

Expiring Laws Continuance Act extended until the 31st August, 1917, the provisions of sections 42, 43, and 44 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1914, which authorized the exemption of lessees of Crown land, &c., from cropping and other conditions; enabled the postponement of rent to be extended to tenants of pastoral runs; and also to holders of small grazing-runs of settlement land.

Finance Act.—Section 50 authorized a loan of £50,000 for the purpose of afforestation. This supplements the revenues derived from the sale of timber in State forests.

Reserves and other Lands Disposal, &c., Act contained a number of provisions relating to specific lands, and also amended the provisions of the Wanganui River Trust Act, 1891, the Swamp Drainage Act, 1915, the Hauraki Plains Act, 1908, and other enactments that concern the operations of this Department.

War Legislation Act.—Part II extended the provisions of section 24 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1915 (relating to applications for land by agents on behalf of members of the Expeditionary Force), fixed the age-limit of applicants for settlement land who are or have been engaged on military service at a minimum of seventeen years instead of twenty-one, and also gave power to postpone the dates of payment of instalments of principal and interest by deferred-payment licensees of Crown land who are members of the Expeditionary Force.

LANDS OFFERED FOR SELECTION

During the year an area of 425,119 acres of land was offered for selection under the various tenures provided by the Land Act, Land for Settlements Act, and Education Reserves Acts. In addition the Crown also dealt with an area of 2,709 acres comprised in endowments other than education and national endowments, the administration of which is carried out by the Department acting under special statutory authority.

Under the optional system an area of 32,110 acres was advertised, and practically all selected.

Under renewable lease an area of 39,657 acres was offered, 9,374 acres being settlement land, of which the lessees have the right to acquire the freehold; 26,344 acres national endowment; 2,543 acres ordinary Crown land supposed to contain metals or minerals; and 1,396 acres of Cheviot Estate. Pastoral runs offered comprised 311,803 acres, and an area of 12,033 acres was offered as small grazing-runs.

In addition to the above, a total area of 276,290 acres of Crown, settlement, national-endowment, and Cheviot Estate lands, comprising 529 holdings, was set apart for selection by discharged soldiers under the ordinary tenures of the Land Act and the Land for Settlements Act, and the special tenures of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act. Full particulars regarding these lands will be found in the report on the operation of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915.

LANDS TO BE OPENED.

It is estimated that a total area of 547,359 acres, comprising 1,796 holdings, will be available for selection during the coming year. The following table shows the distribution of this area :—

Land District.	Town.		Suburban.		Rural.		Total.	
	Number of Holdings.	Area.	Number of Holdings.	Area.	Number of Holdings.	Area.	Number of Holdings.	Area.
		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.
Auckland	120	30	20	20	450	90,000	590	90,050
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	123	73,963	123	73,963
Taranaki	12	13	29	43	72	29,942	113	29,998
Wellington	90	41	4	37	174	5,371	268	5,449
Marlborough	50	50	..	..	8	4,758	58	4,808
Nelson	160	40	..	..	106	71,151	266	71,191
Westland	..	..	..	..	80	12,567	80	12,567
Canterbury	..	..	7	7	72	192,600	79	192,607
Otago	45	12	10	6	82	52,200	137	52,218
Southland	..	..	6	8	76	14,500	82	14,508
Totals	477	186	76	121	1,243	547,052	1,796	547,359

Of this area all lands which are considered suitable for settlement by discharged soldiers will be set apart accordingly.

LANDS SELECTED.

The total selections during the year under all tenures covered a gross area of 1,010,152 acres by 2,059 selectors. These figures include, however, 135 purchases of small town and suburban sections aggregating 181 acres, offered for sale at auction.