

these road-works will be found in the Appendix, also a very interesting report from Mr. Mueller on his exploration of a road-line from Upper Rakaia to Hokitika, over the main range *via* Mathias Pass.

LAND TRANSFER SURVEYS.

This class of work is executed entirely by private authorized surveyors. As all plans deposited at the Land Transfer Office are the basis of title guaranteed by the Government, the department is charged with the duty of seeing that no plans are passed into the office which are defective or inaccurate as survey records. Very considerable trouble was occasioned recently, in a few cases, where it was found that not only the plans were defective but also the surveys inaccurate and overlapping on the ground. Generally, however, the surveys for Land Transfer are executed with care and according to the regulations on the subject.

In one or two districts, where the earlier surveys were imperfectly executed, the department is deemed obstructive, because the Chief Surveyors cannot always accept the diagrams and descriptions on old Crown grants as sufficient for the certificate of title under the Land Transfer Act. The landowner, or his agent, cannot see why the description that served for the one title should not do for the other. If some flagrant inaccuracy is patent, then the demand is for the Government to rectify it. A good deal can be said on both sides of the question as to whether the landowner or the Government should be at the cost of perfecting defective descriptions. But, as the interviewing and correspondence in such cases is vexatious to both sides, it would be as well in future to prevent it by a regulation providing that, in cases where a resurvey is necessary, the landowner will have the option either of doing it through an authorized surveyor at his own expense solely, as at present, or the Government will undertake it on deposit of a survey-fee according to a moderate fixed scale of charges. The Government would not of course undertake any subdivisinal surveys of private property, but only the periphery survey and its connection with trigonometrical station or other standard point.

With the object of facilitating Land Transfer work, standard points have been laid down in the streets of most of the principal towns in the colony; and there are still other towns in which this is either now in hand or soon will be. To prevent any misconception in the public mind with regard to the object of standard survey of towns, it may be explained that the department, in making these surveys, does not attempt to settle any dispute as to boundaries between property—the keeping of the boundaries of a property is the function of its owner, not of the Government. But the dealing with the survey of a town at once, and in a comprehensive manner, sheds a flood of light on discrepancies which otherwise would not be revealed by any private survey, and prevents their further propagation. The points laid down, the distances and bearings between them, and their relation to the occupancy of the town, are mapped on a large scale, which map furnishes a sure guide and standard of reference for all surveys under the Land Transfer system. The utility of this work is so obvious, that the local authorities gladly share in the cost.

PUBLICATION OF MAPS.

The total number of plans, maps, &c., published during the year amounts to 429,028 copies; of these, 269,176 copies were for other departments, as detailed in Mr. Barron's report in Appendix. Before each land sale, from 250 to 1,000 plans of the block or township to be offered are lithographed on the 20- or 40-chain scale and distributed to the public. Maps of the trigonometrical surveys are issued to the surveyors. Geographical maps to the scale of 4 and 8 miles, and district maps to the scale of 1 mile to 1 inch, are being prepared and got out as rapidly as other current work will allow. It would be well to accelerate the issue of these maps by having more assistance. The maps on a scale of a mile to an inch are in an especial degree a great saving and convenience both to the public and Government. The scale is sufficiently large to show distinctly every section of land over 10 acres, and on this scale a very considerable area of country is shown on a small surface. A square of $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches contains 100,000 acres, which is the standard size of the sheets