

also are hopeful. In the other districts the tenantry engage in the usual farming operations; grow grain and root crops, and, where facilities are offered, engage in dairying, and on the hills and downs give their attention to sheep.

Southland Land District.

The Rangers' inspections comprise 742 holdings, on an area of 71,687 acres, the value of improvements required being £20,446, as against those actually effected to the amount of £48,481. Only 32 tenants were in default, representing 4 per cent. of those visited, the lowest percentage of any district in the colony.

The condition of the Crown tenants is reported as satisfactory. Their occupations comprise dairying, grazing, timber-cutting, and many of the smaller farmers seek employment for a portion of the year on road and railway works.

In Stewart Island 35 scattered holdings, comprising 3,938 acres, were visited during the year. On these the amount of improvements actually effected was £1,615, being an excess of £374 over that required by law. The difficulty of getting rid of the forest and cultivating the land is very great. The settlers have to supplement their incomes by engaging in fishing, working at the sawmills, and some have to visit the mainland to find work. A few are employed in boatbuilding.

Cheviot Estate.

The statement of accounts, as recorded in the Accountant's office, is given in the same form as in previous years for convenience of comparison. This great estate continues to flourish; all save two of the tenants have complied as to improvements, and all but four as to residence. The value of improvements effected amounts to £69,786.

Dr.				£	s.	d.
Cost of the estate, including roads, surveys, landing-						
service, &c.	324,908	19	7
Interest to the 31st March, 1903	87,258	4	5
				<hr/>		
				£412,167	4	0
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Cr.				£	s.	d.
Land sold	38,754	18	10
Rents, interest, royalties, and other charges	138,634	14	11
Cost of estate at the 31st March, 1903	234,777	10	3
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				£412,167	4	0
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The revenue for the twelve months ending the 31st March last amounted to £14,606 4s. 11d. received from 314 tenants, whilst the arrears came to £617 12s. 11d., or $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. of the total. The settlement made steady and satisfactory progress during the year, though the central and southern portions were visited in January by a severe hailstorm, and afterwards experienced a heavy frost, which occasioned damage to the crops. The lambing was good, showing a 90 per cent. increase, which means from fifty to sixty thousand lambs added to the flocks of the settlers, at latest returns there being some 100,000 sheep and 2,200 cattle on the estate. The present population is estimated at 738 souls on the Crown leaseholds, exclusive of those residing on freehold properties and in the Mackenzie Township. Counting these, the total population is 1,026.

From the annual report and balance-sheet of the Harbourmaster at Port Robinson (laid on the table of the House as a separate paper) it is seen that, notwithstanding the competition of the overland carriage, there was a considerable quantity of goods, &c., landed, the weight of general merchandise and coals amounting to 1,806 tons, and in addition about 11,000 bricks, 3,200 fencing-posts, and 418,756 superficial feet of timber were also imported. The revenue from handling these goods amounted to £814. The exports were about 3,400 bales of wool and 3,000 sacks of grain and other produce, £248 being derived from this source. The total receipts came to £1,062 18s. 4d., being £67 4s. 9d. in excess of the expenditure.

Land for Settlements.

During the year the Land Purchase Board handed over to the Lands and Survey Department 16 estates, comprising an area of 91,724 acres 2 roods 4 perches, and consisting of 12 estates, 1 homestead site, and portions of the Birch Hill and Awatere freehold properties, the latter having been acquired in exchange for Crown lands. Of these, 8 estates,