

the Land Act Amendment Acts, amounting to £47 15s., may, however, be fairly considered as a credit for the department, and would consequently reduce the net cost by that amount.

Office-work.—Appended are statements of the work done by the office staff generally, also for other departments, and a miscellaneous return: 30 surveyors' plans, with the accompanying tabulations, &c., were received, examined, and checked; 87 plans were put on certificates of titles in lieu of Crown-grants—42 on ordinary certificates of titles and 18 on certificates of Native titles; altogether 308 plans, large and small, were prepared, besides numerous tracings. Considerable progress has also been made with the plotting of valuable topographical information long locked up in our field-books; but I am sorry to say the many other demands on Mr. Roberts's time, as accountant for our Road Branch, in examining and checking plans, and in other occasional assistance in the ordinary routine work (rendered necessary by smallness of staff), greatly retards the progress of our map of Westland on the one-mile scale; indeed, lately, the work on it has come to a standstill altogether. The same may be said of our Crown-grant and Land Transfer record maps, of our 40-chain district maps (intended for photolithographing and reduction to the one-mile scale), and also of many of our block-sheets and application maps, which have not been touched for a long time. Mr. Clark's time is fully occupied with his duties as Receiver of Land Revenue, Application Officer, and Clerk to Land Board, and he has no time for draughting; consequently, Messrs. Roberts and Dixon are the only officers available for this class of work.

It may not be out of place to here draw attention to the amount of clerical work connected with the administration of the various branches of the department—namely, lands, surveys, roads, forests, and matters in connection with the Midland Railway contract, &c. The amount of such correspondence is greatly in excess of what would naturally be expected if judged by the area of land disposed of only. In illustration of this work relating to correspondence, vouchers, accounts, land notices, returns, and records, &c., the inward correspondence received and dealt with for the nine months in question amounted to 1,920 letters and papers, and the outward to 4,436; total, 6,356. I have already urged, and would again urge, upon you the necessity for appointing at least one experienced draughtsman to our staff to replace Messrs. Pfeiffer and Covil, who, as you are aware, were removed at the time I took charge of the district last year, and thus enable us to do something towards bringing our maps up to date and of service to the public.

The credits in favour of the office received in fees for preparation of leases, licenses, and plans, and for amounts passed for work done for other departments, equal £51 15s. 6d.

Work proposed for the Year 1892-93.—The field staff will proceed with the rural and suburban section work now on hand and that may come in during the year, including areas applied for under the Midland Railway contract, and will, when opportunity offers during the progress of their work, bring under check any adjoining spotting and built surveys not already connected to the standard work. It will also be highly desirable to have the boundaries of the already-proclaimed mining reserves defined on the ground. With our present staff, however, we will not be able to do much at this during the year. The probable cost of cutting these boundary-lines I have already reported to you. Some minor road-surveys will also have to be done, the construction of which will probably be undertaken during the current year. Every opportunity will also be taken to extend our topographical information in the neighbourhood of current work. There are also many constructed roads and tracks of which we have no reliable record on our plans, and which should be traversed when time permits, but I am afraid at present they cannot be undertaken.

JOHN STRAUCHON, Chief Surveyor.

CANTERBURY.

Topographical Survey: Minor Triangulation.—In consequence of the reduced number of the field staff it was not possible to proceed with surveys under these headings, although the necessity is recognised for their extension in the Hunter River District and north-west parts of the land district.

Topographical Survey for Selection Purposes.—The only area of this class is the 32,320 acres which Mr. District Surveyor Brodrick executed on the Station Peaks. The work was completed in a few weeks, and furnished a scheme of sections which afforded satisfaction to the selectors who subsequently took up the country.

Rural and Suburban Settlement Surveys.—An area of 27,286 acres is returned, the average area of the lots being about 153 acres.

Mr. District Surveyor Welch's surveys comprise 13,238 acres of lands selected by the Midland Railway Company in Blocks XLV. and L., and are included under this head, though the large area of the subdivisions almost bars the work from being classed as sectional survey proper.

Mr. District Surveyor Brodrick defined 2,268 acres of scattered sections in the Waimate and Geraldine Counties, which had been purchased from the Crown in 1890.

Mr. Assistant Surveyor McClure's area of 2,811 acres includes the Medbury Farm Homestead Block, the subdivision of reserves near Rakaia and Dunsandel, and some small selections of the Midland Railway Company.

Mr. Assistant Surveyor Mathias returns 7,263 acres, made up of sections in the Ashburton County, which were mostly purchased from Government in 1890 and 1891. He also completed the