

selectors are already residing, and that over 36 per cent. have commenced and partly effected improvements. Including the Christchurch Settlement, the figures are as follows: Total value of improvements, £11,201; number residing, over 12 per cent.; sections already improved, 37 per cent.

“Regarding most of the blocks, it is worthy of note that the value of improvements and percentage residing is somewhat proportionate to the amount of roading effected in each block. The Pioneer, Stirling, and Coonor are the best opened up by roads, and are, as a sequence, the most improved.”

*New Land to be opened for General Settlement.*—The demand for land under the ordinary conditions of the Land Act is now becoming as urgent as is the demand for land on special-settlement conditions, and to my mind the comparatively small area which we have been able to open under the ordinary conditions during the last three years, has to some extent helped to make the very congested state of the labour market in this district, because many of the bushmen demanding work on the co-operative works, are men who would have been employed in their usual avocation, but in which they cannot get employment owing to the decrease in the area of land taken up by settlers who would employ them. As I mentioned before, I am aware there are a large number of the sons of the early settlers who are waiting to take up land if they can do so—young men with energy, used to the hard work of a settler's life, whose parents will help them with a moderate amount of capital, who will start on the land if they can secure five to six hundred acres of good country, but who cannot profitably employ their capital on lesser areas.

In the Awarua Block 18,000 acres have been laid out into sections, near the Mangaweka Township, and should be ready for selection in August next, and about 19,000 acres of rougher country, immediately north of the Kawatau, will be ready for selection about the same time. A further block of 9,000 acres is under survey in the forks of the Hautapu and Rangitikei, and 125,000 acres south-east of Moawhanga, both of which will be opened for selection next summer. Nearly all this land will be readily taken up; and there is the further block of 44,000 acres in the Upper Waimarino, to which I have previously referred, which will be opened in the spring, and will offer an inducement to younger men who are not afraid to tackle the back-country lands.

Under *Village-settlement Lands* I have a small block containing twelve sections of from 11 acres to 26 acres ready to open at once, adjoining the Mangaweka Township, and two other small blocks near the Sandon Special Settlement, and another on the Mangawharariki, in the centre of the Marton 1 and 2 Farm Homestead Settlements, and further village settlements will be chosen from lands being dealt with from time to time.

*Revenue.*—The total amount of revenue from all sources collected during the year was £75,802 8s. 8d. This includes £1,639 6s. 8d. of endowment revenue. This is nearly £13,000 more than last year, and £11,193 over the estimated amount, which was only £64,609. This large increase is due to the increase in perpetual-lease freehold titles applied for, which were about £12,900 over the estimate.

*Arrears.*—These amount to £11,220 2s. 2d, owing by 1,166 persons, being an increase over last year of £2,628 10s. 3d., and 441 selectors. This increase is almost entirely due to the arrears on farm-homestead blocks. Owing to the alteration of the date from which payments of rental under this system were to commence, the payments were held back until the matter was settled, and amended notices of payments due were issued and received by the lessees. As the determination to make the date of payment commence from the 1st of January last was not finally arrived at until the middle of February last, a great number of the notices did not reach the settlers in time for them to make the payments before the 31st of March last, but the amounts have been coming in rapidly since that date, and it is anticipated the arrears under this heading will be considerably reduced by the end of June.

*Forfeitures.*—The following table shows the forfeitures which have taken place during the year:—

System.	No.	Area.		
		A.	R.	P.
Perpetual lease ... ..	6	1,591	2	0
Occupation with right of purchase ... ..	3	1,873	0	0
Village homestead on lease in perpetuity ... ..	4	181	3	24
Village homestead special settlement ... ..	19	181	2	31
Farm homestead special settlement, surrendered or forfeited ... ..	87	16,742	0	0
Small grazing-run ... ..	2	1,009	1	1
Total ... ..	121	21,579	1	16

*Inspection of Improvements.*—I am glad to be able to report a very marked alteration in respect to the manner in which the improvements required under the Land Act are now carried out. The settlers begin to understand that the conditions under which they take up land are not to be considered a dead-letter, but have to be strictly carried out, and, though the Land Board is willing to give the utmost latitude to any struggling settler trying to do so, still the selectors now know the conditions imposed on them by the Land Act have to be observed. This is shown by the fact that there is not now amongst the ordinary landholders, one-tenth of the refusals to pass transfers or applications for titles there used to be, because the settlers have found, that to get these passed they must comply with the conditions of their leases or licenses, and they now do so before asking the Land Board to sanction the dealings they want to effect.\*

\* Great praise is due to both Messrs. Tone and Lundius, the Crown Lands Rangers, who are known to be trustworthy and reliable officers who do their duty conscientiously, and who report faithfully on the improvements made on every holding exactly as they find them, either on the large grazing-run or on the village settler's small allotment.