

TABLE F.—RETURN of NUMBER of INSPECTIONS made by the Rangers for Four Years from the 1st April, 1899.

Year.	Number of Properties visited.	Area.	Value of Improvements.		Number of Defaulters.			
			Required.	Actually made.	For Improvements.	For Non-residence.	For other Reasons.	Total.
		Acres.	£	£				
1899-1900 ...	5,926	1,159,202	369,627	887,998	447	695	54	1,196
1900-1901 ...	6,028	1,173,093	368,474	876,363	363	449	64	876
1901-1902 ...	7,464	1,980,586	623,498	1,147,495	826	910	146	1,882
1902-1903 ...	8,551	2,110,542	742,307	1,654,845	653	629	97	1,379

POSITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

Auckland Land District.

The inspections of five Crown Lands Rangers in the Auckland District, and of one surveyor who occasionally assisted in the work, comprised visits to 1,739 properties, containing 425,569 acres. On these the statutory value of improvements required to be effected was £111,296, whilst the amount actually carried out was £257,388, showing an excess in the tenants' favour of £146,092. The total number of defaulters from all causes was 521, or nearly 30 per cent. of those reported on. These and other breaches of the Land Act are dealt with by the Land Boards, each case being considered in a judicial and equitable spirit, according to the circumstances affecting each case.

The Rangers' reports, which are printed with the Commissioner's, indicate that north of Auckland the settlers who are so fortunate as to have secured areas of good lands are well established and prosperous. They combine cultivation, grazing, dairying, growing of fruit, and, necessarily, being engaged upon such profitable industries, they thrive and succeed and add largely to the productions of the country. But upon the broken and poorer areas the holdings are scattered, and the settlers concentrate their energies in establishing comfortable homes, orchards, and work small areas of grazing-land. They cultivate fruit, and manage well-bred stock, engage in dairying where good pasture can be produced; and many employ the greater portion of their time in gum-digging and in the great and important timber industry of this land district. The cultivation of the poor and more broken lands has not yet been generally attempted, though it is anticipated that *danthonia* and other suitable grasses will ultimately be cultivated, so as to greatly enlarge the grazing-areas and increase the flocks and herds in that part of the colony. The Rangers report that, wherever opportunities offer, the settlers have established dairy factories and creameries, and that this example is likely to be followed. Whenever this occurs the success of the settlers is generally assured.

Stress is laid upon the fact that in numbers of instances the settlements are cut off from the outside world, the communication by sea is not as satisfactory or as constantly available as it might be, and that long lengths of roads giving access to the settlements are in a very backward unfinished condition.

As regards the districts south of Auckland, it is evident from the Rangers' reports that settlement is increasing rapidly; the demand for Crown lands continues; the evidence afforded by the extension of cultivation and the improvement in the settlers' surroundings are indicative of stability and progress. A great expansion of settlement is anticipated, with a corresponding increase in population, cultivation, and stock carried.

Manukau County.—Excluding the rich areas of volcanic and other lands, extending from Otahuhu to Papakura, and also around Pukekohe and Waiuku, the settlements on Crown lands in this county are described generally as not being in a very flourishing condition. The settlers engage principally in gum-digging, run cattle, grow fruit, and have a splendid market in the great northern city. Notwithstanding, it is reported that there is a brisk demand for holdings, in order to secure a share in the foregoing advantages.

The Crown tenants in *Waikato*, *Raglan*, and *Waipa* Counties, interspersed with the freehold holdings, are represented as being in a good position, to have extended their improvements, and to have good prospects.

Kawhia County, where large areas of limestone lands of excellent quality have recently been thrown open for selection, is reported to have made great progress, notwithstanding that