

to get the cost of survey advanced them, and a large number of applications are now with you for approval. The above areas do not by any means represent the total amount of land prepared for adjudication by the Court, for 319,343 acres, in 72 blocks, have been surveyed by private surveyors during the period, at the cost of the applicants. Operations under this heading will be very extensive during the next season, judging by the applications received, which cover a very large area; and it is by no means improbable that the ensuing season will see an advance into the King country, in the same manner as the last has witnessed the breaking-down of the barrier toward Rotorua, where for the first time a Native Land Court has held a successful sitting. In Poverty Bay, too, the area of large blocks for subdivision will be very considerable.

*Land Purchase Surveys.*—356,940 acres of blocks for purchase by the Crown, principally in Poverty Bay and Taupo, have been prepared for the Court, a part of the cost (£2,414) having been borne by Land Purchase votes. If to this area be added the Native Land Court surveys, made by Government and private surveyors, an area of 760,232 acres, in 226 blocks, will be found to have been prepared for the operations of the Court; whilst a considerable amount remains on hand, principally subdivisions of blocks, to excise the portions awarded to the Crown. More than half the area surveyed by the staff lies in the mountainous forest country of Urewera, involving very great hardship and privations on the surveyor so engaged, with great loss of time, owing to difficulty of getting provisions, and bad weather. The mean cost per acre, therefore, is very reasonable.

*Gold-Mining Surveys.*—Only one claim (the prospectors at Te Aroha) has been surveyed during the year.

*Roads, Railways, &c.*—Of the 185 miles of road surveyed, I am not aware of a single instance in which the limiting grade has been exceeded, which means that these lines are permanent, and will not require alteration as the country is settled. Nearly the whole quantity has been in exercise of the rights under the Native Land Court Acts. A separate report will inform you of the amount of work performed in the actual construction of roads to open up lands before settlement, the cost of which is not borne by Survey votes, though one officer of the survey staff has been engaged nearly all the season in constructing and laying down lines for immediate use, whose expenses are included in the general return. The amount of work to exercise the road-rights is enormous, and can never be overtaken by the present staff; whilst it is at the same time a matter of no small moment that the right should be so exercised at the earliest possible date.

*Detention owing to Native Opposition.*—This amounts to a sum of £155 18s. 11d., and arises through disputes as to boundaries, or the vexatious destruction of survey-marks.

*Other Work, &c.*—A detail statement under this heading is supplied. It covers miscellaneous work not returnable under the headings given, such as inspection, officers' leave, office-work, definition of old boundaries, road-inspection, reports, connections, &c.

*Inspection.*—During the year Mr. Hickson has not done much, owing to ill-health: he left the service on this account on the 30th June. Mr. Williams, who joined this branch on the 1st November, has made a number of inspections, copies of which have from time to time been forwarded to you. In four cases these resulted in the surveyors (private) having to revise their work. The amount of inspection is so great, and so very necessary, that Mr. Williams is quite unable to keep pace with it: only one of the staff officers' surveys has been inspected by him, though all of them would gladly welcome a visit, in order to prove the accuracy of their work. Mr. Barnard, at Poverty Bay, has shown his usual energy in carrying out this duty, a large number of his diagrams having been sent you. He has, in addition, supervised the construction of the road, Ormond-Opotiki, and laid out a considerable mileage of road besides. I have visited ten of the survey parties myself, but, owing to the multiplicity of duties I perform, I have no time to make a technical inspection. I have been absent from the office eighty-four days, travelling 2,800 miles on duty, exclusive of sixteen days occupied in journeying to Wellington and back. It will be apparent that the inspection duties are heavy in this district, when it is stated that there are, on an average, from twenty to thirty-five surveyors engaged on semi-official surveys, outside the members of the staff, all of whose work the Government are responsible for in one shape or another.

*Office-work.*—The returns show a considerable amount of work, which appears to be on the increase. To keep it up to anything like date has required the unremitted attention of Mr. Kensington and the indoor staff. Miscellaneous work has been performed for some eighteen other departments, exclusive of the plotting on the block sheets of a large number of roads taken under the Public Works Act, and also of conveyances to Road Boards and counties of deviations, &c. Some twenty-eight sittings of the Native Land Court have been held in various parts of the colony during the year, the plans for which have all passed through this office, orders of Court noted and communicated to other district offices; whilst not a day passes without numberless references from the Native Land Court and private individuals as to the tenure of lands, position of title, registration of liens, and other questions too numerous to mention, involving an amount of painstaking research of which it is difficult to give an adequate idea. Up to date, 660 block sheets have been got out showing more or less work on them; 148 triangulation sheets of districts complete, with all major and minor stations shown on them, of which 29 have been lithographed for the use of the surveyors; and, in addition, 113 record maps are prepared and in their places in the safe. As time and opportunity permitted, the