

1911.
NEW ZEALAND.

THE LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in compliance with Section 85 of the Land for Settlements Act, 1908.

The LAND PURCHASE INSPECTOR to the Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD, Bart., Minister of Lands.

Land for Settlements.

SIR, —

Wellington, 1st July, 1911.

I have the honour to submit the report of the Department for the year ending 31st March, 1911.

During the period there were eighty-one properties (containing 350,708 acres) offered, of which fourteen (containing 14,399 acres) were purchased, and nearly all have been taken delivery of and settled.

The actual expenditure was £158,796, making a total of £5,566,588 since the Act came into operation in 1892, for the purchase of estates containing 1,252,495 acres.

By far the largest number of the properties offered were from Canterbury, and, although at prices considered high, still not so excessive as those demanded further north. The Board, however, did not feel justified in recommending any great area for purchase, as the margin between the purchasing and letting value was not considered sufficient to warrant the State accepting the responsibility of placing settlers upon the land.

One important transaction the Board was pleased to conclude was the exchange of some 2,500 acres of freehold lands belonging to the trustees of the late Mr. J. B. Acland, Mount Peel Station, Canterbury, for Crown lands adjoining the balance of their freehold. These freeholds were early selections, and "gridironed" through the Crown leaseholds; therefore it was very important they should be secured. In addition, the trustees are to surrender in February next some 50,000 acres of Crown lands of which they hold the lease until 1917, and for which they are to receive valuation for improvements in the shape of Crown lands and an extended lease for twenty-one years of some 35,100 acres, the greater proportion of which is summer country only. The area surrendered with freeholds will provide a considerable number of excellent small runs.

Since the close of the year the Waihao Downs property, renamed the "Douglas" Settlement, has been satisfactorily disposed of.

The purchase of the Sherwood Downs Estate, near Fairlie, and the Conical Hills Estate, near Tapanui, has also been concluded. The former consists of 11,842 acres of freehold, nearly all agricultural, and the lease of 45,000 acres of Crown lands adjoining. The latter contains 10,518 acres, the largest proportion being good agricultural land. Delivery of both properties will be in February and March next. These estates will provide room for a considerable number of settlers, and should be largely competed for.

It is evident that there is an unsatisfied demand for land, and every endeavour is being made to meet such; but at the same time the interests of the Dominion, as well as of the settlers, have to be considered.