

## FOREST AND SCENIC RESERVES.

A few new reserves have been created during the year, the most notable of which are those acquired on the Port Hills, and one of about 128 acres on the Four Peaks Estate opposite Gunnion's camp. The Rangers report that no damage by fire or other means has occurred, and that the rabbits on the Mount Cook Reserve have been kept down well.

## RANGERS' REPORTS AND CONDITION OF SETTLEMENT.

As nearly the whole of the ordinary Crown leaseholds have been in the possession of the tenants for a considerable number of years, and the periods of statutory requirements have expired, there is little to report under this heading.

## LANDS TO BE OPENED.

The lands to be opened during the ensuing year will consist principally of fifteen estates under the Land for Settlements Act, containing 34,003 acres. Under pastoral lease there will be an area of 51,600 acres situated at Snowdon and Hurunui. The area at Hurunui, a large block of 45,000 acres of back country on the north side of the Hurunui River, lying adjacent to the pass to the west coast and up into the mountainous country of the Main Divide, has been offered before, and still remains open for selection. Under the small-grazing-run tenure about 12,000 acres of the Acheron Run, near Lake Coleridge, will be offered in two runs. An area of 741 acres and 32 perches formerly held as grazing-farms on the Cheviot Estate, the lease of which expired at the end of February, is being reoffered on renewable lease, a tenure that up till the present has been represented on Cheviot by only one holding of 11 acres. The lessees of eight small grazing-runs at Greta and three small grazing-runs at Oxford, aggregating an area of 15,874 acres, have been given notice of the resumption of their holdings for closer settlements, as required by law, twelve months previous to the expiry of their leases, and during the coming year the final disposal of these must be determined.

## PASTORAL RUNS LET LAST YEAR.

The valuation by arbitration of the improvements on the pastoral runs relet to new tenants in 1911 was completed this year, the total value assessed being £15,289 9s. 8d. Eighteen lessees took advantage of the privilege of paying for the improvements on their runs by twenty-eight half-yearly instalments of principal and interest, the Crown paying the outgoing tenants for them in full. This concession was much appreciated by many who would otherwise have been hard pressed to find the money to pay for them, and also for the stock and fencing of their runs without it. The new tenants only obtained possession of their runs on the 1st March, 1912, so that it is too early to make any definite report on their progress. The indications are, however, that most of them are setting about the occupation of their holdings in a businesslike manner.

## DEPARTMENTAL.

The total number of ordinary and special meetings of the Land Board held during the year was twenty. A large number of statutory applications for land were received and considered, and the Board also dealt with a number of transfers and the usual routine work inseparable from the requirements of the large tenantry of this district. The office staff has been fully occupied during the past year. Every settlement adds to the work, and many estates have been settled without the staff being correspondingly increased. This year the control of the educational reserves, formerly managed by the School Commissioners, was taken over, and altogether the rent-roll has increased by about £40,000 during the year.

In conclusion, I have much pleasure in acknowledging the valuable co-operation and assistance I have received from all the officers employed in this office.

T. N. BRODRICK,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

## CHEVIOT ESTATE.

This estate, containing 84,755 acres, was acquired under the Land and Income Assessment Act in 1893. It is held under the various tenures mentioned below, viz. :—

Lease in perpetuity—						A.	R.	P.
Ordinary	..	..	..	..	..	24,385	2	25
Village homestead special settlement	..	..	..	..	..	2,480	1	0
Renewable lease	..	..	..	..	..	11	0	7
Grazing-farms	..	..	..	..	..	45,021	1	32
Pastoral run	..	..	..	..	..	1,642	0	0
Miscellaneous occupation licenses	..	..	..	..	..	1,094	2	30
Sold for cash	..	..	..	..	..	6,843	0	25
Grazing-farms terminated during year and partly relet as renewable lease after 31st March, 1912						741	0	32
Roads, railway reserves, wastes, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	2,535	2	9
Total	..	..	..	..	..	84,755	0	0

The Ranger reports that this estate is in a most satisfactory condition, and remarkably free from noxious weeds of any kind. Its capital value, which had increased very much of late years, in common