

Land Transfer Branch.—Ninety-nine plans received from surveyors were examined and passed, 2,336 plans were placed on Land Transfer titles, 10 plans illustrating dealings were compiled, and 3 Land Transfer working-town plans were constructed for Petone, Pahiatua, and Kilbirnie. The usual action was also taken on the following dealings: 53 applications, 1,320 transfers, 1,036 mortgages, 56 Crown leases, 131 leases, and 4 proclamations.

Clerical Branch.—During the past nine months Mr. Wright, Chief Clerk, and his assistants have been quite overburdened with work, and it is only by working overtime that the arrears can be kept within reasonable limits. The following list comprises the portion of the work that is recordable: Letters received and despatched, 11,598; vouchers passed, 890; applications registered, 350; licenses and leases prepared, 49; circulars to surveyors prepared and despatched, 165; in addition to which, of course, the multifarious duties—the time spent on which cannot well be estimated—such as work connected with warrants, titles, Land Board, land-sales, notices as to payments to selectors, forwarding lithos., posters, “Land Guides,” waiting upon the public, &c., all of which form part of a day’s work, and require special attention.

Proposed Operations, 1892-93.—The very large number of special settlements started all over the district, comprising as they do thirty-three separate blocks, ranging from 3,000 to 11,000 acres each, aggregating a total area of over a quarter of a million acres, will take every available officer of the staff, although a dozen more temporary surveyors have been engaged and started on the work, to get the whole of the allotments pegged out to enable the bushfalling to be commenced within a reasonable time. Two settlements have, however, been completed, and work has been started on twenty-four of the others. On eleven of these the roads have been located, and the schemes for the allotment of the sections have been sent in, or shortly will be, so that on these bushfalling can commence at an early date as soon as the sections have been allocated by ballot. On thirteen of the other settlements I hope to get sufficient roads laid out to locate part of the sections, so as to allow some of the settlers to start bushfalling this season, thus leaving only seven in which work cannot be commenced until next spring. This large area of sectional surveys will take at least two years to complete in the field and get the plans finally checked and completed. Thus a still larger staff will be required for the road and other surveys necessary to enable a constant supply of land to be put in the market for ordinary selection. At least three surveyors will have to be kept another season at the survey of roads required to be taken through Native lands, before the right to do so expires, and on the roads in the North and South Wairarapa districts, which have—though they have been formed many years—never yet been located. I shall therefore have to leave several Town Standard and other surveys now urgently required.

JOHN H. BAKER, Assistant Surveyor-General.

MARLBOROUGH.

Upon reference to the returns it will be seen that the field-work executed during the period ended 31st March, 1892, comes mainly under the headings of “Rural and Suburban” and “Native Land Court Surveys,” the major portion of which has been done by Mr. Goulter (staff); and the cost must be considered reasonable when it is borne in mind that the whole country is very rough, and covered with timber, with bay and coast traverses, and in many cases the side and back boundaries are traverses along the ridges. The remaining sections, executed by authorised surveyors, are in open country, surveyed on application at schedule rates.

Topographical Survey.—No work under this heading has been returned. Mr. Robertson is now engaged in connection with his survey in the Rai Valley, extending minor triangulation with topography over the Ronga, Tunakino, and Rai Valleys, covering an area of about 20,000 acres.

Minor Triangulation (7,800 acres).—This represents the aggregate area of subsidiary triangles in breaking down from the main triangulation in the Pelorus and Queen Charlotte Sounds; and, as they have been observed as in minor triangulation, and permanently marked, the stations are all available for future work, and have accordingly been classed under the above heading.

Topographical Survey for selection under “The Land Act, 1887.”—No surveys under this head have been found necessary, the topography of the localities in which lands have been proclaimed open for selection meeting all requirements appertaining to applications.

Rural and Suburban (5,290 acres).—Of this area, 3,168 acres were surveyed into thirteen sections in seven different localities in the Pelorus Sound, extending from Havelock to Forsyth Island, surveyed on application. Eight sections, representing 284 acres, are old surveys, the ground-marking requiring re-establishing in connection with the survey of the adjoining Crown lands. Field operations in the Sounds are at times much interfered with by winds and bad weather. This has been especially the case with these surveys. The remaining 1,838 acres, in seven sections, by authorised surveyors, are situated on the Erina and Molesworth Runs, in the Wairau and Awatere Valleys, and were surveyed on the application of the lessees.

Town Section Survey.—No work has been done in this direction during the year.

Native Land Court Survey (1,616 acres).—Survey and partition into four subdivisions of the Kumutoto Native Reserve, Queen Charlotte Sound, dealt with by the Native Land Court for individualising the interests therein, and issuing the Crown grants. The numerous bays which indent this block gives it a very irregular and rough coast-line, requiring six miles of ridge (scrub and bush) and nine miles of beach traverses.

Gold-mining Survey.—No applications have been sent in for mining surveys this year.

Road Survey (8½ miles, Havelock to Mahakipawa).—This includes land-plan survey under Public Works Act of five miles of road through Mr. Cullen’s property, of which two miles had to be selected and graded, and continuation of same three miles and three-quarters across the mud-flat to Havelock, and traverse of alternative line from the saddle to the Kaituna Ford.