

There has been a satisfactory absence of destructive fires on Crown timber lands during the year.

Planting operations are still being carried on by the Mackenzie County Council on a reserve at the southern end of Lake Tekapo by means of funds derived from the temporary occupation of other planting reserves in the same part of the district.

Reports have been furnished by officers of the Department on the proposed acquisition of lands at Peel Forest, and of the properties known as "Kennedy's Bush" and "Dean's Bush," near Christchurch, with a view to the permanent preservation of the native bush growing thereon.

"The Workers' Dwellings Act, 1905."

The first homes to be established in Canterbury under this Act will be located in Christchurch, on a piece of land belonging to the Crown, which has been used as a paddock for a number of years. It is situated near one of the electric-tram lines, about fifteen minutes' journey from the centre of the city, and is very well adapted for the purpose contemplated. About thirty-five sections, averaging nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ acre each, will be laid out, and arrangements are now being made for road-construction, water-supply, drainage, &c., preparatory to the erection of dwellings by the Crown, in terms of the Act.

Crown Lands for Disposal.

The following table summarises the Crown lands open for selection on the 31st March, 1906:—

Tenure under which Land is open.	Area.			Counties in which situated.
	A.	R.	P.	
Village-homestead allotments ...	103	0	0	Ashburton.
Optional selection, under Part III of "The Land Act, 1892"—				
First-class surveyed ...	54	1	27	Ashburton.
Second-class surveyed ...	186	0	9	Ashley, Ashburton, Geraldine, and Waimate
First-class unsurveyed ...	421	0	0	Selwyn and Ashburton.
Pastoral runs ...	45,000	0	0	Amuri.
Land for Settlements Acts—				
Small grazing-runs ...	3,684	0	0	Amuri.
Lease in perpetuity ...	5,478	0	35	Amuri, Selwyn, Akaroa, Ashburton, Levels, and Waimate.
Total ...	54,926	2	31	

It has been already indicated that leases of five blocks under the small-grazing-run system, comprising in all about 12,675 acres of Crown land on the Malvern Hills, at present occupied under pastoral licenses expiring on the 28th February, 1907, will be offered for selection early next year, but beyond these there are practically no further Crown lands to be offered for occupation during the year, except such as may from causes at present unforeseen revert to the Crown.

Some portions of the Kinloch and Mills Settlements, recently opened under the Land for Settlements Acts, were still available for selection at the close of the year, but no new properties are at present in hand for disposal under this system.

Departmental.

The number of ordinary and special meetings of the Land Board held during the year was twenty-five, a change having been made in June, 1905, by holding ordinary meetings once a month, instead of at fortnightly intervals. The number of statutory applications for land lodged was 265, of which ninety were granted, and large numbers of applications for approval of transfers and mortgages, Crown Lands Rangers' reports, and other miscellaneous questions, were dealt with at each sitting. The inward and outward recorded correspondence, returns, notices, &c., amounted in round figures to about 18,500, and about 4,300 sale plans, posters, &c., were distributed. In the office of the Receiver of Land Revenue, besides the gross revenue for the year, amounting to £133,241 6s. 1d., for which 5,544 receipts were issued, a sum of £17,794 19s. 2d. was paid into the Deposit Account, against which 833 receipts and cheques were issued. A sum of £2,498 2s. 4d. was paid to the Local Bodies' Deposit Account, and £1,842 1s. 10d. paid over to various local bodies in respect of proposals approved by the Land Board. In the accountant's office, 321 vouchers, representing a sum of £4,102 17s. 10d. were drawn against the Imprest Account, and 395 vouchers, representing £70,114 15s. 11d. were passed through for pre-audit and payment.

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OTAGO.

The first matter to be dealt with is that of settlement on ordinary Crown lands. The transactions, however, under this head, as will be seen from the several tables, have been comparatively few, a fact which must be regarded as evidence of the limited area of ordinary Crown lands now available in this district for close settlement.