

Work in Hand.—The work in hand (incomplete) is 130,000 acres of triangulation, 8,000 acres of rural section work in Hawera and Opaku Districts, 38,000 acres back-pegging, and the standard survey of the town of New Plymouth, this latter is not worked continuously, but during winter months. Up to the present time, 30 concrete blocks which are provided by the Borough Council, have been fixed, and the positions fixed for the remaining 45 which are now rapidly being placed in position. The total cost to date is £252 4s. 10d., and the bulk of the work is done.

Proposed Future Operations.—The new surveys that I would recommend to be taken in hand are 1st. 15,000 acres in the Huiroa District, opening up the Waitara, Taramokau, and Manga Moahu Valleys, in which there are some thousands of acres of open and scrub land. I have little doubt but that settlement would rapidly spread in this direction, as the land is good, and the block is only ten miles from Inglewood Railway Station by the Junction Road, which is now in course of formation. A village settlement will be required also, as it is likely in the future, to be the centre of a considerable population. 2nd. A further extension of the settlement survey inland of Whareroa in the Hawera District, and also at the back of Mokoia, if on inspection it is found to be suitable. 3rd. Should the small grazing runs inland of Patea be leased, additional work would be required in this direction to meet requirements.

THOMAS HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

HAWKE'S BAY.

General Remarks.—Owing to the reductions in the staff, and to the various delays that have prevented the expenditure of the votes to open up Crown lands, the area surveyed this season shews a considerable falling off from previous years. There is a corresponding reduction in the total cost of the work completed, the expense of the field staff being less by £1,047 15s. 7d. The surveyors employed in the field have only been able to keep abreast of the demands for settlement surveys, consequently the other classes of work, such as triangulation, Roads and Native Land Court surveys, could not be worked off, and the arrears remain in much about the same position as they were at the end of last year. I am pleased to report that the triangulation and section survey, executed by Mr. Tone, and his work generally has given me great satisfaction.

Triangulation.—Mr. Tone has extended a network of triangles over the unsurveyed Crown lands, in the Tautane Block, Weber Survey District. The other small triangulations completed, 41,000 acres by Mr. Hallett, and 15,000 acres by Mr. Rich, were required to control section or road surveys.

Settlement Surveys.—The area laid off is 14,641 acres of forest land, cost per acre, 3s. 8d., average size of sections, 176 acres. In the Tautane Block the side lines, as well as the back lines of the sections of pastoral land, have been traversed over ground suitable for fencing. The character of the formation is such, that to have run the boundaries on right lines would have entailed considerable expenses on the selectors, not alone in the cost of fencing, but it would also have necessitated the exchange of land between adjoining holders. When making the valuations, on which the upset or reserved prices were based, the cost of the survey of the side lines was added to the price of the sections. A contract has been let for the survey of 5,000 acres, for the Tautane Special Settlement Association. Two village settlements have been laid out, one at Woodville, the other at Matamau.

Native Land Court Surveys.—Some 39,748 acres have been surveyed at the expense of the Native owners.

Roads.—The falling off from past years upon the mileage laid out is very marked, being nineteen miles, against an average, for five years, of eighty-three miles. The cost of the road surveys shews little variation, it stands this season at £9 13s. 6d. a mile.

Other Work.—Under this heading is included a variety of work, the chief items are £168 15s., railway land surveys, charged to Public Works Department, and £186 18s. for the traverse of the rabbit-proof fence line in the Tautane Block.

Land Transfer Surveys.—Mr. Dennon, the chief draughtsman, has examined and recorded eighty-six plans, covering an area of 45,375 acres, divided into 1,206 allotments. There is a steady increase in the business of this branch of the department. The cost for the year is £333 16s. 7d.

Office.—The value of the work done in the office for other branches of the service, and for local bodies is £305 16s. 5d. The plans put on titles number 383. Lithographs prepared for printing, six. The examination and recording of plans is kept up to date, as nearly as circumstances will allow.

Proposed Operations for 1886-7.—The area of work on hand under the different headings is as follows:—Minor triangulation 340,000 acres; settlement surveys, including Educational Reserves, 68,909 acres; roads, 130 miles; Native Land Court surveys, 579,807 acres. The officers of the permanent staff, at present stationed in the district, will not complete the surveys of lands required for immediate settlement. Unless further assistance is provided the survey of 8,000 acres in the Ruataniwha District must be let by contract. The triangulation and road surveys may stand over for another season without any serious inconvenience. It is never possible to gauge the demand for Native Land Courts surveys, for, as stated in previous reports, so much depends upon whether the owners are pressing to pass their lands through the courts, and, having obtained orders for titles or sub-division of blocks, whether they can find the money to pay the surveyors. However, I anticipate that 200,000 acres will be surveyed during the coming year.

HORACE BAKER, Chief Surveyor.

WELLINGTON.

To meet the increased activity of the Land Purchase and Native Land Court Departments the number of field officers was augmented; and as a better understanding had been arrived at with the Maoris of the Upper Wanganui and Taupo country, five officers were detailed to extend trigonometrical and topographical surveys over the Waimarino block and contiguous lands. The work has been energetically