

The table shows in a dramatic fashion the periods of land settlement in the Dominion. Prior to 1890 New Zealand had been a paradise for the land speculator; most of the readily accessible fertile land had already been freeholded and the possibility of extended settlement rather retarded.

The aggressive land policy of the early "nineties," coming at a time when the economic depression was lifting, led to a very great increase in the land opened up. By far the largest area so occupied was one form or another of Crown leasehold. This development continued for some fifteen to twenty years. In the twenty years from 1891 to 1911 the area of occupied land had increased from 19,000,000 acres (approximately) to 40,000,000 acres (approximately), an increase of 111 per cent. To put the same facts in another way, in 1891, 30·6 per cent. of the total area of New Zealand had been occupied, while in 1911, 63·5 per cent. was occupied (these figures are not absolutely correct as they omit certain urban lands, but they give some indication of the trends).

The second fact that emerges from the table is the further, but smaller, rise between 1911 and 1921, this being probably due to another impetus given to land settlement after the last war. The increase over the period, however, was only 3,000,000 acres, the bulk of which was probably due to immediate post-war expansion and to the development of areas for returned soldiers. Since 1920 there has been little change in the occupied area, the tendency over the past few years being in a slightly downward direction. In 1944, 64·7 per cent. of the total land of the Dominion could be classified as occupied. No adequate statistics are available of these details, but land in boroughs and holdings of less than 1 acre in independent town districts, dependent town districts, road districts, and counties would not account, at the most, for more than 1,000,000 acres. Land unfit for settlement (including rivers, lakes, roads, &c.) amounts to 5,000,000 acres (approximately). Native land held on the communal system, but excluding areas alienated by sale to Europeans, totals about 4,000,000 acres. Crown land available for future disposal (but not necessarily fit for settlement) approximates 2,000,000 acres. The total of these figures of land not included in occupied land is 12,000,000 acres. The balance of land required to make up the total area of New Zealand is chiefly in the nature of large public reserves which are not classified as occupied, and total approximately 11,000,000 acres.

To summarize, the following table shows a very broad view of the distribution of land in the Dominion :—

Table No. 68.—Table showing Distribution of Available Land in the Dominion in 1943-44

	Acres (Millions).
Occupied	43
In boroughs, and holdings under 1 acre	1
Unfit for settlement	5
Native land under communal system	4
Reserves, &c.	11
Crown land available for disposal	2
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The above discussion is relevant to the question of the possibility of a further development of land settlement in New Zealand. The Lands and Survey Department estimate that there are 214,290 acres of land in developmental blocks, of which 35,000 acres is unsuitable for development, 69,000 acres capable of development but totally undeveloped, leaving 100,000 acres capable of being farmed at the moment, of which 25,000 acres is required for bases for future development—that is, 75,000 acres is available for early settlement (subject always to supplies of fertilizers and other materials). The main areas of undeveloped land capable of development are in the Auckland Province and in the hinterland of Taranaki and Wellington. An estimate