

The number of Deeds relating to property registered in the Land Office during the year was nearly 400 less than the previous year the chief falling off being in the case of assignments which occurred during the latter part of the year, the number of lots changing hands being 998 as against 1,455 the previous year.

In the New Territories the demand for land continues normal.

III.—LEGISLATION.

Thirty-three Ordinances were passed during 1914, of which 19 were amendments of previous Ordinances.

The most important matters with which these Ordinances dealt were the Opium Ordinance (No. 4) by which the Government assumed the entire control and management of the opium business hitherto leased out to private individuals, the Cremation Ordinance (No. 5) which provides for the regulation of the burning of human remains and enables Crematoria to be established, the Seditious Publications Ordinance (No. 6), the Public Lighting Ordinance (No. 13) which provides for the public lighting of the Colony and for the protection of the appliances used in connection therewith, the Obscene Publications Ordinance (No. 15), the Dentistry Ordinance (No. 16) which endeavours to protect the public in some measure against the practice of dentistry by incompetent and unqualified persons, the Wild Bird and Game Preservation Ordinance (No. 18), the Piracy Prevention Ordinance (No. 23), the Special Police Reserve Ordinance (No. 27) which provides for the formation of a Special Police Reserve, and the following Ordinances necessitated by the outbreak of the war with Germany and Austria-Hungary:—Trading with the Enemy (No. 21), Alien Enemies (Winding up) Amendment (Nos. 28 and 30) and the Defences (Sketching Prevention) Amendment (No. 32).

The history of the local policy with regard to enemy firms may be divided into two stages, one up to the 27th October, 1914, and the other from that date up to the present time.

In the earlier stage the foundation of the policy adopted was the desire to prevent the sending of supplies or money to enemy territory and generally to prevent trading with the enemy. In pursuance of this policy two measures were adopted which may be roughly stated as follows:—

- (a) Local firms which were branches of firms in enemy territory were given permission to carry out existing contracts as far as possible, subject to restrictions designed to prevent the remitting of money to enemy territory.
- (b) Local enemy subjects were given permission to engage in fresh trade on their own account subject to similar restrictions designed for the same object.

The view which was taken of the legal position of local import and export firms which were branches of firms in enemy territory was that trading with them or by them involved trading with persons