

THE SEVERAL SYSTEMS OF TENURE.

Table 5 (Return of Crown Lands sold for Cash) shows the total number of purchasers to have been less by 10, the area less by 1,849 acres, and the consideration less by £1,321 11s. 9d. than the previous year, there being a smaller number of purchasers under the optional system and fewer conversions into freehold.

The deferred-payment holdings have been reduced from 31 at the 31st March, 1905, to 19 on the 31st March last; and the area held from 8,121 acres to 6,189 acres; so that in the course of a year or two the holdings under this system will become nil.

Perpetual-lease holdings also have been further reduced by 13 in number, 3,337 acres in area, and £115 16s. annual rental, the number now being 206, area 38,783 acres, and the annual rental £1,452 14s. 4d.

The selections under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase system have increased by 10, there now being 249, over an area of 43,000 acres, at an annual rental of £1,197 13s. 2d. This, of course, is a very small increase for a current tenure, but it must be borne in mind that the area opened during the year under the optional system has been very small.

Lease-in-perpetuity selections, apart from land for settlements, have only been 26 in number and 4,773 acres in area, as against 72 selections and 13,221 acres respectively. In addition, two have been exchanged from perpetual lease. There are now 775 holdings, over an area of 189,095 acres, at an annual rental of £5,563 5s. 4d. These, added to the ordinary lease in perpetuity under the Land for Settlements Act, make a total of 1,204, with 268,301 acres, at £29,479 10s. 4d. per annum, being a total increase under this head of 65 tenants, 25,064 acres, and £4,116 16s. annual rental.

Agricultural leases remain about the same, while occupation leases under the Mining Districts Land Occupation Act have but slightly increased, there having been a number of forfeitures and surrenders of the latter during the year. Village settlements, too, have altered but little, the only difference being an increase of four village-homestead allotments selected under lease in perpetuity, with an area of 56 acres, at £3 8s. annual rental.

In small grazing-runs there has been no increase, with the exception of one under the Land for Settlements Act in the Greenfield Settlement. The survey of the 25,000 acres before referred to, which it was thought probable would have been brought into the market during the year, was not completed in time, but the several areas into which the block has been cut up will now be offered at an early date.

A number of these runs are about to fall in, and renewals have been offered to the present lessees in terms of the Land Act. The issue of the new leases in these cases will constitute some of the present year's transactions. All things considered, the tenants under this system are doing fairly well, the conditions of the leases being complied with in a generally satisfactory manner.

In respect of pastoral licenses, the transactions during the year and the area at present held are practically the same as the previous year. The annual rental, however, at which these lands are held is gradually diminishing, as evidenced by the fact that, while the area at the 31st March last is only some 4,000 acres less than at the 31st March, 1905, the annual rental is less by £508. The cause of this has been frequently adverted to—namely, the cutting-off of the low-lying country, and the lessening of the carrying-capacity through the depredations of rabbits and the spread of noxious weeds. The following comparative table of the ordinary Crown lands held under pastoral license during the last five years may be of interest, as showing the gradual falling-off of revenue under this tenure :—

Year.					Number.	Area.	Annual Rental.		
						Acres.	£	s.	d.
1901-2	...	...	...	...	237	4,508,322	29,313	8	8
1902-3	...	...	...	...	237	4,519,101	28,832	4	2
1903-4	...	...	...	...	226	4,385,344	27,876	15	10
1904-5	...	...	...	...	213	4,324,622	27,427	14	6
1905-6	...	...	...	...	216	4,320,008	26,919	14	4

INSPECTIONS AND RANGERS' REPORTS.

The results of the inspections by the Rangers, showing as they do so large an excess of improvements effected over actual requirements, are very satisfactory, and must be taken as conclusive evidence of steady and substantial progress. The excess of improvements over statutory requirements in respect of the total area inspected amounts to £84,457. With regard to several of the defaulters, attention is again directed to the fact that these are principally those who hold inferior land upon which the expenditure necessary to cover the required amount of improvements is not warranted. The Rangers' general reports as to settlement will be referred to under the next heading.

PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

On every hand there are unmistakable indications of satisfactory progress of settlement throughout the district as a whole. It must, however, be noticed that such progress varies in different portions of the district, and the Rangers' general notes serve to illustrate this fact, and show the relative position and progress in the three divisions into which for convenience of reference, the district has been