

survey of the Waimate Educational Reserves, now the village settlement lands which are advertised for sale on the 31st May.

The other unspecified surveys under this heading call for no special notice, but it has to be noted that the three last-named officers' work was much hampered and increased in cost by reason of the manner in which they had to travel from one part of the district to another to survey small and scattered sections, and to make inspections and reports for the Land Board on reserves and river-bed lands.

Mr. Brodrick afforded substantial assistance to Mr. Ranger Fussell and the department by undertaking a number of urgent and difficult inspections of selectors' holdings. In addition to the surveys which were returned as completed, Mr. Welch has in an advanced state of survey 1,913 acres in the Midland Railway Company's Block L. Mr. Brodrick has since completed the field-work of the Station Peak Run surveys, comprising 32,320 acres. Mr. McClure has nearly surveyed 3,410 acres of selected land near Rakaia, and also 15½ miles of standard traverses.

The small area returned for this period for Canterbury is due to the fact that the operations extended over only nine months, and because Messrs. McClure and Mathias were in the office about three months completing the mapping of the survey work which had been returned for the year ended 30th June, 1891. No claim can be made for town section or Native Land Court surveys.

*Mining Surveys.*—But one survey, and that of 111 acres, at Alford Forest, has been placed in this class. Two leases of this area, one for working coal and one for minerals, were issued.

*Road Surveys.*—The traverse of ten miles shown in the schedule was executed in connection with the ordinary sectional surveys. An additional length of 23½ miles of traverses, executed principally by Messrs. Brodrick and McClure as a basis for their sectional surveys, were carried out with extra care, and, as the stations have been permanently marked, the traverses should prove of exceptional value for further reference.

*Other Work.*—The duties comprised in the schedules include, among other matters—repairs and renewals of trig. stations; extra expense of permanently making standard traverses; inspections of and reports on Crown lands and reserves; marking, preparatory to sale, by notice-boards, boundaries of Greta Peaks runs; the laying-down a 10-chain standard at Christchurch for testing long steel bands, &c.

*Office-work.*—During the nine months under review the staff has been employed on varied and miscellaneous duties, the exigencies of the department rendering it impossible with the very much reduced staff to keep each officer on special or defined work. Mr. Shanks, the Chief Draughtsman, reports that seventy-three field plots, embracing 59,717 acres, were deposited for examination. Most of the plans were checked, but none of them have been reduced and brought up on Crown grant, Land Transfer, or the district maps. Indeed, this class of work has not, in consequence of the small staff, been attended to for some years past. As this is one of the essential requirements and safeguards of the splendid system inaugurated by the late Mr. J. T. Thomson, I felt justified in declining to approve the plots before they had been reduced and brought up upon the record-maps. Eleven tracings were drawn for reproduction by photolithography, in addition to six which were prepared and published by the Head Office. All these plans were required to illustrate notifications under the Land Acts.

The demands of the Property-tax and the Land Office returns (which have been unusually heavy) have necessitated the employment of the draughtsmen on semi-clerical work. The preparation of plans and tracings for the field staff, to illustrate reports and correspondence; searches in the Land Transfer Office registers; attending to the requirements of local bodies, other departments, and the public; the preparation of schedules, descriptions, &c., and an unusual amount of sick-leave, account for the whole time of the draughtsmen.

*Correspondence.*—This is under Mr. Bendely's control, who supplies the following information: Letters received, 3,700; letters sent out, 4,647; circulars issued, 589; returns prepared and forwarded, 42; sale plans and advertisements circulated, 800.

*Land Transfer Work.*—Mr. D. H. Monro furnishes the following statement of work for the nine months ending 31st March, 1892: Plans deposited, 38; ordinary certificates, 717; Crown grant certificates, 156; transfers checked, 302; mortgages checked, 6; leases checked, 17; applications checked, 152; road-deviation plans, 12. Only one subdivision plan was prepared.

Mr. Monro finds that the clerical work has increased one-third in consequence of his having to furnish for record purposes a report on each plan examined. The number of certificates in lieu of Crown grants is about the average of the last two years. Though there has been a falling-off in the number of certificates of title, &c., issued, the work of the office has not decreased as the contract system formerly in vogue has been abandoned. The tendency latterly having been to embrace in one several former titles, the work in connection with the issue of a certificate of title frequently involves much additional time and labour. The cost of the branch for the nine months was £442 10s.

The system of check applied by Mr. Monro and his assistants in the examination of all plans and documents submitted for scrutiny is thorough and precise, with the exception that there are but few standard plots on which to record the multitude of surveys which have been effected by licensed surveyors under the Act, or in ordinary course by staff officers. The additional safeguards afforded by standard plots render the practice worthy of general adoption.

During the nine months under review, though I found it impossible, owing to other demands upon my time, to make technical examinations, I found time to make six distant visits of inspection of surveyors' work, and devoted seventy-five days to the duty of making myself acquainted with my new district, attending to urgent and special matters over the whole extent of Canterbury, travelling by train 1,900 miles, by coach and on horseback 1,150 miles. During the current year I propose to resume the active examination of field-work, whether by the staff or private surveyors.