

*Endowments (Tables 27 and 28).*

There is nothing calling for special remark under this head. Table 27 shows the sales and leases which the Department effected on behalf of the various bodies in whom the endowments are vested. There were six lots sold on behalf of the Auckland Museum trustees, and 102 sections, containing a total of 2,696 acres, were let for £390 a year under the principal tenures of the Land Act in the interests of educational and other boards. No less than 91 leases of endowments were issued in the Nelson Land District, all comprising lands vested in the Westport Harbour Board, only seventeen other leases being issued in the remaining districts of the colony.

## INSPECTIONS AND RANGERS' REPORTS.

The duties under this head are summarised as under:—

TABLE F.—RETURN of NUMBER of INSPECTIONS made by the Rangers for Five 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.
		Aores.	£	£				
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
1903-1904 ...	8,886	1,928,804	745,671	1,683,674	609	631	59	1,299

The number of inspections, 8,886, is a record, and exceeds those of the previous year by 335. The area of the holdings inspected is less; this is no doubt accounted for by fewer pastoral runs having been included. The value of the improvements effected on the holdings is one and a third millions sterling, being rather more than two and a quarter times the requirements under the leases. Notwithstanding the increased number of the holdings inspected, it is satisfactory to observe that the tenants who failed to comply with the improvement, residential, and other conditions are less in number. This state of affairs may be anticipated to become more satisfactory, as the holdings are certain to grow more valuable and reproductive in common with the surrounding lands and settlements.

## POSITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

It is not necessary on this occasion to enter into so much detail as in the previous report, as the Commissioners of Crown Lands and Rangers have furnished in most instances complete and interesting reports upon the settlements throughout the colony.

It will be observed that, for the first time, the order and arrangement of these reports for the ten land districts are more uniform and systematic, and therefore convenient for reference and comparison.

*Auckland.*

From a perusal of the Commissioner's report, it is reasonable to claim that as regards progress, present position, and prospects the Auckland reports are in these respects very satisfactory. The exceptions are given by the Rangers, and are accounted for by the bad state of the roads and other difficulties with which the settlers in certain localities are confronted. The position and future of Crown tenants in the northern land district are better than at any previous time; the only drawback was the fact that the east coast portion of the district was unfortunately subjected to heavy rains and floods last March.

Taking into consideration that the Auckland Land District is favoured with a diversity of climate, a variety of soils, which are capable of producing all kinds of fruit, grain, and root crops, and that it is endowed with vast areas of forests and kauri-gum fields, together with tracts where gold, coal, and other minerals are obtainable, an extensive seaboard and inland waterways, and improved road and railway communication, it is not surprising that its people are now reaping their harvest, and that their material prosperity and future prospects are so thoroughly sound and satisfactory.