

TRANSFERS.

The total number of transfers approved during the year was 187, the area dealt with being 388,320 acres, comprising lands held under the tenures shown hereunder :—

Tenure.	Lessees.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Lease in perpetuity	67	17,601	3	24
Occupation with right of purchase	22	4,309	1	25
Perpetual lease	16	2,752	0	4
Lease in perpetuity, land for settlements	22	2,998	2	16
Pastoral licenses	31	355,738	0	0
Certificates of occupation	1	796	1	9
Deferred payment	1	6	2	36
Miscellaneous licenses	20	1,004	2	14
Small grazing-runs	2	2,594	2	0
Mining District Land Occupation Act	3	117	3	13
Sawmill licenses	2	400	0	0
Totals	187	388,319	3	21

SELECTORS ON THE BOOKS.

The total number of Crown tenants in this district is 2,069, comprising 1,753 on ordinary Crown lands holding 1,671,338 acres; 247 on land-for-settlements estates holding 52,687 acres, and 69 lessees of endowment lands holding 131,333 acres. The total area held is 1,855,358 acres.

RANGERS' INSPECTIONS.

The Crown Lands Rangers have made 591 inspections of selectors' holdings on the mainland, covering an area of 112,577 acres, and their reports in the main have been very satisfactory, the large majority of the lessees having complied with the conditions of leases and made improvements considerably in excess of the value required.

Ranger Traill has reported on twenty-four Crown tenants on Stewart Island, who hold 2,937 acres, and have made improvements to the value of £3,811 18s., which is £2,162 in excess of the requirements. The position of the selectors may be reckoned as fairly satisfactory, considering the conditions under which they live.

RESERVATIONS.

During the year under review 252,875 acres were permanently reserved. Of this area 43,966 acres in the Jacob's River Hundred and the Waiau and Longwood Survey Districts were reserved for scenic purposes, and 208,650 acres on Stewart Island were reserved for the preservation of the fauna and flora; the balance of the total area was reserved for various public purposes.

LAND PROPOSED TO BE OPENED FOR SETTLEMENT.

The block of land in Invercargill Hundred, Blocks XXIII and XXIV, mentioned in last year's report, comprising some 6,500 acres, has now been surveyed and will be thrown open during the ensuing year.

An area of 10,000 acres in Blocks VI and XI, Alton Survey District, has been under survey, and this block will also be opened during the year.

There is a strip of land between Longwood and Orepuki, of some 4,000 to 5,000 acres in extent, which has up till recently been held as sawmill areas, but as the timber has now been cut out the land has become available for settlement. A start has accordingly been made with the survey of this block, and it is expected that the greater part will be placed in the market during the year.

DEPARTMENTAL.

Just before the close of the financial year Mr. Duncan Campbell, Crown Lands Ranger, gave notice of his intention to retire on the 13th June next. By the time of his retirement Mr. Campbell will have completed sixteen years' continuous service in this office. He originally joined the public service in 1884 and served for several years as Forest Ranger.

Office Work.—Without entering into details of figures, which are generally uninteresting, I may state that the volume of the inward and outward correspondence and other matters dealt with by the clerical branch has largely increased, and has taxed to the utmost the energies of the several officers employed therein. The writing-up of the new allotment-books, a work that has occupied some considerable time and entailed much search and careful investigation, has been completed, and the books will be of much use in the future.

In concluding this report, I would wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all the officers of the Department for the manner in which they have assisted me. By the willing way in which they have placed their services and local knowledge at my disposal they have made the taking-up of my duties here as Commissioner much easier, and for this I now take the opportunity of thanking them.

E. H. WILMOT,
Commissioner of Crown Lands