

In the Christchurch office there are still very great arrears of work—regular dead work, which has been accumulating for years and cannot be hurried through, but must be taken patiently and methodically. The triangulations approved, revised, and recently executed, are a sound basis on which to plot, record, and check this arrear work. It will be seen, from Mr. Baker's report that, notwithstanding the difficulties he enumerates, very good progress has been made with the plots of old work. The system, or rather no system, of allowing surveyors to go on for long periods without plotting up their work is simply an encouragement to slovenliness and a premium on bad survey.

Maps of the Counties of Mongonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, Whangarei, Hobson, Rodney, Waitemata, Eden, Manukau, Coromandel, Thames, Piako, Waikato, Waipa, Raglan, Taranaki, Tauranga, Whakatane, Cook, Wanganui, Kaikoura, Westland, Waitaki, Waikouaiti, Maniototo, Vincent, Lake, Peninsula, Taieri, Bruce, Clutha, Tuapeka, Southland, Wallace, have been prepared at the District Survey Offices, and are now on exhibition at the head office. They show the lands sold, leased, reserved, and open for sale, also boundaries of ridings, positions of towns, roads, railways, and generally give such information as would be of service to a stranger in ascertaining where land is for sale. The County Maps of the Provincial Districts of Canterbury and Nelson will be gone on with also. A copy of the map of each county enumerated has been given to its Council. The copies of County Maps at Head and District Survey Offices will be posted up periodically, so that they will always afford a very good idea of the tenure of the public estate.

Publication of Maps.

A General Land Tenure Map of the North Island was issued early in the year, and a fresh printing, corrected to date, is about to issue. A land tenure map of the Middle Island is also on the stone and will issue in a few days hence.

A very great want in the Colony, and one that will be more and more felt, is the need of published maps of its settled districts. A beginning has been made, and it will be continued, of bringing out maps of surveyed districts to a scale of one inch to the mile.

Photo-lithographic Department.

In the return of office work appended, it will be seen that 195 independent plans, or subjects, have been disposed of, and 59,118 copies struck off. The greater number of these are sale maps of townships and of blocks of rural land. There are also included the maps provided for the census, for some of the Parliamentary Blue Books and other miscellaneous purposes. This branch of the Survey Department, in pursuance of arrangements made by the Honorable the Minister of Public Works, will be shortly generalised and extended, so as to undertake all the photo-lithographic work of the Government.

The Work of the Current Year.

This will mainly consist of working off the arrears of sectional surveys, which aggregate 1,610,000 acres, part of this is not arrears in the sense of land purchased and remaining unsurveyed, but is land that the Land Boards have recommended to be got ready for disposal. The arrears in all the districts, with the exception of Canterbury, are well in hand. There, an arrear of 765,934 acres begins the season. But of this 349,051 acres are let in survey contracts. Contracts yet to be let, 200,000, and the staff will dispose of 120,000, so that a total of 669,051 acres ought to be completed by 30th June, 1879.

Triangulation and Topographical Survey

Will also be gone on with in those districts, where settlement is soon to follow. That in hand amounts to 1,804,000 acres.

The Surveyor-General has arranged to return to the Colony early in November. In London he ordered, from Troughton and Simms, the necessary instruments required for the determination of latitude and differences of longitude. Should they arrive in time, the work of determining the position of the principal survey points of the Colony, more especially those cut off from trigonometrical connection by high mountain ranges, will be gone on with and probably completed within the season.

Mr. Thomson also availed himself of the opportunity of getting from the Astronomer Royal a copy of the actual observations taken at Greenwich of the moon's right ascension, of even date with his own observations at Rockside, Dunedin, September, 1869, to June, 1871. The detail of this will be found in *New Zealand Gazette*, No. 46, 20th May last.

During the year several valuable officers left the service to engage in private business as surveyors and estateagents. The great increase in the value of land has induced so much subdivision of property as to cause much demand for the services of surveyors and draughtsmen. It must also be mentioned that several officers were allowed to leave, whose services were not deemed profitable to the Government. The department is getting rapidly recruited by lads, born, bred, and educated entirely in the Colony, and not a few of them are already well forward in the department, and have become mainstays in it.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,

Assistant-Surveyor General.