

area 4,468 acres : total, 5,049 acres. There were 5 exchanges from other tenures to lease in perpetuity area 1,019 acres. Last year 5,312 acres were selected on this tenure by 20 applicants.

The other ordinary tenures show little movement during the year, there being comparatively few selections, and few forfeitures or surrenders.

"THE BUSH AND SWAMP CROWN LANDS SETTLEMENT ACT, 1903."

The total area opened to selection under this Act during the year was 5,597 acres, comprising 2,709 acres of heavy-bush land, and 2,888 acres of light-bush land. The total area selected was 8,665 acres, comprising 2,420 acres of heavy-bush land, 2,526 acres of light-bush land, 596 acres of scrub land, and 3,123 acres of swamp land ; the number of selectors being 47.

The total number of selectors in the district under the Act is 84, the area held being 18,615 acres. It is as yet too early to make any pronouncement as to the success or otherwise of the operation of the Act.

REBATES AND REMISSIONS OF RENT.

The rebates allowed for prompt payments of rent amounted on ordinary Crown lands to £275 0s. 6d., distributed amongst 626 tenants ; to 149 tenants on settlements under the Land for Settlements Acts, rebates amounting to £637 2s. 9d. were granted.

No remissions of rent on account of adverse circumstances were granted to tenants on ordinary Crown lands during the year, but two land-for-settlements tenants were granted remissions amounting in all to £75 14s. 4d.

ARREARS OF RENT.

The arrears of rent due by tenants on ordinary Crown lands amount to £203 6s. 3d., owing by 52 selectors, as against £114 2s. 4d., owed by 37 selectors, last financial year.

On land for settlements the arrears amount to £1,247 6s. 10d. due by 29 tenants, as against £687 9s. 9d. owed by 14 tenants last year.

RESERVES.

2,384 acres have been reserved during the year, of which 2,182 acres were for scenic purposes, situated in the Alton, Longwood, Titiroa, and Waikawa Survey Districts. The balance of 202 acres was reserved for miscellaneous public purposes.

RANGERS' INSPECTIONS.

Ranger Campbell reports having made 531 inspections of holdings on the various tenures, and found that the tenants as a whole are prosperous and have made good progress with improvements, consisting of buildings, fencing, clearing, draining, &c., notwithstanding the backward season experienced. The total area of the holdings inspected is 102,461 acres ; value of required improvements, £37,468 1s. 5d. ; value of improvements made, £73,118 8s. 6d. Ranger Campbell also made 302 reports to the Land Board in connection with applications for miscellaneous licenses, titles, transfers, &c.

Ranger Traill, Stewart Island, reports having made forty-six inspections of Crown holdings ; and states that the amount of improvements effected is satisfactory when it is taken into consideration that most of the tenants were employed on the road contracts for the greater part of the year, and the fact that the climatic conditions were most unfavourable for many months for working on the land. There is, however, a general improvement in the condition of the settlements, many of the settlers having bettered their positions. The 23 settlers reported on hold 3,583 acres ; the value of improvements required is £1,307 11s. ; the value of improvements made is £2,744 10s. Ranger Traill further states,—

"The sawmills have worked continuously full-handed, the regulations have been complied with, the output being up to the usual in former years.

"A good deal of my time has been devoted to the protection of the flora and fauna. No destruction of bush of any consequence has taken place, and no killing of game out of season has come under my notice. The prevention notices are in order.

"On the summits of Mount Anglem and Mount Rakeahua, the highest peaks on the island, are to be found numbers of *celmesias* and other rare flowering-plants known in no other part of the world. So far no destruction of the plants has taken place, but it is possible the imported game may discover and destroy them all. The trout placed in Rakeahua Creek seem to be thriving. Sea-fish have been plentiful, but native game birds have been very scarce. The tourist traffic steadily increases, and additional accommodation is being arranged. A Government hut at the head of Paterson Inlet would be of very great benefit to persons making the journey across the island to Mason's Bay, the distance being too great to get over in one day from the settlements."

POSITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

In a previous paragraph I have dealt with the general results of the transactions of the last financial year ; the settlements under the Land for Settlements Acts, and the improved-farm settlements are dealt with in separate reports, and also the village and village-homestead settlements ; and I would now refer to the general position of all Crown tenants in this district holding leases or licenses on ordinary settlement tenures. For convenience of reference I have divided the district into two portions—eastern and western, the Oreti or New River being taken as the dividing boundary.