

I would again suggest the desirability of laying out and surveying main roads through these lands, especially as so much subdivision is now going on. The roads would doubtless in many instances be made to form boundaries of the partitions.

I propose to give attention to the survey of roads through lands thrown open as “unsurveyed,” and have already made arrangements for their being put in hand—notably in the Raglan County, where the land is being extensively taken up by *bonâ fide* settlers under deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems.

Office-work.—The energies of the office staff have been taxed to the uttermost during the past year to keep pace with the heavy demands caused by the large amount of settlement survey which has been going on in all parts of the country, and also on account of the very large amount of Native Land Court work, which has been submitted to rigorous check.

The correspondence, instead of abating, has increased: 1,337 marginal plans have been placed on 460 Crown grants, and certificates of title in lieu of grants, representing 66,957 acres; 710 plans have been drawn on 245 ordinary leases and licenses, representing 52,891 acres; and 232 diagrams on 102 Native Land Court titles, for 172,074 acres. The sale of lithographs has amounted to £109 10s. during the year.

In February last the business of the Survey Department was transferred from the old buildings near the Supreme Court to the new, handsome, and commodious one in Custom Street. The change has proved a very great convenience to the public on account of the building being in the business part of the city. Twenty-one county maps, coloured up to date, are now hung up in the long corridor of the building, and all day long persons are found inspecting them with a view of selecting lands for settlement.

During the year the staff has been increased by the transfer from the Nelson District of Assistant Surveyors J. McKay and T. K. Thomson. Mr. R. Galbraith has also been promoted from cadet to the grade of assistant surveyor; and I am pleased to report that the work done by these young surveyors has been very creditable to them. There are now no survey cadets in this district.

At the close of this, my first departmental year in the Auckland District, I desire to express my entire satisfaction at the manner in which the officers, both field and staff, have met the great strain of the past year, and my appreciation of their willing services and hearty co-operation.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI.

Rural and Suburban.—The bulk of the work has been the subdivision of ninety-two sections of Crown lands for settlement, comprising an area of 27,943 acres, thus giving an average area per section of 304 acres, at a mean cost of 1.24s. per acre, which I think compares very favourably with that of previous years, when it is considered that each new block, as a rule, lies further away from settlement centres.

Native Land Court Surveys.—Under this heading 8,607 acres have been surveyed into sixty-two sections; and in this area there are five partitions, containing 297 acres, of West Coast Commission reserves: 1,240 acres are also included, being the resurvey and subdivision of old Native reserves in and around New Plymouth, for which grants have never issued, and which were brought under the provisions of the Native Land Act and orders made in June, 1887. Owing to considerable discrepancies having been revealed between the areas ordered and those included by the fences, some unavoidable delay was occasioned in the resurvey of the Puketotara and Moturoa Subdivisions. These have now been amended by the Court, and the plan of Puketotara has been received. Moturoa and one or two others will be finished shortly. The balance of 7,070 acres comprises the Pukengahu Block, a partial resurvey of which has been made at a cost of £60.

Native Land Purchase Surveys.—The survey of the Taumatamahoe and Whitianga Blocks, situate on the Upper Wanganui River, are in progress by Mr. John Skinner on contract; but, as they lie far back in rough country, the survey cannot be completed for several months. The completion of the southern boundary of Taumatamahoe will also complete the survey of Pahatuhia Block, estimated to contain 6,000 acres, and, as this block lies between the Mangaotuku and Taumatamahoe Blocks (Crown land), it should, I think, be acquired by the Crown, more particularly as Mr. Skinner's report upon it is more favourable than previous ones.

Roads, Railways, &c.—With reference to the 148 miles returned under this head, it should be explained that 144½ are included in Mr. Skeet's reconnaissance survey to connect with the Main Trunk line, 29½ miles of which were graded and chained. Three miles have been surveyed through the Ngaere Block (which is leased by the Crown) to give access to the Mangamingi Block, now in process of subdivision for settlement.

Other Work.—This includes back-pegging of old work, laying down a few standards at Inglewood and Stratford, the survey of a few sections at the latter town, the periodical soundings at the breakwater, and some scattered surveys about the town and district.

Land Transfer Surveys.—Mr. Bird, Chief Draughtsman, has examined forty-eight plans, comprising 32,786 acres, and surveyed into ninety sections, all of which have been approved, and the work of this branch is up to date.

Field Inspection.—I have during the year inspected the work of one staff surveyor, one contract surveyor, and eight Land Transfer surveys by licensed surveyors in different parts of the district. I have also inspected, prior to survey, the grading of two road-lines by Mr. R. H. Davies—namely, through the block subdivided by him near Urenui, and the line he is now surveying between Ngatimaruru and Tikorangi.

Office-work.—Mr. Bird reports that the office staff has checked 18 surveyors' plans, prepared 19 new block-sheets, 41 plans for Native Land Court, 8 for the Department of Justice, 286 tracings