

Many special inspections have been made by the Rangers during the year, who are now brought face to face with a class of work which requires a great deal more than ordinary care, for on their preliminary reports is generally based the decision as to whether lands offered to the Government under the Land for Settlements Act are referred to the Board of Commissioners or not.

At the date of last report there were 13,225 selectors recorded on the books of the department, some 11,000 of whom required to have their holdings inspected. On the 31st March last these numbers had increased to 13,948 in the first case, and to about 12,000 in the latter case. To perform the duties connected with this and the forest branch of the department, nineteen officers are kept constantly employed, besides the occasional assistance of the Survey staff.

The number of forfeitures, exchanges, and surrenders occurring last year were 223, covering an area of 104,041 acres.

PASTORAL RUNS.

Including small grazing-runs, the Cheviot grazing-farms, and pastoral leases properly so called, there were 227 selections or purchases for pastoral purposes, covering an area of 898,945 acres. The pastoral runs included in that area numbered 85, with an area of 646,253 acres, by far the largest area of which is situated in Otago, the greatest number being in Nelson, where the areas are small. The pastoral runs let were those in which the leases had expired and came in for re-leasing during the year, and were not so much new country taken up for the first time. These runs are let for varying terms up to twenty-one years. The greatest number of small grazing-runs were also taken up in Otago; these cover some of the pastoral runs resumed the year previous. The number of small grazing-runs forfeited and surrendered during the year was 27, covering an area of 64,495 acres. The grazing-farms at Cheviot are held on terms very similar to the small grazing-runs; in both cases residence (with a few exceptions) and improvements are compulsory.

ARREARS.

The arrears of rents due to the Crown show a decrease in number of selectors who are behind-hand, but no decrease in the total amount. The following table gives the arrears for several years past, exclusive of the arrears on miscellaneous leases and licenses which are only of a temporary nature, but which amounted to 214 cases, who were in arrear £1,522 :—

31st March, 1889	...	...	...	3,862 selectors, owing	£44,533
" 1890	...	...	...	3,755 "	52,891
" 1891	...	...	...	3,548 "	37,341
" 1892	...	...	...	2,612 "	25,256
" 1893	...	...	...	3,382 "	28,875
" 1894	...	...	...	3,104 "	32,205

The figures for last year, although showing an increase, must be considered satisfactory when the low price of grain and bad season in the South is taken into consideration, especially as a considerable amount has been paid off since. There will always be a certain amount of arrears, for most of the payments are only due on the 1st January preceding the 31st March, to which date the accounts are made up, and the half-yearly rents on pastoral- and small grazing-runs are only due thirty-one days prior to the same date.

REVALUATIONS.

The time during which applications for reduction in the value of selections could be received was extended by "The Selectors' Land Revaluation Act, 1892," up to the 1st January, 1894, and the operation of the Act extended so as to include agricultural leases and small grazing-runs. No transactions had taken place under the last two headings up to the 31st March, 1893, but up to the 31st March, 1894, a few cases were dealt with as shown in the table below, and a few more have yet to be completed.

District.	Deferred Payment.			Perpetual Lease.			Agricultural Lease.			Small Grazing-run.		
	No.	Area affected.	Loss in Capital Value.	No.	Area affected.	Loss in Rent.	No.	Area affected.	Loss in Rent.	No.	Area affected.	Loss in Rent
Previous years ..	1,356	Acres. 213,264	£ 154,938	573	Acres. 71,400	£ s. d. 1,812 0 7	..	Acres. ..	£ ..	..	Acres. ..	£ ..
Auckland ..	4	354	237	1	45	0 13 6	..	..	..	..	..	..
Westland ..	19	723	276	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Otago ..	5	1,443	439	8	1,598	24 18 6	15	2,096	117	17	32,128	266
Total ..	1,384	215,784	155,890	582	73,043	1,837 12 7	15	2,096	117	17	32,128	266
Endowments, from last year's report	51	13,179	13,195	33	7,477	228 0 0	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total to date ..	1,435	228,963	169,085	615	80,520	2,065 0 0	15	2,096	117	17	32,128	266

Total loss in capital values £169,085
Total loss in rentals 2,448

STATE FORESTS.

The total area of State forests at the date of last report was 1,136,467 acres, in which are included all classes of reservations connected with forests, whether for timber, climatic, plantation, growth of trees, or other purposes. The area which has been added during the past year is 5,311; consequently, the total area reserved at 31st March last was 1,141,778 acres.