

## RANGERS' INSPECTIONS AND CONDITION OF SETTLEMENT.

The Crown Lands Ranger for North Canterbury reports that during the year he inspected 131 holdings, comprising an area of 25,213 acres, on which improvements to the value of £11,086 were required, and the value effected was £27,087. In a very large number of cases the periods of compulsory residence and improvements have expired. The Lake Ellesmere leaseholds still labour under the disadvantage of periodical overflow from the lake water, and until the land is secured from this trouble further improvements cannot be expected, as at present fences have to be renewed every two or three years, and the lands can generally only be used for grazing purposes. If the present endeavours to prevent the lake from rising beyond a defined level should prove successful, further improvements may be looked for. On the small grazing-runs at Hororata, selected in March, 1907, the holders have all done the necessary improvements, and are making good progress. On the Oxford plains the settlers have experienced a better year than last, and satisfactory compliance is being effected. Generally speaking, the tenants throughout North Canterbury have done fairly well; the absence of any long period of dry weather, and the plentiful rains during spring and summer, kept the pastures good and feed abundant, and also where cropping was attempted there were fair results.

In mid Canterbury the Ranger states that all settlers are fairly prosperous, and are keeping their holdings in good order; there are a few cases of deficiency in value of improvements, which will no doubt be remedied as time and opportunity permit.

In South Canterbury the Ranger reports that the past season has been a particularly good one for the small grazing-runs and pastoral leases in perpetuity, which form the bulk of the Crown lands holdings in this portion of the district. The heavy snow experienced in July last did not have such serious effects as was at first anticipated, and the percentage of lambing has been good. Feed has been fresh and plentiful, and surface-sowing has been successful. The tenants of some of the larger holdings are deficient in respect of the large amount of improvements required, but have done as much as is reasonably necessary for the efficient working of their holdings, and in all other respects are complying very satisfactorily.

The village settlements throughout the district do not disclose much change of condition, but continue to afford very useful homes for agricultural labourers and others, who devote their spare time to keeping their homesteads and holdings in good order, and with very few exceptions have amply fulfilled all the requirements of their leases.

## CROWN LANDS FOR FUTURE DISPOSAL.

The Crown lands lying open for selection at the close of the year totalled 394 acres 1 rood 11 perches, made up as follows:—

Tenure.	Area.	Localities.
	A. R. P.	
Rural lands under optional system ..	248 2 27	Selwyn and Geraldine Counties.
Village homestead allotments on lease in perpetuity	76 2 0	Ashburton County.
Land for settlements .. ..	69 0 24	Annan, Highbank, and Rosewill Settlements; Kapuatohe and Tarawahi Hamlets; Culverden and Morven Townships.

Before the 1st March, 1910, steps will have to be taken to reoffer for disposal the leases of a number of pastoral runs, comprising a total area of nearly a million and a half acres, consisting principally of the back country runs in the Mackenzie and Ashburton Counties, with a few in the Amuri, Selwyn, and Geraldine Counties. These will require careful inspection and classification to determine what blocks, if any, are suitable for disposal in smaller areas, to meet the pressing demand that exists in this district for land. Much of the country, however, is situated at high altitudes, liable to heavy falls of snow, and remote from centres of population, and can therefore probably only be successfully occupied in blocks of considerable size.

## LAND BOARD ELECTION.

The first election by Crown tenants of a member of the Land Board under the amendment of the land-laws passed in 1907 was held on the 27th August last, three fresh candidates being nominated in addition to the sitting member, Mr. J. Sealy, who offered himself for election and was returned.

## DEPARTMENTAL.

The usual current departmental work has been well maintained during the year, our endeavour being to insure that the requirements of the Crown tenants and others shall be dealt with as promptly and satisfactorily as possible.

ERIC C. GOLD SMITH,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

## REPORT ON THE CHEVIOT ESTATE.

With the exception of a few transfers, there has been practically no change in the occupation of the holdings on the Cheviot Estate during the past year. The Crown Lands Ranger reports that, so far as the season and the crops are concerned, the tenants have experienced a good year.