

The following is a RETURN of the NUMBER of INSPECTIONS made by the Rangers for the Year ended 31st March, 1906 :—

District.	Number of Properties visited.	Area.	Value of Improvements						Number of Defaulters			
			Required.			Actually made.			For Improve-ments.	For Non-re-sidence.	For other Reasons.	Total.
		A. R. P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.				
Auckland ...	1,473	379,100 0 0	79,036	0	0	196,173	0	0	227	276	...	503
Hawke's Bay	877	391,203 0 11	154,829	17	3	449,279	11	4	43	62	12	117
Taranaki ...	631	185,141 0 9	73,167	0	0	150,183	0	0	83	55	...	138
Wellington	1,678	361,034 0 0	149,015	10	11	348,488	4	0	31	46	2	79
Nelson ...	201	32,624 0 0	6,736	0	0	20,746	0	0	18	25	...	43
Marlborough	319	274,822 3 10	67,061	19	8	115,421	9	6	29	40	...	69
Westland ...	491	38,196 0 0	10,560	0	0	18,860	0	0	...	...	...	...
Canterbury	1,859	423,415 1 13	277,614	14	5	516,169	5	4	95	24	...	119
Otago ...	1,228	314,351 0 12	127,651	18	6	212,109	0	2	146	35	...	181
Southland ...	554	106,044 2 3	38,775	12	5	75,862	18	6	50	23	...	73
<b>Total ...</b>	<b>9,311</b>	<b>2,505,931 3 18</b>	<b>984,448</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2,103,292</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,322</b>

Some 2,505,931 acres were inspected. Upon this area the settlement conditions required that improvements to the value of £984,448 should have been made, whereas the value of the improvements placed upon the same area by the selectors totalled the very handsome sum of £2,103,292, or considerably more than double what the settlers were required to place thereon. Out of a total number of 23,000-odd Crown holdings the Crown Rangers inspected 9,311, and reported 722 cases of non-fulfilment of improvement conditions and 586 of non-residence—a most satisfactory result. I notice, when reporting upon their land districts, that the Commissioners have more or less generally adopted the plan of dividing them into territorial divisions, which will be found very convenient when a comparison of results is sought.

#### “ BUSH AND SWAMP CROWN LANDS SETTLEMENT ACT, 1903.”

The beneficial result to settlers of the passing of the Bush and Swamp Crown Lands Settlement Act is now becoming very apparent. Up to the 31st March last 416,232 acres had been selected and are held by 952 selectors, and the total annual rent remitted amounted to £15,076—a very great boon to struggling settlers, thereby enabling them to use capital to that amount in clearing and grassing their holdings. Table 36 shows the amount remitted in the several land districts.

The area brought under the provisions of the Act and opened for selection during the past year amounted to 215,322 acres. The selections under the Act during the same period amounted to 207,012 acres, which was taken up by 537 persons, the annual rent remitted to them amounting to £7,034.

#### IMPROVED-FARM SETTLEMENTS

Considerable interest attaches to this class of settlement, especially when it is borne in mind that it includes a large number of co-operative workers on the North Island Main Trunk line of railway and elsewhere, who had saved money, and, being married men, were anxious to make a home no matter what privations they were at first called upon to endure. These settlers were almost wholly confined to lands set apart in the Taranaki and Wellington Land Districts, only a small portion of suitable land being found available in the Auckland District, as the balance was needed for ordinary settlement. The returns show that in the Taranaki Land District 42,826 acres were set apart for improved-farm settlers, of which area 33,360 acres are at present occupied by 566 persons, who have grassed 10,496 acres and own 5,260 head of cattle. In the Wellington Land District 34,010 acres were set apart under this system, and the area occupied is 27,195 acres, with 845 persons resident thereon, who have grassed 15,104 acres and own 16,718 head of cattle—both most encouraging results. For the whole of New Zealand 96,175 acres have been set apart for improved-farm settlers, of this area 75,529 acres is occupied by 1,830 persons, who have grassed 34,900 acres and own 24,677 head of cattle. The total amount advanced by Government to these settlers amounts to £55,870, whilst the total value of the improvements now upon the land is probably of a value of close upon £166,000, whilst rent and interest paid by the selectors amounts to close upon £28,000.

#### VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

Holdings and settlement under this denomination are specially reported upon by Mr. March, Superintendent of Village Settlements, in the Appendix.