

subdivided and change hands in twenty years. The number of plans drawn upon certificates of title during the year has been 932, and the number of Land Transfer record-maps prepared has been 37. This department of the work is likely to increase for some time to come.

CROWN GRANTS.

The number of Crown grants prepared and recorded during the year has been 635. In addition to this 240 were recorded after their return from Wellington, a practice which is now discontinued, the process of preparation and record being now simultaneous. Under this head I might mention that plans (in duplicate) have been prepared for 156 conditional titles or deferred-payment licenses.

LITHOGRAPHS.

During the year 26 drawings have been prepared for purposes of lithography. Three of these drawings were somewhat important and extensive ones, representing as they did the surveyed sections in the districts of Hokonui, Taringatura, and Forest Hill respectively. These districts alone occupy a large space on the provincial district map, covering as they do some 550,000 acres, and comprising some 1,250 surveyed sections. The other drawings were of new townships, village reserves, special-value and deferred-payment blocks, the immediate object of preparation being to guide purchasers and selectors. The greater bulk of the drawings (23 in all) was printed locally, at a cost of £67 15s., the total number of prints being 3,575. The remaining drawings (3 in all) were printed at the head office, Wellington, the total number of prints being 1,250. Were the prints all disposed of at the published price—a contingency which of course cannot arise—the sum realized would be £453.

We have still two or three important districts—particularly Wairio and Waiau Districts—to draw and print, on the completion of which this office will be in a very fair position at a moment's notice to supply in a published form the information in regard to form, position, and acreage of sections which is constantly required by the general public, and which is so invaluable to the Government and local bodies for Road Board, County Council, property-tax, &c., purposes.

WORK ON HAND.

The progress that has been made with the field work during the past year, joined to the paucity of land-purchasers and the limited character of the land available for selection, would go to show that with the present staff we shall soon be able to give a good account of the outstanding surveys. Outside of purchases there are still, however, some 20,000 acres of deferred-payment land requiring ultimate subdivision; and, in addition to these, 37 reserves have been recommended by the Waste Lands Board as suitable village sites, these sites entailing subdivision at an earlier or later date. The work before the office ere the records and the routine of posting them can be considered satisfactory is still considerable. The current work, including land transfer, Crown-grant preparation, and other pressing and important duties, has hitherto left little or no time to enable the working surveys of the unblocked districts to be compiled on uniform block-sheets; and till this be done the survey data of such districts cannot be looked upon as being in a perfect state. The selection maps to guide the public, however, have been considerably improved during the past year, and, instead of having a dozen or so of small maps (the relative places of which were apt to confuse settlers), we have now one or two large wall-maps, which show a great breadth of surveyed country and the tenure of same at a glance.

JOHN SPENCE,
Chief Surveyor.

HEAD OFFICE.

I have the honor to report that during the past year forty-two survey district maps have been drawn and lithographed on the scale of 1 mile to an inch; two circuit maps, scale 8 miles to an inch; one trig. map, scale 1 mile to an inch; and fourteen survey block-maps, scale 20 chains to an inch.

The land-tenure maps were revised to 30th June, 1879; maps for the annual report and Land Guide were constructed and printed; also maps for the Local Industries and West Coast Commissions.

The miscellaneous work consisted mainly of tracings, compilations, calculations, descriptions of boundaries of districts.

The county maps exhibited in the corridor are now posted up with the land sales as they take place, from the returns of the Receivers of Land Revenue which are sent here by the Treasury for scrutiny and record.

During the year the number of letters received and despatched have been about 6,800. This number gives only a partial indication of the work to be done in conducting such a correspondence, as, this being the Head Office, many of the subjects require careful study.

In the photolithographic establishment the service has sustained a very great loss in the death of Mr. Alexander McColl, the chief of that branch of the department; and there is little doubt but that the illness of which he died was contracted by too close attention to his profession and to the experiments which he carried on for developing its utility. His assistant, Mr. Ramsay, has satisfactorily conducted the routine work since Mr. McColl's death.

It will be seen that the quantity of maps and other papers lithographed—viz., 529,574 impressions, in 1,634 separate printings—is nearly double the quantities shown last year. The number of photographs taken—438—is rather less than last year, and is due partly to Mr. McColl's illness and also to the fact that only one photographer has been employed instead of two, as was the case during a part of last season. It is also now partly arranged that such work as can be more efficiently and speedily done by hand is drawn on stone or transfer-paper, thus relieving the photographic gallery of work which is either not suitable for the process or which it would be a waste of means to pass through it.

A copy of one of the survey district maps is appended hereto. This will illustrate the principal work on which the Head Office draughtsmen have been engaged during the past year, and the kind of maps which is being published by the department.

A. BARRON,
Office Surveyor.