

ANNUAL REPORT.

The UNDER-SECRETARY FOR LANDS to the HON. the MINISTER OF LANDS.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 2nd June, 1913.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report of the Department for the year ended 31st March, 1913.

I have, &c.,

JOHN STRAUCHON,

The Hon. W. F. Massey, Minister of Lands.

Under-Secretary for Lands.

REPORT OF DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY, 1912-13.

In submitting my annual report upon the work of the Department during the past year I desire first to refer to the Land Laws Amendment Act passed last session. This Act made important changes in our land law in several directions, the principal being—

- (a.) Permitting a tenant holding a lease-in-perpetuity section, upon ordinary Crown lands, to acquire the freehold;
- (b.) Granting a similar privilege to the holder of a renewable lease upon land-for-settlements lands;
- (c.) Enacting that all moneys accruing from the sale of any Crown lands shall be paid into the Land for Settlements Account, and not into the Consolidated Fund as has been the practice hitherto;
- (d.) Enabling a tenant who is unable from some sufficient cause to pay his rent to obtain a postponement upon certain conditions;
- (e.) Providing for the settlement of land in kauri-gum districts.

Few transactions under the amending Act are recorded in the tables attached to this report, as more than seven months of the financial year had passed when the Act became law.

The necessary regulations under the Act in regard to the purchase of lease-in-perpetuity holdings were gazetted on the 20th March last, and those dealing with land-for-settlement renewable-lease holdings on the 1st May last.

The regulations fixing the conditions in respect of the settlement of lands in kauri-gum districts appeared in the *Gazette* on the 20th March last.

The provision for moneys received from the sale of lands being paid into the Land for Settlements Account did not affect last year's receipts in any way, as the section of the Act only came into operation at the beginning of the current year. It has been estimated that the amount that will be received from the sale of lands and paid into the Land for Settlements Account this year will reduce the moneys credited to territorial revenue by £79,000.

The transactions that were completed before the close of the year in regard to freeholds on ordinary Crown land amounted to seventy-nine purchasers, with an area of 11,633 acres 1 rood 37 perches. In addition to this there were six tenants who changed to deferred-payment conditions, the area being 154 acres 2 roods 23 perches.

A considerable number of applications for the purchase of the fee-simple were received from renewable-lease tenants of land-for-settlement holdings, but no transactions were completed up to the 31st March, 1913.