

hundred lease deeds, and the preparation of a large number of temporary leases, which should be overtaken this year, unless a great deal of unforeseen work should require to be done. I desire to place on record my sense of the willing and satisfactory manner in which all the officers have fulfilled their several duties.

SIDNEY WEETMAN, Chief Surveyor.

OTAGO.

Minor Triangulation and Topographical Surveys.—During the year nothing has been done in this excepting 3,000 acres of topography, at a cost of Od. 4 per acre, by Mr. Assistant Surveyor Neill, for the purpose of subdividing runs in the Lee Stream and Hummock districts.

Rural and Suburban.—The total area surveyed during the year under this heading amounts to 37,847 acres, embracing 137 sections, at an average cost of Os. 76 per acre. Of this area, Mr. District Surveyor Langmuir returns 1,513 acres, being part of Tokarahi Estate. These surveys, as a rule, occupy much time and care, on account of the necessity for reproducing old and intricate boundaries. Mr. District Surveyor Wilmot returned 3,892 acres, made up of areas widely scattered throughout the districts under his charge. Mr. District Surveyor Calder tabulates 11,122 acres, which include the subdivision of Run 261, Poolburn district, into small grazing-runs. Mr. Assistant Surveyor McCurdie returns 3,100 acres, subdivided into eighteen sections, all in heavily bush-clad country, the survey of which is difficult, and impeded by the inclement nature of the weather prevailing in the district. Mr. Assistant Surveyor Neill completed 14,276 acres, embracing subdivision of Run 260A, Lee Stream district, into small grazing-runs, and other small surveys widely scattered over various districts. Mr. Edie surveyed 3,942 acres into twenty-eight sections, all situated in country heavily timbered and difficult of access. His progress was much retarded by the prevailing wet weather. This officer's services were dispensed with after the completion of the above work, because of the lessening demand for that kind of land in the district.

Town Section Surveys.—These comprise 1,066 acres, subdivided into 616 sections, at a cost of 13s. 7 per allotment. The townships surveyed were Ranfurly and Komako, situate in the Maniototo District.

Gold-mining Surveys.—During the year 7,747 acres, embracing 197 sections, were surveyed, at a cost of 4s. 53 per acre. As the applicants deposit fees, and as the staff surveyors were fully engaged on other works, the majority of these surveys were handed to and executed by private surveyors, who, I am pleased to report, did the surveys in a satisfactory and expeditious manner. In future I anticipate the staff surveyors will be able to overtake most of these surveys as they come to hand.

Roads and Railways.—There were surveyed 49½ miles of road, at a cost of £13 per mile, more than half the mileage being situated in bush country.

Other Works.—The principal items under this heading include supervision connected with the improved-farm settlements, such as the measuring of earthworks, areas for grass-seed sowing, and bushfelling, and reporting generally on business connected with the working of the department.

Proposed Operations for 1898-99.—Mr. Langmuir has on hand some 300 acres in Greenvale district, and a number of small surveys scattered throughout various districts. He will be at liberty to undertake all mining surveys applied for in the Lawrence Survey District, and will also be available for any future work under the Land for Settlements Act. Mr. Wilmot has 500 acres of settlement surveys on hand, situated in the Districts of Tarras, Kawarau, Cromwell, Leaning Rock, and Wakefield, also five mining surveys in various districts, and I anticipate he will be kept busily employed during the ensuing year on rural and mining surveys as they come to hand. Mr. Calder has 7,200 acres of settlement surveys to operate on, situated in the districts of Naseby, Blackstone Hill, and St. Bathans; also a number of mining applications. Mr. McCurdie has 4,800 acres of bush-land to sectionise, situate in Tautuku district, and this will keep him fully employed. Mr. Neill has the engineering survey of twenty miles of road between Bendigo and Matakauui to complete.

Office-work.—This has been carried out very satisfactorily under the supervision of Mr. S. Thompson, who was appointed Chief Draughtsman in the month of July of last year. The draughtsmen in this office have been fully occupied during the year. Besides the work of checking maps as they come in from the surveyors, lithographing them, recording them on the Crown-grant record-maps, copying on to Land Office maps, and checking and recording all Land Transfer maps as they come in from the private surveyors, a considerable amount of work has been done by the draughtsmen of an extra kind, such as the preparation of borough valuation maps, as also those of ridings, tracings, and preparation of estates maps and runs. The compilation of working plans of four blocks in the Glenomaru district, and two copies of the north-eastern run map, have also been made. Of the latter, one is for this office and the other for the Naseby District Office. A copy of the south-eastern run map is also in hand, and it is intended to make a copy of the interior run map as well. These run maps have been in almost daily use for many years, and are getting very dilapidated, hence the necessity for their renewal. Some of the oldest Crown-grant record-maps are also very much rubbed and worn, and as opportunity occurs these also will require to be replaced. A map on a scale of 5 chains to an inch, of Dunedin and suburbs, showing all subdivisions and areas, is in course of preparation, and on completion it is intended to be copied for publication. Besides the ordinary block and township lithographs, data for a new litho. of Kauroo Survey District, on a scale of one mile to an inch, was prepared; also a very complete map of the northern portion of Otago, on a scale of eight miles to an inch, and also a "Tourist Guide" map of Dunedin. Several 4 in. to the mile litho. maps of Otago have been mounted, and coloured up to show counties, ridings, and survey districts, both for other Government departments and private firms. Working up detached and scattered surveys into compiled block-maps have, during the last few years, fallen very much in arrear; these, as the draughtsmen's time can be spared, I