

much higher rate. Surveys of two Native Land Blocks have been made in the Croixelles, amounting to 7,362 acres, at a cost of 3'8d. per acre, making with the former a total of 62,174 acres, averaging 1s. 5d. per acre. Owing to a large area of land being closed pending the negotiation for the construction of the Midland Railway, the applications for land during the past year have been comparatively few. The total area unsurveyed, including current applications, is now reduced to 223 sections, containing 56,336 acres. Of these a few old applications still requiring survey, remain in the Amuri district and the bays about the French Pass and Pelorous Sound. In the above area is also included a block of about 5,000 acres of applications made on the West Coast mining districts, the granting of which is held in suspense by the Waste Lands Board. Mr. Bullard has been engaged about nine months in survey of 10,000 acres into sections on the Maruia Block, and has completed the field work of 6,370 acres during the past season. This work will be plotted during the winter, the party being disbanded during the winter which has set in unusually severely in the high, back country districts. Mr. F. E. Greenfield has been employed since the 1st of January in revision survey of about 10,500 acres of freehold and leasehold sections near Lake Rototiti, the former of which has been in dispute for a number of years, and a re-survey of the latter is required on which to issue certificates on completion of purchase. About fifty-five and a half miles of traverse have been completed in the field, and, as the country is now covered with snow, he will plot this work during the winter. Mr. J. Snodgrass has in hand the sectionizing of land held under business licenses at the Waimangaroa, and suburban land adjoining. Visits of inspection have been made to the West Coast districts and the several survey camps, and the closures of work maintain a fair standard of efficiency.

*Gold-mining and Mineral Lease Surveys.*—There has been an increase during the year in applications for mining leases, sixty-nine of which and six mineral have been surveyed, eight mining and four mineral applications are in hand. The auriferous reefs in the Owen district have attracted some attention, and Mr. W. C. Wright, of the Nelson office, was instructed to proceed there and report to the Government upon the locality. His services were utilized while in the district in making twelve mining surveys, which, as the district is very rough and heavily timbered, has delayed his report—this is now completed and will be forwarded at once. The survey of some large mineral lease applications containing coal, in the district round Blackball creek, a tributary of the Grey river, near Brunnerton, has been completed during the year. Mr. C. Lewis has collected data for a map of the Para Para mineral and Collingwood gold-field district, but the publication is delayed pending some additional information.

*Standard Surveys.*—Mr. Montgomerie has completed standard surveys of Black's Point and Capleston townships, extending sections in the latter. At Westport similar work is required, but the District Officer has not yet been able to undertake it, owing to pressure of current work. Mr. W. D. Murray, during the winter months, besides plotting up the season's work, laid down thirteen miles of standard road survey in the Waimea district for the purposes of land transfer surveys.

*Native Land Survey.*—Two native blocks have been surveyed, viz., Wangarei, of 4,045 acres, and Okiwi, 3,317 acres, total 7,362 acres, at a cost of £116 16s., or 3'8d. per acre. These reserves had not previously been defined on the ground, and it was necessary to survey them, in order to lay down adjoining applications.

*Road Surveys.*—Mr. H. Tarrant surveyed twenty-two miles of road lines, to give access to leasehold sections not provided with roads in the old surveys, and also to open up back lands. Many of the lines are through freehold sections in which the right of taking roads has lapsed. Plans and reports have been furnished to the Chief Commissioner for the consideration of the Waste Lands Board. Mr. T. Sadd has traversed fourteen and a half miles of the Takaka new line of road for the purpose of adjusting areas of sections fronting on the old road.

*Land Transfer Work.*—During the year 156 certificates of title in lieu of Crown grants have been prepared; 137 plans examined and passed; forty plans plotted and registered; thirty-three tracings and compilations made; and 326 plans placed on certificates. Mr. Curtis in charge of this work has had no assistance till the last two months, and it has fallen into arrear.

*Office Work.*—During the year this has been gradually getting into arrear. Mr. W. C. Wright, computing draughtsman, has been employed three months on field work, and on town re-surveys, necessary for the issuing of certificates. During the last two months the temporary services of Messrs. Spreat and Mason have been obtained, and arrears are being worked up, but another draughtsman is still required. 748 plans have been placed on leases and licences, 18 block plans have been made, and 167 survey plans examined and passed. There has also been a considerable amount of office work in preparing copies of plans and specifications connected with road work. Mr. E. W. Buckeridge, cadet, has taken the field with Mr. A. P. Rawson, Mr. J. McKay, office cadet, Reefton, has gone into the field with Mr. Montgomerie, and Mr. J. Drayer has completed his apprenticeship with Mr. Snodgrass, and is at present assisting that officer in field work. Mr. J. Thompson, cadet, will take the field in the spring. Office cadets are required in the Reefton and Westport district offices, these being in the centre of the mining and mineral localities, great inconvenience is felt by miners seeking information, the officers in charge being generally in the field.

*Proposed Operations, 1886-7.*—Messrs. Smith and Thompson to continue triangulation, and to mark out boundaries of large leaseholds in the Amuri district, held under purchasing clauses, also surveys of main roads. Mr. Snodgrass to extend triangulation northwards from Mokihinui, and connect with the Karamea circuit. Mr. Murray to continue triangulation over the bays and sounds, surveying current applications for land. Messrs. Bullard and Greenfield to complete work in hand. Messrs. Rawson and Sadd, survey of current applications, and necessary revision of old surveys. Much work has yet to be done in traverse of main roads, not yet laid down on plans.

I much regret the occurrence of a disaster to a survey party in the Amuri district, which ended fatally to Mr. E. Paske, cadet, a promising officer, and Mr. Hugh Thompson, chainman, who died from exposure on the night of the 9th June, 1886. The party were coming in for the winter from the mountainous country round Lake Guyon, and had crossed Fowler's Pass into the valley of the Upper Clarence, when they were caught in a driving snowstorm of great severity. They arrived within a few