

all lower country, the runs have not been found suitable for strict enforcement of residence conditions, and the lessees reside on lower lands in the vicinity; good improvements have generally, however, been placed on the Crown lands, the carrying-capacity of which has also been increased by surface sowing. In a fair number of cases, where suitable and accessible sites could be found on the runs themselves, good homesteads have been established.

*Pastoral Runs.*—The sixty-seven runs, comprising 1,781,568 acres, cover all the back country and mountain-ranges not hitherto found suitable for closer occupation. In nearly all cases the lower country necessary for the working of the runs was bought up under the free-selection system, and the practicability of further subdivision of many of the runs is thus seriously diminished. A considerable number of the existing leases will expire in 1911, and these and other subjects connected with the leasing of these lands will—in 1910 or shortly before—have to receive earnest consideration.

In all the foregoing paragraphs, lands in the Cheviot Estate and in land-for-settlements estates have been excluded from the data quoted, but in those that follow they are included in all cases.

#### *Rangers' Inspections.*

A summary of the Rangers' reports shows that full inspections have been made of 1,859 holdings occupied under settlement conditions, representing an area of 423,415 acres; the value of improvements required amounted to £277,614, and the value actually effected to £516,169, not far short of double the statutory requirements. The total number of defaulters for all causes is 119, and ninety-five of these represent cases in which the improvements are not yet up to the required values. Many of these lessees are, however, arranging to add to their improvements as their means and necessities will permit.

In addition to the work represented by the above figures, a very large number of other inspections have been made, covering lands offered for acquisition for settlement or scenery-preservation purposes, applications for temporary tenancies of various kinds, sawmilling and timber-cutting licenses, forest and scenic reserves, &c., and the three Rangers have thus had their time very fully employed.

#### *Payments of Rent, Rebates, and Arrears.*

In accordance with the provisions of "The Crown Tenants' Rent Rebate Act, 1900," and section 52 of "The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900," a uniform rebate of 10 per cent. has been allowed to all tenants under the specified tenures who paid their rents within the prescribed period of one month after due date. The total number of tenants who participated in this concession was 1,741 out of the 2,040 tenants included in the classes specified by the Acts, and the total amount of rebate granted was £7,320 12s. 1d.

Excluding the current half-year's rent, the total amount of arrears owing on the 31st March, 1906, was £1,064 5s. 5d., payable by 103 tenants, occupying an area of 8,213 acres and 16 perches. The amount of arrears represents about  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the total annual rent-roll of the district, and the number of tenants in arrear is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. of the total.

#### *Forfeitures and Surrenders.*

The total number of holdings of all classes that reverted to the Crown during the year was twenty-five, comprising an area of 1,191 acres 2 roods 33 perches. Out of these only two, comprising 270 acres 2 roods 29 perches, both temporary occupation licenses, were forfeited for breach of conditions, all the others being surrendered at the request of the lessees; while seventeen sections out of the total were held under temporary-occupation licenses.

#### *Transfers and Exchanges.*

The total number of settlement holdings transferred during the year was 159, comprising an area of 25,424 acres 2 roods 20 perches, made up as follows:—

	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Leases in perpetuity, all classes .. ..	104	14,60	2	36
Village-homestead leases .. ..	37	1,18	1	10
Perpetual and farm-homestead leases .. ..	11	68	0	21
Occupation-with-right-of-purchase licenses .. ..	2	33	3	33
Small grazing-runs and grazing-farms .. ..	5	8,609	2	0

Sixteen holdings, with a total area of 506 acres and 8 perches were exchanged from the perpetual-lease to the lease-in-perpetuity tenure.

#### *Reserves.*

Thirty-five reserves, comprising a total area of 373 acres 1 rood 18 perches, were set apart for various purposes, including gravel-pits and quarries, school-sites, recreation and scenic reserves, &c.

Proposals have been submitted with a view to the setting-aside of endowments for education and hospital and charitable-aid purposes. As the only available Crown lands consisted of pastoral country, runs aggregating 181,501 acres, and at present yielding a rental of £2,075 per annum, were selected for educational endowments, and an area of 94,624 acres, now let at a rental of £1,284 per annum, for hospital and charitable-aid endowments. These were distributed as much as possible over the different parts of the district.

#### *Timber, Forests, &c.*

Twenty-two milling and splitting licenses, covering 3,884 acres 3 roods 8 perches, were in existence at the close of the year, the revenue collected having been £290 7s. 1d. Practically the whole of these were situated in the Oxford Bush.