

## FOREST AND SCENIC RESERVES.

As will be seen from the Ranger's reports, in consequence of the continued dry weather of the last few months fires have been somewhat prevalent. The forest reserve at Rewa suffered severely, and some of the reserves round Tailhape received more or less damage, but on the whole it is a matter for congratulation that greater and more widespread loss did not take place.

I have given a good deal of personal attention to new scenic reserves both on Crown and private lands, feeling, as we all do, that with the onward march of settlement, if we do not take steps to procure fair samples of our primeval forests, those who follow us will have but an imperfect idea of the scenic beauties existing in the Dominion in the early days of European settlement. In connection with this I may mention that quite a number of settlers have promised to give free a number of scenic spots on their holdings, feeling that they will permanently be safer and better protected under the State's control than if left in their own hands.

## REBATES OF RENT.

For prompt payment of their rents, rebates amounting to £2,543 were granted to 1,886 settlers on ordinary Crown lands, £1,747 to 325 tenants on land-for-settlements estates, and £25 to 16 settlers on national-endowment lands. These amounts show an increase over the previous year's figures of £597, demonstrating that fuller advantage is being taken of the concession granted to Crown tenants in being up to date with their payments.

## ARREARS OF RENTAL.

The arrears of rental at the end of the year showed a decrease from last year's figures of £410, and it must be remembered that the gross arrears include amounts owing by settlers in the North Waimarino Block who are not being pressed for payment at present. When this amount is deducted the arrears reveal a very satisfactory position.

## CONVERSIONS OF TENURE.

During the year under review three tenants applied for and obtained conversions of their village-homestead holdings to renewable leases, and thus secured the advantage of a lower rental. The area brought under the new system was 24 acres.

## TRANSFERS.

During the year 286 transfers were completed on ordinary Crown lands, the area transferred being 81,757 acres. On land-for-settlements land the number was twenty-one, and the area 2,505 acres. The figures are made up as follows:—

	Number.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Ordinary Crown lands—				
Occupation with right of purchase	61	32,341	1	1
Renewable lease	16	64	1	3
Lease in perpetuity	156	22,989	1	20
Small grazing-runs	14	19,781	0	24
Pastoral runs	2	3,840	0	0
Improved farms	21	2,701	3	24
Miscellaneous leases and licenses	16	40	0	0
	286	81,757	3	32
Land for settlements—				
Lease in perpetuity	21	2,505	3	30

## MEETINGS OF LAND BOARD.

During the year twelve ordinary meetings and six special meetings of the Board in connection with the land-sales were held. The volume of business that came up for consideration was so great that in many cases the meetings extended over two days.

The Board took the opportunity during the year of making special tours of inspection in different parts of the land district, probably the most important one being through the back country lying between the North Island Main Trunk Railway and the Wanganui River, and extending from Taumarunui on the north to Raetihi on the south. Most of the settlers were interviewed *en route*. Visits like these are of the greatest assistance to the Board in its administration, and are also much appreciated by the settlers, and both alike are brought face to face with the living and bed-rock elements of Crown-lands settlement.

## FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

The number of forfeitures during the year was thirty-two, of an area of 1,215 acres, and the number of surrenders was seven, of an area of 227 acres. In addition to these figures, eight of the dwellings in the Heretaunga Settlement were vacated, but were relet to new tenants during the year.

## OFFICE OF RECEIVER OF LAND REVENUE.

In the Receiver's office 7,447 ordinary-revenue receipts and ninety-seven provisional titles were issued, covering a gross revenue of £101,979 4s. In the Deposit Account 864 receipts for the sum of £22,195 2s 4d., and 253 cheques, &c., for refunds and disbursements were issued. The sum of £7,480 2s. was paid into the Local Bodies' Deposit Account, and sixty-four payments, amounting to £8,126 7s. 10d., were paid to twenty-four local bodies.