbury and Delaware, Onslow, Hall, Palmerston North Forest Reserve, Pohangina and Umutoi, Rising Sun, Masterton Reform, Pahiatua Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, Christchurch, Woodville and Kaikoura, Waiwera, Awarua, and Rewa Blocks have been reopened for selection, comprising an area of about 29,047 acres, of which about 17,857 acres were selected during the year. A sale of twenty-four town and village sections in Pongaroa and Rakaunui took place, resulting in seventeen being sold. One lot of totara timber, of an area of 160 acres, in the Eketahuna Forest Reserve, was offered by auction, and realised £2,560. The leases of ninety-one sections in the Native township of Pipiriki were offered by auction and tender, sixty-four of which have been taken up. The Eketahuna Native Reserve, comprising an area of 898 acres, and subdivided into two sections, was offered and disposed of for cash, at the request of the Native owners.

Pipiriki: As stated in my last annual report, the Government negotiated with the Native owners, and concluded the necessary arrangements for the opening of this township in terms of "The Native Townships Act, 1895." The township was thrown open at public auction for lease on the 27th July last, when a very satisfactory sale was effected; the balance of the sections have since been reopened for selection. It is anticipated that with the progress of settlement in the adjacent country, and the additional advantage of a splendid steam-service connecting the township and Wanganui, this place will become one of some importance, particularly as an attractive and healthful resort for tourists and holiday-makers. I may mention that the Township of Tokaanu, which was also acquired through the instrumentality of the Surveyor-General, will be opened in a similar manner on the 17th June, 1898, with the object of affording business people and health-seekers an opportunity of obtaining business and residential sites in the vicinity of the most important thermal-springs locality in the Wellington District, and the best centre for tourists and others who wish to visit the volcanic region of Tongariro and Ruapehu.

The total number of formal applications for land received and dealt with during the year is as follows :—

System.	Number of Applications received.	Number approved.
Cash ...	7	3
Occupation with right of purchase ...	315	97
Lease in perpetuity ...	154	45
Lands for settlement, lease in perpetuity ...	39	19
Village-homestead special settlements ...	1	1
Village homestead, lease in perpetuity ...	27	25
Perpetual lease ...	2	2
Small grazing-run ...	11	1
Improved farms ...	67	67
Miscellaneous leases ...	16	16
Total ...	639	276

On the 31st March, 1898, the lands that were open for disposal comprised 45,589 acres of surveyed and 71,123 acres of unsurveyed lands, making a total open of 116,712 acres. The area of Crown lands, exclusive of gazetted and non-gazetted forest reserves, and including lands open for selection, is approximately 845,000 acres, the bulk of which, except the very high-lying country, is under forest.