

LAND REVENUE.

The gross land revenue received during the year amounted to £1,066,496, collected under the following headings :—

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Cash sales and purchase of freeholds	200,608
Deferred-payment instalments	11,094
Perpetual-lease rents	2,155
Occupation-with-right-of-purchase rents	99,698
Lease-in-perpetuity rents	234,014
Renewable-lease rents	121,640
Small-grazing-run rents	84,352
Pastoral-run rents	79,827
Education and other endowments	106,634
Other leases and licenses and miscellaneous receipts ..	126,474
Total	<u>£1,066,496</u>

SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

Satisfactory progress was made during the year in placing Crown lands in the market. The area offered to the public amounted to 474,586 acres, the number of selectors was 2,051, and the area selected 500,396 acres, being an average of 244 acres to each holding. The Lands and Survey Department is vigorously pushing on the subdivision of land for settlement. The area under survey at the end of the year totalled 778,500 acres. During the present year it is estimated that 790,000 acres will be opened for selection.

At the close of the year there were 29,790 Crown tenants, occupying 19,601,151 acres and paying an annual rental of £741,404.

FREEHOLD.

The Land Act of last year extended the privilege of acquiring the freehold to tenants holding leases in perpetuity under the Land for Settlements Act, perpetual leases under sections 161, 163, or 167 of the Land Act, 1885, small grazing-runs on ordinary Crown land and settlement land, and Hauraki pastoral licenses.

During the past year 549 persons purchased 99,127 acres under the Land Acts of 1912 and 1913, paying therefor the sum of £108,205. This amount, after deducting loan repayments and contributions to local bodies for road-construction and maintenance, was credited to the Land for Settlements Account.

In addition to the above there were at the end of the financial year 221 tenants who had converted their leases to deferred payment, and are acquiring the freehold by this method. The area covered was 32,467 acres, and the amount received by way of instalments during the year was £8,336.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT.

At the close of the year the area within the endowment was 8,607,000 acres, of which 6,525,034 acres are occupied at an annual rental of £99,600.

The gross amount collected during the year was £103,271, from which a sum of £15,007 was deducted for payment to local authorities by way of loan repayments, thirds, fourths, and halves, as provided under the Land Act, leaving a balance of £88,264, which will be distributed in accordance with the statutory provisions governing the endowment.

KAURI-GUM RESERVES.

The policy outlined in my previous Statement is being continued, and a Commission has recently been engaged upon the work of inspecting and classifying the reserves for the purpose of recommending the lands that can be immediately prepared for settlement without prejudicing the kauri-gum industry. An important recommendation of the Commission in regard to land-settlement is that an area of 71,000 acres out of the 228,000 acres covered by the kauri-gum reservations should be immediately made available for settlement. The land is adapted for fruit and other culture, and the necessary steps will be taken as early as possible to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission.