

REPORTS BY THE INSPECTOR OF SURVEYS.

No. 1.

The INSPECTOR of SURVEYS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

Inspector of Surveys Office,
Auckland, 25th June, 1872.

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit the annual Return of the number of maps of surveys of Native land claims submitted to this office during the past year, and of the area contained in them divided between the several Provinces within which the lands they represent are situated.

The Report* furnished by me last year gave so full an account of the state of this department, of the defects in the existing system of conducting surveys of Native land claims, and of the remedies which appeared to me to be required, that I need not again go over the same ground, none of the facts having materially varied, except some diminution in the business of the Native Land Courts in this Province, which is no doubt in part owing to the difficulty claimants find in respect of surveys, and their cost. * See No. 2 of this Paper.

During the past year the triangulation has made considerable progress, but the necessity of making it available for the immediate purposes of the Public Works Department has led to its being carried over the forest country near the head of the Manawatu River, instead of the connections being completed between the Bay of Plenty and the Hawke's Bay surveys, which is needed for a reciprocal check on the accuracy of the two works, and by their union to give the whole some geographical completeness.

I forward an Index Map of the North Island, showing on a small scale all the surveyed portions, from which it may be seen at a glance how much remains to be done before the surveys of the Northern districts can be put upon a satisfactory basis.

In the course of the survey the most troublesome part of it in the district north of Auckland has been the closure with points in the topographical surveys, and, as might be expected, great discrepancies and distortions have been discovered; whenever we have approached the coast too, errors in detail in the Marine Surveys have come to light, but only one instance has yet occurred in which a mistake in a prominent position for which a latitude and longitude have been given in the *New Zealand Pilot* has been found of sufficient magnitude to call for special remark. In that case, affecting the position of Cape Turnagain, a special communication was forwarded to you on 2nd May.

I also enclose a Return of the trigonometrical work performed in the year, from which it will be seen that the cost of the field work of the Southern survey, notwithstanding the disadvantage of some forest country of a general level character, has barely reached the average of the work of this department, its actual cost having been rather less than 4-10ths of a penny per acre.

The permanent Geodetic Staff comprises at present two surveyors only—Mr. Percy Smith and Mr. Horace Baker—who are both, in their respective capacities, thoroughly able and most energetic officers. I have before written to call your attention to the fact, that these gentlemen, owing to my having selected them for their special capacity for the higher branch of surveying, are actually receiving considerably smaller salaries than ordinary surveyors of their standing. I trust that this most discouraging anomaly may be removed, and that these most meritorious officers may in future receive an equal remuneration to what they would have had if employed, as Mr. Smith was, on the public works of the Colony.

When, by direction of the Hon. Mr. Ormond, Mr. Smith went to the South, it was understood that the expense of any work specially to forward the survey of lands for sale would be refunded from the Public Works Department. As it has happened, all the work has been triangulation proper; but since it has been carried in a direction different from that it would otherwise have taken, I propose that the cost should be divided between the two departments. The work in the North (Kaipara) having been chiefly for the purpose of laying out roads, I have set down the whole cost of it to Public Works. I hope that this rather arbitrary division will be considered satisfactory for this instance, but it is my duty to point out that this division between two departments of a work, in which unity of design and execution is so essential as a trigonometrical survey, is objectionable in principle, and very inconvenient in practice; and I cannot but urge that since it is essentially a "public work," and one which ought to furnish the substratum of all public works, it would be in every way advantageous if the whole were transferred to that department. If this were done, the business of the Native Land Court branch of my office alone would be carried on under the auspices of the Native Department, and triangulation and the supervision of roads, &c., which has latterly occupied much of my time, would fall properly under the Public Works Department.

I have, &c.,
THEOP. HEALE.