

Survey of Education Reserve.—Another work which was not paid for out of the survey vote, but which came under the supervision of this office, was a contract let by the School Commissioners for the subdivision of an education endowment of 5,000 acres.

Land Transfer Surveys.—In the Land Transfer branch, 102 plans, comprising 591 lots and 54,678 acres, have been dealt with at a cost of £210 11s. 3d. Mr. Weetman, the District Surveyor in local charge at Gisborne, has inspected Land Transfer and Native Land Court surveys covering 10,114 acres, and reports that generally the work is good as to technical accuracy, but that the ground-marking does not receive that attention which its importance demands.

Field Inspection.—The demands upon my time have left me but little opportunity for formal inspection, but the field-parties have been visited as often as possible, and the location of roads, ground-marking, &c., carefully looked into. No contracts have been in operation during the period under review. The bulk of the office-work at Gisborne has been in connection with the Native Land Court and road surveys, and there has been the usual demand for plans for the various instruments of title and numerous other purposes.

Work in Hand and Proposed Operations.—In the Poverty Bay District Mr. Armstrong has for the last three months been engaged in surveying the Arikihī and Waihora Runs, including several miles of roads to give access thereto, and it is estimated that it will take about six months to complete this work. From there he will go to Mangatōkerāu to survey one or more roads through that block and to define its back boundary. In addition to these works he has about 80 miles of roads and 8 square miles of minor triangulation on his instruction list. Mr. Pickett, authorised surveyor, holds instructions for survey of certain Crown interests in four blocks situated in the Waiapu District, aggregating 4,382 acres. In the Hawke's Bay District proper the section-lines of lands which have been prepared for settlement by Messrs. Tone, Rich, and Wilson will have to be marked as the land is taken up, and some 30,000 acres of Nuhaka Block have to be prepared for settlement, besides about 15,000 acres at Tautane, which have not yet been touched.

G. W. WILLIAMS, Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI.

Field-work.—The field-work executed during the year comes mainly under the headings of "Rural and Suburban" and "Native Land Court Surveys." Of the former there has been completed 21,303 acres, at a cost slightly over 2s. an acre. The rate is a little less than last year, and must be considered reasonable when it is borne in mind that the whole area is covered with forest and a considerable portion hilly, in which case the back boundaries are almost invariably traverses along the ridges. In the Native Land Court work we have had two classes—viz., block survey of 47,000 acres done at 2d. an acre, and the survey of partitions. These latter are subdivisions of the large Native reserves chiefly between Hangatahūa and Taungatara made by the West Coast Royal Commission, the Natives having of late gone in largely for individualising the land. Of the amount so dealt with by the Native Land Court we have cut up 17,748 acres, two-thirds of which is forest, into 230 subdivisions, averaging 77 acres, at a cost of 10d. an acre. The whole of the cost, £1,156 18s. 5d., is made a charge on the land, by liens for survey, on the separate blocks or partitions.

Other Work.—The return shows £1,085 under the head of "Other Work." The principal items are in connection with the railway exploration, and £279 3s. 1d. in the back-pegging of 94 sections, comprising 8,686 acres, sold some years ago. Notwithstanding that much of the old survey was obliterated, and in nearly all cases the back boundaries were streams originally surveyed by compass, and which had to be properly traversed, the cost has been but 7½d. an acre. The work is now nearly completed, there being only 1,000 acres of small sections remaining to be done.

Office-work.—The office-work has been of the usual miscellaneous character; 945 plans have been placed on Crown grants, 138 on leases, 193 on Native titles, 645 on certificates of titles, and 21 surveyors' maps under the Land Transfer Act have been examined and passed, 20 block sheets have been compiled, and the maps of 24 surveys executed by the staff have been checked, and the property-tax maps of the district examined and revised. The work actually in hand is small, Messrs. Skeet and Humphries having 1,000 and 1,500 acres respectively of Native Land Court partitions, Mr. Climie 500 of settlement-work, and Mr. Dalziel 1,000 acres of back-pegging.

Future Operations.—The field staff for the coming year will be but three—Messrs. O'Donohoo, Climie, and Atkinson having been retrenched. Mr. Skinner also leaves the field, and comes into the office at draughtsman's salary. The services of Messrs. Caldwell and Douglas, of the office temporary staff, have also been dispensed with. Since the land in this district was thrown open, on the 21st March, under the Land Act Amendment Act of 1887, nearly 15,000 acres have been selected. It will therefore be necessary to devote our strength to sectional work, so as to keep well ahead of the demand. I would therefore propose that the block of 8,000 acres of level, good bush land about six miles eastward of Pungarehu and Rahotu be surveyed, and a few thousand acres eastward of Stratford. Some may be required in other directions as demand arises through the land at present open for selection being taken up. It is also probable that there will be a call to have a sectional survey made of 8,000 acres of the University Reserve inland of Patea.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

WELLINGTON.

It will be observed that the only triangulation effected comprised 27,665 acres, which was undertaken to govern the settlement surveys of the Waitotara and Mangatāinoka Blocks.

After the winter recess the staff was almost wholly employed in the preparation of blocks of land for sale, with the result that about 41,000 acres of rural lands were sectionised, including areas