

Conversions of Leases in Perpetuity into Freeholds under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912.

Since the passing of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912, in November last, sixty-six selectors have given notice under Part II of the Act of intention to purchase the freeholds of the lands comprised in their leases, the total area affected being 9,052 acres 1 rood 32 perches, and the total price, £10,462 15s. 1d. Of these, twenty-three holdings, comprising an area of 3,963 acres 2 roods 31 perches, have actually been made freehold, at a total price of £3,385 0s. 4d. Of those who have given notice, five elected to purchase by deferred payments and sixty-one for cash. Of the sixty-six applications received, forty-two of them are to purchase small areas ranging from 1 rood to 26 acres.

Conversions to Freehold of Renewable Leases taken up under the Land for Settlements Act, 1908, in terms of Section 59 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912.

Only one selector has given notice of his intention to purchase the freehold of his holding. He holds two leases, comprising 17 acres 3 roods 13 perches. The present price is the same as the original valuation—viz., £135. Selector has elected to purchase by deferred payments, but he has not yet paid his first instalment.

LAND BOARD MEETINGS.

During the year twelve ordinary and four special meetings of the Land Board were held. The special meetings were held in connection with opening of new blocks. Five of the ordinary meetings extended over two days, on account of the large number of matters coming up for discussion.

REBATES OF RENT.

For prompt payment of rent, rebates amounting to £2,896 1s. 4d. were granted to 2,344 tenants on ordinary Crown lands, £1,584 6s. 7d. to 347 tenants on settlement lands, and £70 10s. 3d. to twenty-eight tenants on national-endowment lands.

ARREARS OF RENTAL.

On ordinary Crown lands 129 tenants were £3,846 8s. 5d. in arrear with their rent, exclusive of the current half-yearly instalment. Including the current half-yearly instalment, the arrears under this heading were £6,922 17s. 10d. due by 328 tenants.

On land-for-settlements estates, excluding current instalment, sixteen tenants were £339 10s. 6d. in arrear. Including current instalment, thirty tenants owed arrears amounting to £854 7s. 7d.

On national-endowment areas, arrears amounted to £256 0s. 9d. due by three tenants, exclusive of current instalment; and £492 9s. 2d. due by eleven tenants, inclusive of current instalment.

On education endowments twenty-two settlers were £224 2s. 4d. in arrear with two or more payments, while, including the current instalment, £863 12s. 10d. was owing by eighty-two tenants.

The gross arrears—viz., £9,133 7s. 5d.—include an amount of £3,850 16s. owing by settlers in the Kaitieke and Retaruke districts, who have not been pressed for payment.

OFFICE OF THE RECEIVER OF LAND REVENUE.

In the Receiver's office, 8,070 ordinary revenue receipts and ninety-three provisional titles were issued, governing a gross revenue of £111,098 11s. 7d. In the Deposit Account, 879 receipts, for the sum of £16,080 6s. 9d., and 164 cheques, representing 1,416 disbursements, were issued. The sum of £5,967 18s. 4d. was paid into the Local Bodies' Deposit Account, and the sum of £10,224 19s. 10d. was paid to twenty-six local bodies.

CLERICAL.

The number of letters received during the year was 18,902, and the number despatched was 39,413. These latter comprise letters, telegrams, circulars, plans, lithos, rent notices, &c. The total correspondence thus dealt with was 58,315. There were 821 cheques covering 742 vouchers drawn on Imprest Account for the total sum of £8,633 0s. 11d. Other accounts dealt with covered 614 vouchers for £27,855 17s. 3d., and there were twelve requisitions for imprest money, representing £8,650 made during the year.

CHANGES IN CLERICAL STAFF.

After forty years' continuous service in this office, Mr. G. R. N. Wright, Chief Clerk and Secretary to the Land Board, elected to retire on superannuation last September. The retirement of such an experienced and capable officer was naturally a great loss to the Department and to me, who had only recently been appointed Commissioner here. He carries with him into his retirement the well-earned esteem and good wishes of all his fellow-officers. His place was taken by Mr. H. M. Bannister, late Chief Clerk and Secretary to the Land Board of the Taranaki District, who is also a very experienced officer.

In conclusion, I have much pleasure in advising you of the efficient and cheerful co-operation I have received from all the officers since my transfer to this district.

T. N. BRODRICK,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.