

WELLINGTON.

Minor Triangulation.—The 11,000 acres returned by Mr. Ashcroft covered the coastal lands included in the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company's No. 1 Allocation Block, between the Manawatu and Rangitikei Rivers.

Topographical Surveys for Purposes of "The Land Act, 1887."—Following up the practice introduced in 1887, eight members of the staff executed the necessary surveys and maps representing an area of 92,415 acres of bush-lands, with a view to throwing them open for selection as "unsurveyed lands" under "The Land Act, 1887." The blocks which make up the total comprise Mr. J. R. Annabell's South Maungakaretu, Mr. Lowe's Oroua-Coal Creek, Mr. Ashcroft's Otamakapua, Mr. A. Seaton's Mangahao, the Messrs. Climie's Middle Puketoi, Mr. Hughes's South Puketoi, and Mr. Lewis's Kaiwhata Block. Each of these blocks has been thoroughly explored, and provided with a system of roads and "back-lines" suited to the character of the land; and, with a due consideration of the requirements of the surrounding country, township- and village-sites have been picked out and reserved, river-banks have been conserved, and reservations have been made for schools, gravel, travelling stock, and other public purposes. Preliminary surveys have sufficed to define all these essentials, as well as numerous others, such as homestead-sites, water-frontages, and patches of valuable timber-trees. The maps have been made as full of detail as possible, the practical outcome being the notification for sale of extensive areas, with full and accurate descriptions, and "sale-plans" for the information and guidance of intending selectors, whose interests are considered in every possible manner; and, at the same time, paramount public interests have been conserved as far as possible. A specimen map on a reduced scale is appended. Free selection, wherever exercised without the foregoing safeguards, has resulted disastrously to the Crown's interest. A notable instance will be found in one of the Australian Colonies, where indiscriminate free selection is about to be supplanted by a system similar to that in vogue in this district: this has been determined upon because "many selections have been injuriously intersected by roads," causing "much annoyance and dissatisfaction," and, in consequence, "demands upon the Treasury for compensation."

Rural and Suburban.—The surveys under this class have been unprecedentedly extensive during the period under review, and the cost of 1s. an acre (on hilly forest lands) is less than in any previous year, and would be so even if the whole of the cost of the preliminary surveys were added. Of the total area of 105,470 acres, the staff executed the surveys of 62,216 acres, and 43,254 acres was surveyed by contract. The difference in cost is accounted for by the fact that the staff surveys only averaged 215 acres per section, whilst the contract work averaged 592 acres per section. Moreover, the contractors had, as a rule, more straightforward work, and greater advantages in the way of completed traverses on their blocks. The general character and quality of the latter surveys are being tested by the Acting-Inspector, Mr. Llewellyn Smith, and detailed reports of the result shall be forwarded to you. These settlement surveys are the most practical and useful from the settlers' point of view, as they place him in possession of his holding, and serve as the basis of his title. This class of work is becoming more elaborate and difficult, in consequence of the greater care bestowed upon the road-surveys, the additional work of back-line survey and pegging, and owing to the fact that the blocks are generally distant back lands of a hilly or broken character, covered with dense forest and scrub.

I append particulars showing the quality of the traverse surveys in the Wellington Land District from the 1st July, 1889, to the 30th June, 1890:—

Name of Surveyor.	Number of Closures.	Number of Stations.	Number of Miles.	Total Error.		Total Error per Mile.		Remarks— Nature of Country.
				Meridian.	Perpendicular.	Meridian.	Perpendicular.	
J. D. Climie	11	793	29.0	25.3	54.6	0.88	1.88	Rough.
John Annabell	13	421	16.1	40.5	30.3	2.5	1.9	Broken.
R. P. Greville	6	267	15.45	24.7	40.3	1.6	2.6	Part bush.
H. J. Lowe	5	420	14.0	5.7	20.1	0.4	1.4	Hilly bush.
J. F. Frith	1	109	4.0	12.0	7.1	3.0	1.8	Rough, hilly.
G. T. Murray	16	525	37.1	53.9	26.7	1.45	0.7	Flat bush.
C. A. Mountfort	5	346	16.5	30.6	11.8	1.8	0.7	Rough hilly bush.
J. R. Annabell	1	74	3.75	3.2	12.3	0.8	3.4	Fair country.
H. J. Lewis	4	48	7.9	1.3	3.6	0.2	0.4	Hilly.
Means and totals ..	62	3,003	143.8	197.2	206.8	1.3	1.4	

Native Land Court Surveys.—In addition to the 261,697 acres surveyed at the expense of the Crown, private surveyors surveyed and prepared eighty-four plans, of an area of 183,436 acres, in 223 divisions, making a total of 445,133 acres. The duty of inspecting the surveys, examining the plans, attending to Native Land Court requirements, and issuing titles, has severely taxed the energies of the office staff, and taken the inspector away for months from urgent settlement-survey inspections. The principal blocks included in the return are Awarua, Mangatainoka, Oruamatua, Urukakite, Otairi, Whaharangi, and Pungataua; the other blocks are scattered throughout the district.

Road and Railway Surveys.—The 76 miles of road-surveys include lines outside settlement-blocks in the Waitotara, Otamakapua, Mangamahu, and Pohangina districts, and the Pahiatua-Palmerston Road. The cost, as given by the surveyors, is very moderate. I have again to