

bush as well as open. In very broken bush country, such as the block fronting on the coast line north of the Mokau River, the side boundaries are traversed along the dividing ridges and spurs. To lay off such country on the rectangular system would simply be giving for boundaries a series of lines, crossing precipices and gorges on utterly impracticable fencing-lines.

Another very material cause of expense in the settlement surveys is the finding the boundaries of old surveys, which have either become obliterated or previously only existed on paper, but which nevertheless must now be defined on the ground before the purchases of adjacent lands can be marked off. This source of expense will, of course, diminish as the old boundaries get fixed and connected trigonometrically.

The land systems in vogue in several of the land districts have also a very material effect towards increasing the cost of survey. Thus, in the Auckland District, although the law is that land for cash can only be sold by public auction after survey, there is virtually in operation a system of free selection before survey; because, on any one making known his desire to have a certain area of Crown lands exposed for sale, the Land Board as a rule approve, and a survey has to be made. Hence the surveys are very scattered, in small areas, and necessarily always in arrear, for it is impossible, especially in bush districts, to send a surveyor whenever wanted to some remote valley, it may be, fifty or a hundred miles from any other survey. At present there are surveys in the Auckland Land District waiting execution in 400 localities, and yet only covering in all about 77,000 acres.

In Nelson Land District free selection before survey also prevails, in terms of Section 8, Appendix E, of "The Land Act, 1877." But the cost of the survey per acre is kept partially under by the surveyor sectionizing the adjacent Crown lands that may lie contiguous to the land applied for.

The most economic method of settlement survey is that known as the block and section system. In it the surveyor has a whole country side assigned to him, it may be of five thousand or twenty thousand or more acres. His duty is to study the country, and, having made the best disposition of road-lines, to design and mark off the sections according to the lay of the land. This is in every way the most satisfactory system of survey, and is, with the approval of the Land Boards of the two districts named, being gradually introduced. It is the system in operation in most of the other land districts of the colony.

NATIVE SURVEYS.

For the purpose of enabling the Land Court to investigate and adjudicate title, 191 blocks, containing an area of 556,528 acres, were surveyed. Of these, 21 blocks, containing 137,735 acres, were surveyed at the cost of the Native owners, and for the survey of the balance—170 blocks, of 418,893 acres—the Government advanced the payment, amounting to £6,424 3s. 9d., or a rate of 3½d. per acre.

For land purchases there were surveyed 15 blocks, containing an area of 72,583 acres, costing £1,420 13s. 5d., or 4½d. per acre, out of the funds of the Land Purchase Department.

The south boundary of the King country, from Ruapehu to White Cliffs, was surveyed and marked on the ground by Messrs. Edgecumbe, Spencer, and Skeet, each taking a section. The line passes over some very broken country. They were occupied about four months on the work, which was necessarily of an arduous nature.

The surveys of the subdivisional orders of the Native Land Court are for the most part executed by authorized private surveyors, and paid for by those interested. As the subdivision of a Native block may not, and often does not, take place for long after the issue of the grant, it frequently happens that, by the time the surveys of the subdivisions are made, the right of taking land for roads in terms of section 106 of "The Native Land Act, 1873," and section 14 of the amending Act, 1878, has lapsed, and consequently roads for public convenience rendered necessary by the subdivision, and for the subsequent settlement of the block, cannot be surveyed and dedicated by Governor's warrant.