

Native Land Court Surveys.—Under this heading there have been surveyed by authorised surveyors for Native Land Court and Government Native-land purchase purposes, fifty-one blocks, of an area of 175,221 acres, costing £1,449 11s. 9d., which gives a mean of about 2d. per acre; but, as the final balances are not all paid upon these blocks, the mean cost will be a little higher. All of this work has been paid for at mileage rates, being all subdivisions of periphery surveys in the Rohepotae District, and a cutting-out of Government interests, or of land under negotiations by the Crown. In addition to the above area, there have also been received for examination plans of some sixty-six blocks, containing an area of 100,853 acres, the cost of which is paid by Native owners under private agreement with the surveyors. This gives a grand total of Native Land Court surveys, plans received and passed during the year, of 117 blocks, containing 276,074 acres. During the year there has been a very large number of Native Land Court sittings gazetted, the work of preparing and forwarding the plans for which all falls upon this office.

Gold-mining Surveys.—The surveys for mining purposes have not been many. Owing to the continued depression in the mining industry only some fifty-three sections have been received, covering an area of 1,232 acres, and costing £545 18s. 9d., or a mean of 8·86s. per acre. Of this amount, Mr. Allom has surveyed ten silver leases at the Great Barrier, covering 148 acres, at a cost of 8s. an acre.

Roads, Railways, and Watercourses.—A considerable mileage has been surveyed, totalling 99½ miles, of which mileage the staff have surveyed nearly 92 miles, at a cost of £1,285 5s. 11d., or some £14 per mile; and authorised surveyors 7¼ miles, at a cost of nearly £11 per mile. Considering that the above includes cost of grading in rough forest country, I think it certainly is a low rate. All these roads have been surveyed either in exercise of road-rights reserved through Native lands or for the purpose of giving access to settled lands unprovided with roads.

Other Work.—A total of £863 is entered under this head, and, as shown by the detailed statement, is made up of cost of inspection of Native Land Court surveys, taking levels of swamps for proposed drainage, repegging old sections disposed of without resurvey, inspection of sections by surveyors instead of Ranger, the counting of kauri trees and valuation for sale, &c.

Summarising the work done and the work to be done, it shows as follows:—

	Completed during Year.	In Hands of Surveyors,
Minor trig. with topography ...	147,400 acres.	60,000 acres.
Topographical, for purposes of selection ...	18,000 "	...
Rural and suburban ...	155,349 "	105,330 acres.
Native Land Court blocks ...	276,074 "	516,900 "
Roads ...	99 miles.	201 miles.

In addition to work in hands of the surveyors, I have some 37,000 acres for which instructions have not been issued as yet.

Land Transfer Work.—During the past year 108 plans have been passed, representing a total area of 41,785 acres. There are not many properties being brought under the Land Transfer Act or subdividing at the present time, and therefore the return is small.

Native Obstruction.—There have been three serious cases of obstruction this past year: one obstruction at Kawakawa, in which determined opposition was shown to Mr. Wright, Government Road Engineer, in carrying out a road-warrant, but which was eventually settled by Mr. Bishop, R.M., and myself, after the Natives had been summoned. The second case was near Mangonui, in which the surveyor, Mr. Campbell, was forcibly prevented from carrying on his survey of Crown sections, and the obstructionists had to be summoned and heavily fined before the surveyor was allowed to go on with his work. The third and last is the case of Mr. Creagh, who was obstructed whilst carrying out Native surveys at Ruatoke, in which the Natives had to be arrested and imprisoned before the survey could be continued. The firm stand taken by the Government in all these cases has had a very good effect upon the Native mind.

Work for Ensuing Season.—At present the thirteen staff surveyors and twelve authorised surveyors employed at schedule rates have only some 105,330 acres of rural lands, and 268,900 acres of Native Land Court surveys for land-purchase purposes on hand; but this has been supplemented by large additions this month. The authorised surveyors have in their hands, to be paid for privately by Native owners, an additional 248,000 acres. The additional lands now being roaded and subdivided under "The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, 1891," will tax the whole of the energies of the staff of surveyors to the utmost.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI.

Minor Triangulation without Topography.—In conjunction with the sectional survey an area of 23,300 acres has been covered by minor triangulation, at a mean cost of 2·09d. per acre.

Topographical Survey for Selection under "The Land Act, 1887," including Roads.—A block of 18,620 acres has been prepared for settlement in the Opaku District by Mr. John Annabell, at a cost of 4·5d. per acre. The land is very broken, and only fit for settlement in large areas.

Rural and Suburban.—An area of 47,465 acres has been subdivided into 189 sections, varying in size from 100 to 1,070 acres, at a mean cost of 1·5s. per acre. The least expensive of the staff surveys was Mr. Dalziell's, and of the contract surveys, Mr. Davies's, both being at the rate of 1·3s. per acre. Mr. Finnerty's subdivision of Mangaere is apparently lower, at 8·5d. per acre, but the roads had been previously surveyed on magnetic meridian.

Town Section Survey.—The only work executed has been the subdivision of 52 acres into eighty-six sections, being a portion of a township reserve situate at the junction of the Makuri and Douglas Roads, in the Huiroa District. The cost was at the rate of 14·42s. per allotment.