

Rangers' Reports as to Improvements.—An analysis of Rangers' inspections shows that, as regards rural lands held under "The Land Act, 1885," 244 sections were reported on during the year, comprising first and second-class land. On first-class land the area required to be cultivated was 13,443 acres; the area actually cultivated was 27,799 acres: showing an excess over the area required by law of 14,356 acres. On second-class lands the amount required to be spent was £4,509; the amount actually spent was £16,677, being over three times the amount required. The number of defaulters was twenty-eight; the deficiency in the area cultivated by them was 543 acres; the deficiency in money-value was £1,388.

As regards rural lands held under "The Land Act, 1892," 625 holdings, comprising first- and second-class land, were reported on. On the first-class land the amount required to be spent was £15,921, whereas the sum actually spent was £46,865, being nearly three times the amount required. On second-class land the amount required to be spent was £5,656, the sum actually spent being £18,490, or over three times the amount required. The number of defaulters was eighty-three, the deficiency in the value of improvements effected by them being £1,946.

Of village lands held under "The Land Act, 1885," 118 lots were reported upon, with the following results: The cultivated area required was 950 acres, and the value of improvements required £150; the area actually cultivated was 1389 acres, and the amount spent on other improvements £9,289: showing an excess in area cultivated of 439 acres, and in the amount spent of £9,139. None of the holders of these lands were defaulters as regards improvements.

As regards village lands held under "The Land Act, 1892," 209 holdings were inspected, on which the amount required to be spent was £1,217, and the amount actually spent was £11,763, showing the amount spent on improvements in excess of that required by law to be £10,546. Of these selectors, only five were in arrear with their improvements, the deficiency in the amount spent by them being £18.

This appears to disclose a satisfactory state as regards improvement conditions. The defaulters have been, or are being, dealt with by the Land Board, and a number of them have already sent in statements showing they have complied with the conditions, which remain to be verified by the Rangers when they next visit the sections. With regard to non-residence, the following notes show that the actual defaulters are comparatively few, owing to—(a) Exemptions obtained by selectors under the Act of 1885 who effected double improvements; (b) the expiration of the six years and ten years limits of residence under the two Acts respectively (the latter applying to converted sections); (c) the fact that the great bulk of the holdings of bush-lands has not yet been held four years (section 141, "Land Act, 1892"), and that residence is therefore not yet due on them.

REMARKS ON non-resident selectors reported on during the year ended 31st March, 1897.

System.	Number not residing.	Remarks.
Deferred payment ...	20	Double improvements have been completed in lieu of residence in accordance with the conditions under which the lands have been selected, and therefore residence is not obligatory.
Perpetual lease ...	89	
Special settlement, deferred payment	35	
Small grazing-run ...	7	In some cases the residential period has expired; in another the selector has been allowed to transfer to a settler who has undertaken to comply with the residential conditions; in a third the lessee is residing on adjoining land; and in the remainder of the cases steps are being taken to enforce compliance with the conditions of the leases.
Lease in perpetuity ...	53	Residence has not yet fallen due except in a few cases, and in these steps are being taken to compel compliance with the conditions.
Farm homestead, lease in perpetuity	302	
Occupation with right of purchase	87	
Small grazing-run (1892)	2	Double improvements in lieu of residence.
Village settlement, deferred payment	1	
Village - homestead special settlement	28	In a number of special cases exemption from residence for varying periods has been granted by the Land Board, and steps are being taken to compel the remainder to fulfil the conditions of their leases.
Village homestead, lease in perpetuity	87	In the majority of these cases residence has not yet fallen due; a number of others are converted village-homestead allotments on which the residential period has expired; and in the remaining cases steps are being taken to enforce compliance, excepting a few in which temporary exemption has been granted by the Land Board under special circumstances.
Total ...	711	