

District Surveyor Skeet, through partly cleared country, the survey of 21½ miles of roads taken under warrant by District Surveyor Bullard through very rough and broken Native blocks covered with bush, a small road-deviation by Temporary Surveyor Murcott, and eight miles of engineering survey by Temporary Surveyor Sladden.

Other Work.—Inspections: In addition to inspections made by myself, District Surveyor H. M. Skeet was engaged in inspection and general revision of Land Transfer survey of Pukengahu Block, which has caused this department some inconvenience, but has now been rectified. Office Surveyor W. H. Skinner was engaged in field inspections of Land Transfer surveys in Paritutu, Cape Waitara, Hawera, and Carlyle Survey Districts, all of which (so far as approved) are now satisfactory. Under above heading are also included redefinitions of survey-lines in Ngairi swamps; reporting on an alleged damage done on King's section, Ohura Road; standard surveying, Opunake Township; fixing boundary between Subdivisions 1 and 2 of Tutae-ariari Block; deviating road at Awakino; deviation of Toro Road; alignment survey, Borough of New Plymouth, and standard work: fixing marks in various parts of district; redefining boundary-lines, Mangaehu Special Settlement; and measuring up areas of bush felled; and grass cleared on Tongaporutu, Uruti, and Whangamomona Improved-farm Settlements.

Field-work in Progress and proposed for Next Year.—District Surveyor H. M. Skeet has yet in hand the major triangulation of the north-western portion of this district, which has been delayed owing to the necessity of having certain railway plans completed before the right of taking land for the same lapsed. The topographical survey of Mount Egmont is also well in hand, but it must of necessity be abandoned until next summer clears away the snow. The discovery, after recent sale of sections, that the survey of a large portion of Waitara Township is not complete renders it necessary that this work be attended to: and this, with standard survey of Waitara and Hawera Towns, will also devolve upon Mr. Skeet. Mr. Bullard has about two months' work done in a 20,000-acre block of Crown lands at the back of Hawera, and he will also take under warrant a couple of roads in Pukengahu Block. Mr. Frith has 20,000 acres of section work well in hand, and he will complete by June the survey of twenty miles of road from Pipiriki to Waitotara *via* Pokeka. Mr. Morpeth has a 19,000-acre block for settlement half finished. Mr. Murcott, Mr. Finnerty, and Mr. Sladden have 3,000- to 5,000-acre blocks finished in the field, but the plans are not yet ready. Mr. Laing has some 12,000 acres in hand, which will be finished during ensuing year. Mr. Holt has in hand a block of 10,000 acres in Opaku-Kapara Block.

Office Work.—The work in this branch has been steadily on the increase, necessitating the appointment of several extra hands. The preparation of block sheets, Crown-grant record and Land Transfer plans has been pushed on well during past year, but much still remains to be done. The compiling of land-valuation plans and schedules near the close of the last financial year greatly retarded the then current work, which had to be made up later on.

It is proposed to continue construction of survey district, Crown-grant record, and county maps as fast as other current work and the limited draughting staff at my disposal will permit, besides pushing on preparation of the ordinary block sheets, &c.

JOHN STRAUCHON, Chief Surveyor.

WELLINGTON.

Minor Triangulation and Topography.—Mr. H. J. Lowe, District Surveyor, resumed the extension of the major and minor triangulation through the Rangipo-Kaimanawa districts, and has all but completed an additional area of 745,000 acres, being now engaged in effecting the connection with the Auckland series. During the winter months I expect that we shall complete the whole of the calculations and maps, and be in a position to furnish you with some interesting comparisons between the Wellington triangulation and those of the adjacent land districts. Next summer it is proposed to measure a central base of verification, preferably on the Murimotu Plains.

Topographical Survey of Land to be opened for Selection.—The 16,905 acres returned under this heading comprise Awarua 4c No. 2, the preliminary survey of which was effected by Mr. J. M. Morice, and Awarua 2c No. 1, situated between the Upper Rangitikei and Moawhango Rivers, which was defined by Mr. H. I. Biggs. These lands were opened for sale, numerous applications were received, and the surveyors have now all but completed the definition of the various selections.

Rural and Suburban Surveys.—The surveys of this class comprise a much smaller area than usual, due to the fact that several surveyors were employed upon miscellaneous duties and scattered surveys, that four of them have a considerable area in hand approaching completion, and that the staff has been considerably reduced. The average cost per acre of the rural and suburban surveys (about 1s. 2d. per acre) is very moderate. The chief blocks which make up the area are—3,338 acres in the Akitio Improved Farm, surveyed by Mr. J. G. Littlejohn; 15,021 acres situated in the Makara and Ruakokoputuna (South Wairarapa) district, by Mr. P. R. Earle; 8,607 acres of the Awarua Block south-east of Moawhango, by Mr. H. I. Biggs; and 6,220 acres of the Mangapapa Block, in the Upper Waitotara district, by Mr. J. R. Annabell. The attached schedule of traverse closures shows that the average error per mile on the meridian and perpendicular amounted to 1.3 links and 1 link respectively, which I think will be admitted to be very satisfactory, taking into consideration the fact that surveys in Wellington District comprise generally hilly and broken forest lands. This result is due to the care and ability of the surveyors, and the great facilities and accuracy obtainable in measurements by the use of long steel bands.