

1,310 acres, were laid off as saw-mill areas; 8 sections, covering 6,453 acres, were laid off as education reserves; 7 sections, covering 103 acres, were laid off as gold-mining lease (quartz) areas; while the remainder for the most part consists of township and village reserves, cut up into suburban size, portions of which are meant to be opened for absolute sale, and portions disposed of on the suburban deferred-payment system. The land lately surveyed for rural deferred-payment purposes has, as a rule, been taken up the moment it was thrown open, and settlement and surface improvements are now rapidly taking place in localities that were formerly covered only by the native tussock. The deferred-payment blocks in the vicinity of the railway-line and in accessible localities have now for the most part been laid off, and, indeed, the deferred-payment blocks now unsurveyed are neither numerous nor large. The chief work that will probably fall upon this branch of the department for some time to come will be the subdivision of bush and village reserves (for small settlement), many of which are dispersed over the district. There is a large amount of Crown land only a short remove from the present centres of settlement, comprising the whole of Seaward and the southern fringes of Longwood Forests, which must doubtless be subdivided at an earlier or later date. The district has now come to such a stage that settlement will not so much broaden out as it will fill up and become more dense. In my last annual report I alluded to the great advantages attending the use of the steel band in preference to the old chain, and the work during the year will thus, I am sure, bear a very favourable comparison with any that has been done before. The days of the old linked chain have evidently gone by, and, if improvements are sought after, these should, I think, be in the direction of perfecting the steel band.

Land Transfer Work and Crown Certificates.—A considerable amount of work has been done during the year, particularly during the early part of it, in connection with the Land Transfer branch. During the year 50 plans for deposit have been examined and passed. These I find cover 219 of the original Government sections, embrace 3,458 subdivisional allotments, and deal with an acreage of 61,468. The number of Crown grants prepared prior to the coming in vogue of the new system (which I may include under this head) is 350. The number of Crown-title certificates prepared during the period has been 77, while the number of ordinary title certificates has been 628. The plans of the former being in triplicate, and of the latter being in duplicate, the number of diagrams thus drawn for the Land Transfer Office, apart from those required for the Crown grants above mentioned, was 1,487. The number of applications made under the Act during the year, a good proportion of which required examining and checking with the Government maps, was 312.

Lithographs.—During the year 14 drawings have been prepared for purposes of lithography, a number considerably smaller than that of last year. Of these, two (*i.e.*, one of Longwood Reefs and one of Wairio District) have been general maps, embracing a large number of sections and a considerable breadth of country. With two exceptions the drawings were printed locally, the cost of printing and preparation being about £60, and the number of prints issued being 2,700. The total publishing price of the lithographs is £171 5s. We have still two or three districts to draw and lithograph, and have presently in hand a general map of the Southland District on a scale of 2 miles to 1 inch. No map of the kind has been prepared in this office since 1865, and of course the progress which the district has made in the interval, as indexed by the construction of fresh roads and railways, the creation of fresh townships, &c., renders a new general map desirable, apart from the fact that the old issue is now all but out of print.

General.—There have been very few purchases indeed during the past year, and this has enabled the department to thoroughly work up the outstanding arrears. The staff both in the field and office now stands at a minimum, below which it would scarcely be possible to cope with the current work. As it is, there are many absolutely necessary branches of work, such as the construction of block and Land Transfer record maps, which must meanwhile be left for the most part in abeyance, with the hope of having more time in future to overtake them. During the year the office has sustained a severe loss through the death of Mr John Innes, Office Surveyor. He was noted for his conscientious discharge of duty, and will be much missed. I might state that the large wall maps lately prepared for the use of the public have been highly appreciated, the advantages of seeing the whole district at a glance, in its topographical and sectional features, being very apparent.

JOHN SPENCE,
Chief Surveyor.

HEAD OFFICE.

THE work of the head office has consisted chiefly as follows: A map of the portion of the North Island, lying south of the parallel of 39°, has been drawn and photo-lithographed, and will be published during the year. The projection used is Mr. Thomson's rectangular tangential, and the central meridian is that of 176° E. The reductions from the mile scale were made and the outline drawn by Mr. Grant, the writing and hill-work by Mr. Flanagan, very creditably. It has been photo-lithographed on the scale of 8 miles to 1 inch, and will, I believe, be very useful, as no topographical map of the Wellington District has yet been printed.

Mr. Spreat has drawn on stone the map of the North Island, showing the map publication of the department (which accompanies this report), and he has in hand the map of the Middle Island on the same scale—25 miles to 1 inch. It will be seen that what has been finished is an