

surveyors could, with much advantage, be kept constantly employed thereon; but unfortunately there [are no] funds available under the control of the Surveyor-General or the Land Transfer Department for the prosecution of the work. I earnestly recommend that special provision be made to enable this essential and most important class of survey to be rapidly extended throughout the Wellington District. As I understand the large accumulation of the Assurance Fund of the Land Transfer Department is not available for defraying the cost of standard surveys, it appears to me that power might be taken to divert some portion of the fund for this purpose, and that such diversion might be claimed to be in the interests, and for the protection, of the Land Transfer Department, in prevention of claims for compensation which otherwise will, in all probability, fall upon that department.

*Rangers' Duties.*—Though the staff surveyors will not be called upon to the same extent as in previous years to assist the Crown Lands Rangers, it was found convenient and necessary to utilise the former in remote localities.

*Land Transfer Surveys.*—All the surveys executed under this heading were carried out by licensed surveyors. The Land Transfer draughtsman reports that the work continues to increase; that the year's output exceeds that of any previous period; 247 plans were examined and approved; 1,666 deeds and other instruments were passed; and nearly 3,600 plans were placed upon certificates of title, and sixteen plans were compiled.

*Office.*—The past year has been an exceedingly busy one. Plans of 207 settlement surveys, townships, Native Land Court, &c., were duly examined and approved. I am now able to report that the Examiner and Computer, Mr. F. Carrington, with the assistance of several officers who were detailed to take part in the work, has overtaken all arrears, and is now well abreast of his work. The examination of a large number of road and public-works plans which had been deferred have been partly dealt with. During the past year seventy-eight plans were finally disposed of, and twenty-three others are well advanced towards completion. Special assistance has been afforded Mr. Littlejohn, the officer in charge of this work. In the draughting department the following new work was completed: Standard plan of Petone, eleven Crown grant record-maps, six road record-maps, two district maps on the 40-chain scale, besides a multitude of other duties attended to and performed. In connection with the Native Land Court, three plans were compiled; 552 titles were prepared; also twenty Land Purchase deeds; and forty-four authorities for surveys issued. The value of the services rendered to other departments amount to £4,008 2s. 9d. Included in this is the sum of £2,694 14s. 8d. for services within the North Island Main Trunk Railway area; surveyors' and draughtsmen's services to the Land Transfer Department, £463 13s. 6d.; Land-tax Department, £585 3s. 7d. The whole of the county maps and record-maps have been partially revised. It is proposed to construct accurate county maps to be exhibited in terms of the Survey Regulations. Should the strength of the staff permit it, it is intended also to proceed with the construction of district maps and the publication thereof, which appears still to be an urgent necessity and a crying want in this district. A thoroughly complete index and register of every section and title is in progress. Reliable and complete catalogues of reserves and Crown lands are also being prepared. This work, which is intended when finished to be a complete register of all the lands in this district, showing tenure, selectors' names, with references to titles, *Gazettes*, and records, has always been recognised as a necessity. The preliminary rough registers, occupying six large and four small volumes, are now about ready for revision; when completed they will prove of great service. Should we be fortunate enough to carry out all these proposals during the current year it will be a matter for congratulation; their necessity and importance cannot be over-rated.

*Land-valuation Maps.*—The preparation of section lists and maps for the Valuer-General under "The Valuation of Land Act, 1896," was carried on into the past financial year, and was duly completed at a cost of £385 3s. 7d., the work extending to the end of June—far beyond the expected time—interfering with and retarding greatly the regular work.

*Proposals for 1898-99.*—The survey-work in hand or proposed to be undertaken during the year comprises, approximately, 1,016 square miles of triangulation, 101,000 acres of settlement survey, 293,000 acres of Native Land Court surveys, 159 miles of road survey, and 500 acres of township and village surveys. As before noted, Mr. H. J. Lowe will complete the Rangipo-Kaimanawa triangulation. Mr. J. D. Climie, in conjunction with his inspecting duties, will complete miscellaneous surveys in the Waimarino country, Native Land Court subdivisions in the Awarua Block, Hautapu Valley, and, if approved, and should funds be available, the extension of the Petone and Hutt standard surveys. Mr. F. A. Thompson is to continue the surveys of the Crown lands on the western slopes of the Ruahine Ranges, and miscellaneous road and other surveys in the Rangitikei and Pohangina districts. Mr. P. A. Dalziel will shortly complete various surveys in the Puketoi district, and will then map up and hand in the results thereof. Mr. James McKay is now pegging off about 12,000 acres of sections in the Rangiwahia Block; when finished it is proposed that he should survey and legalise the roads of access to that block, both from north and south. Mr. H. Maitland will complete the sectionizing of the experimental farm block and the Native Land Court subdivisions in Awarua 4A No. 3c, &c., near Taihape, and the definition of the roads therein. Mr. J. R. Strachan is to complete the road and settlement surveys in the Kaiwhata district, and then take up the exploration and survey of the Crown lands on the eastern slopes of the Tararua Ranges. Mr. C. A. Mountfort will shortly complete the settlement surveys north of the Hautapu, near Taihape, and will then finish the Native Land Court subdivisions in the adjacent Awarua Block, and also survey and legalise roads in the locality. Mr. H. J. Lewis will prosecute the Native Land Court and settlement surveys of the Tauakira Block, comprising 49,540 and 26,650 acres respectively, and finish various miscellaneous road surveys which he has in hand. Mr. P. R. Earle will complete the survey of the Wairarapa Lake, which is required in connection with Native claims and applications to lease lands outside the title boundaries. He will also continue the survey of roads in South