

(g.) *Mining Districts Land Occupation Act*.—Under this Act twenty-three leases have been granted during the year, having an area of 528 acres, as against twelve leases the previous year with an area of 277 acres, the total area now held being 4,968 acres by 136 selectors at an annual rental of £189 12s. 9d., as against 4,502 acres by 116 selectors at an annual rental of £174 13s. 9d. on the 31st March, 1901. The dealing with applications under this Act involves a considerable amount of careful inquiry and investigation before coming to a final decision, in order to avoid the clashing of pastoral, mining, and other interests.

(h.) *Village Settlements*.—On comparing this year's figures with last it will be seen that there is a still further falling-off of holdings under this head, the reasons being, I am convinced, those mentioned in my last report. Only six selections have been made, with an area of 66 acres and 25 perches, there being a decrease by purchases, forfeitures, and surrenders of twenty-one, over an area of 364 acres, leaving at the 31st March 261 holdings, with an area of 4,127 acres, at an annual rental of £670 4s. 4d., divided as follows: Ordinary Crown lands, 232 holders and 3,734 acres; rental, £371 3s. 10d. Land for settlements, twenty-nine holders, 393 acres; annual rental, £299 0s. 6d. The total number, area, and rental at the 31st March, 1901, were: Number, 276; area, 4,425 acres; rental, £706 15s., land for settlements being then the same as at present. There has thus been a diminution during the year of fifteen selectors, 298 acres, and £36 10s. 8d. in annual rental. The relative figures as regards the value of improvements on the land are, at the 31st March last year: Ordinary Crown lands, £12,500; land for settlements, £1,959; total, £14,459. At the 31st March this year: Ordinary Crown lands, £11,261; land for settlements, £2,072; total, £13,333.

(i.) *Small Grazing-runs*.—The area taken up under this system during the year was 11,801 acres, in five holdings, one of which was a renewal of an expired lease over an area of 5,047 acres. No new country has been proclaimed as small grazing-runs, and it is unlikely that there will be any so proclaimed during the current year, unless the subdivision of the two Highfield Runs before referred to should be completed in time to offer for disposal before the 31st March, 1903. There having been no surrenders accepted or any forfeitures during the year, the total number now held, exclusive of endowments, is 262 with an area of 531,292 acres at a yearly rental of £12,671 1s. 6d., the average per acre being 5·72d., as against 258 selectors with an area of 523,860 acres at an annual rent of £12,571 16s. 6d., average per acre 5·75d., on the 31st March, 1901. Included in the gross area here given is the area held under land for settlements—viz., 3,667 acres, in three holdings, at £401 18s. 10d. per annum; average per acre, 2s. 2·3d. The net average per acre of ordinary Crown lands is 5·58d. In addition, there are ten small-grazing-run leases of endowment lands, with an area of 14,511 acres, at an annual rental of £333 6s. 6d. The revenue collected under this head during the year was: Ordinary Crown lands, £11,516 8s. 2d.; land for settlements, £401 18s. 10d.; endowments, £278 4s. 1d.; gross total, £12,197 11s. 1d.; the gross total for the previous year being £12,319 2s. 11d., comprising ordinary Crown lands, £11,511 7s. 8d.; land for settlements, £443 6s. 10d.; endowments, £364 8s. 5d. I still think it would be advisable to make provision for reduction or rebate of rent in cases where, in the mining district, claims and other mining privileges are granted on small grazing-runs, many of which are of small area, as there can be no doubt that the granting of such privileges must materially affect the value and working of the runs.

(j.) *Pastoral Runs*.—By runs taken up during the year there has been an increase of nineteen, with an area of 773,231 acres, at an annual rental of £905 1s. 6d., but a decrease by forfeitures, expiries, and surrender of twenty-two in number and 277,746 acres in area; the number now current being 239, area 4,509,276 acres, annual rental £29,435 1s. 8d., as against 242 in number, 4,413,792 acres in area, and £29,170 18s. 8d. in rental; so that, while the number is less by three, the total area held and annual rental are greater by 95,484 acres and £264 3s. respectively. This is inclusive of two pastoral licenses under the Land for Settlements Act over an area of 954 acres, at a rental of £121 13s. per annum, but exclusive of endowment lands, of which there are two runs, with an area of 25,590 acres, at a rental of £460 10s. The average rental per acre of the ordinary Crown lands is 1·56d., a fraction less than last year, when it was 1·58d. per acre. The receipts for the year were: Ordinary Crown lands, £28,810 11s. 3d.; land for settlements, £60 16s. 6d.; endowments, £460 10s.; total, £29,331 17s. 9d.

(k.) *Miscellaneous Licenses*.—A large number of licenses are still being issued under the 116th section of "The Land Act, 1892," over unoccupied Crown lands and reserves, by means of which the Government is relieved of considerable expense for rabbiting, &c., and the operation of the section continues to be satisfactory to both settler and State. The total number of miscellaneous licenses and leases issued during the year was not quite so large as during the previous year, but the total number now held, including land for settlements, has increased from 565, over an area of 77,632 acres, to 589, with an area of 77,789 acres, the annual rental being £1,112 3s. 11d. as against £1,187 1s. 5d. The gross receipts were, including land for settlements and endowments, £1,748 6s. 11d.

Forfeitures and Surrenders.—The table of forfeitures and surrenders shows by comparison a much less number than the average of the last four years, the totals for which are as follow:—

		Number.	Area.
1898-1899	...	166	307,131 acres.
1899-1900	...	124	39,493 "
1900-1	...	85	170,545 "
1901-2	...	45	26,406 "

The large variation in area during the year 1900-1 is accounted for by the inclusion of pastoral lands. The transactions in the way of surrenders for the purpose of obtaining reduced capital values have become considerably diminished, and, while the selections have also been less, so also have forfeitures and surrenders, and this to a certain extent has equalised the number of holders at present in occupation.