

The area opened for settlement during the year ended the 31st March, 1906, was as follows :—

	Acres.
North of Auckland City .. .. .	13,250
South of Auckland City .. .. .	124,005
Total .. .. .	137,255

The area taken up on all tenures during the year ended the 31st March, 1906, was :—

	Acres.
North of Auckland City .. .. .	26,174
South of Auckland City .. .. .	81,231
Total .. .. .	107,405

It is estimated that the area of new lands that will be opened during the coming year will be as follows :—

	Acres.
North of Auckland City .. .. .	42,000
South of Auckland City .. .. .	152,000
Total .. .. .	194,000

#### CONDITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

Considerable progress is being made in the settlement of Crown lands in this district, as evidenced by the returns of land opened and disposed of. These show that a large area has been available, and a correspondingly large area taken up. Although it may be somewhat premature to predict whether all the new selectors will make a success of their holdings, still it will be an indication of what the majority will do if a glance is taken at the various tables, which show what a similar class of men have already achieved. In the great bulk of cases the Rangers reports show that the total value of improvements far exceeds the value required by law. There are of course defaulters, both as to improvements and residence, but they form a very small minority.

For convenience of description, Auckland as a land district may well be designated as North and South from the City of Auckland.

##### *North of Auckland.*

In the country north of Auckland there are approximately 2,708 Crown tenants, the majority of whom are making steady progress with their selections. There is doubtless a great deal of broken second-class land under occupation, and cattle-raising and dairying are the principal industries, the timber, flax, and gum industries also giving employment to a large number of people. The want of road access is, however, in many cases a severe handicap, but every year naturally brings an improvement in this respect.

In this portion of the district, an area of 178,887 acres, divided into 825 holdings, has been inspected by the Rangers, and on this area improvements to the value of £38,973 should have been effected by our tenants. The inspections, however, show that the value actually carried out amounts to £97,605. There were seventy-seven who had not effected the required improvements, and 128 were not residing, whilst, as a set-off to this, in many instances both residence and improvements had been carried out long before either was due.

##### *South of Auckland.*

In the southern districts there has also been considerable progress. On all hands the reports go to show that settlers are successfully farming their lands, content with their progress, and hopeful for the future.

In some instances settlers, particularly on the east coast districts, are giving up maize-growing on account of the frosts, and are going in for sheep and cattle raising, for which the land seems well adapted. Dairying is well established in some localities, and in others is the future hope of the settlers, as soon as the land is at all suitable and the roads are completed.

In some localities, particularly in the east coast—Matata district, great attention is being paid to swamp-drainage, and in many parts of the Auckland District this will be one of the greatest problems. Hand in hand with it there will not only be the advance of settlement, but the flax industry will go ahead by leaps and bounds, areas being so worked long before the country is dry enough for the growing of grass.

On the Coromandel peninsula the chief industries are gold, timber, and gum. Although the eastern portion of the Thames country is rough and broken, there is a good strip of fair land on the west side of the county, and some sections have changed hands there at very high prices, whilst the advantages of the Mining Districts [Land Occupation and Hauraki pastoral-lease tenures in the encouragement of settlement are gradually being realised.

In the King-country and south-western portion of the land district settlement is also progressing on sound lines, mixed farming, in the way of cattle and sheep raising, being what the settlers have at first in view, with dairying to follow in later years.

In the southern half of the land district there are approximately 2,613 Crown tenants, and of these 648 holdings, comprising an area of 200,213 acres, have been inspected. The Rangers value the improvements made at £99,468, whereas the requirements were only £40,063.

There were 148 who had not taken up residence, and 150 defaulters as to improvements.

It may not be here out of place to note that the system of inspection by Rangers has been altered during the year. The land district is now subdivided into Rangers' districts, in each of which a Ranger resides. Every Ranger is supplied with a ledger containing full particulars of all the selections under