

offered at a reduced upset and was disposed of. Six reserves, comprising 864 acres, were disposed of by public auction to six tenants. Two education reserves, comprising 103 acres, were disposed of by public auction for a term of fourteen years, and four were not disposed of at auction. These latter are now being reduced in upset price, and are to be reoffered by tender. Four reserves, comprising 1,160 acres, were disposed of by tender. 260 acres of Crown land were disposed of to four purchasers. In the Cheviot Settlement, three sections of an area of 14 acres were disposed of to one tenant, under renewable lease, and one section of 7 acres was sold at auction.

LAND REVENUE.

The total revenue for the past year amounted to £237,025, being an increase of £30,970 on last year's figures.

FREEHOLD.

Three perpetual-lease holders acquired the freehold of 368 acres, to the value of £864. Four occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenants acquired 826 acres for the sum of £833. Under the legislation of 1912, two perpetual-lease holders acquired an area of 51 acres, realizing £215, and twenty-three tenants of lease in perpetuity of Crown land acquired 4,059 acres, to the value of £5,885, and thirty holders of lease in perpetuity of lands for settlement acquired 1,331 acres, representing £11,458. Four holders of lease in perpetuity of Crown land, comprising 114 acres, converted to deferred payments, the annual instalments amounting to £14. Nineteen lease in perpetuity of lands for settlement converted to deferred payments 969 acres, the annual instalments amounting to £536; and one small grazing-run of lands for settlement, comprising 978 acres, was converted to deferred payments, the annual instalment amounting to £77.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS, AND TRANSFERS.

Seven miscellaneous leases were forfeited, comprising an area of 604 acres, annual rent £225; and five leases under the lands for settlement were dealt with, comprising 90 acres, annual rent £117. The number of transfers approved was 273, and eleven were declined.

CHEVIOT ESTATE.

This settlement continues in its successful state generally. The Cheviot farm lands have now increased in the public appreciation, as shown in the goodwill paid when transfers are effected. The settlement suffered in common with the rest of Canterbury in the disposal of fat stock, through the shortage of storage capacity at the freezing-works, and limited number of ships available to receive freights of carcase mutton, owing to the war. The dry autumn increased the trouble, as feed was not available for keeping the stock in condition, and the crops of turnips for winter supply to the breeding-flocks were utilized. All straw, even to the solid Tuscan, will be required for winter fodder.

To such an extent has the want of storage capacity been felt that many of the larger stockholders are contributing to the new company forming to establish a new freezing-works at Waipara Junction, the site for which is under negotiation, to be purchased out of the recently acquired settlement land of Glenmark Estate.

The cereal crops were satisfactory, the average being about 30 bushels of wheat and 40 bushels of oats per acre, and all the grain was well harvested. The high prices of these crops will induce the farmers to increase the area to be devoted to grain-growing during the coming season.

The population of the district remains about the same. Twenty-six grazing-farm leases, expiring in 1916, were extended for twelve months, and will have to be dealt with in the coming year.

EDUCATION-RESERVE LEASES.

The leases of a number of these reserves expired during the year, and were relet, after revaluation, to those tenants whose working of the land in the past indicated their fitness to be given an opportunity for a new lease under more favourable conditions than those of the expired lease, the present form conferring the right to renewal on revaluation at the expiry of the term. Where the conditions of their holdings indicated carelessness in husbandry the reserves were put to public competition, either by auction or tender. The Education funds have benefited by the increased rents, and the lands by a careful selection of tenants. The general appearance of the education reserves in this district is satisfactory.

PASTORAL RUNS.

The runs of larger area, chiefly in the high country, have had a successful year. There were very few losses from snow in the winter; a fair lambing percentage in the spring, and a fair wool crop, with excellent prices, obtained. Shortness of feed in the high country was not experienced, most of the lands receiving the benefit of warm westerly showers.

The Mackenzie County has experienced another good winter, and in consequence is looking exceedingly well. The plantations, reported on for the first time last year, have, with few exceptions, done well. The general experience of settlers is that three-year-old trees do better than any others, and the varieties which appear to thrive best are larch, *Pinus muricata*, and *Pinus ponderosa*. The older plantations in this district are also looking well.

LANDS HELD UNDER PART III, LAND ACT, 1908.

Few new leases under this Part of the Act were issued during the year, there being very little Crown land, apart from the pastoral country, left for disposal. All the other settlements at Oxford,