

Of these arrears, the principal items are:—

	£
222 perpetual-lease selectors, owing	1,656
212 occupation-with-right-of-purchase selectors, owing	1,518
210 lease-in-perpetuity selectors, owing	1,678
122 village-homestead special selectors, owing	1,528
77 special-settlement-association selectors, owing	750
79 improved-farm selectors, owing	541
58 small-grazing-run selectors, owing	2,228
120 miscellaneous selectors, owing... ..	2,889
119 lease-in-perpetuity (land-for-settlement) selectors, owing ..	2,770

SURVEYS.

The transactions connected with the surveys of the colony are summarised in the table below:—

	Acres.	Average Cost per Acre.	Total cost.
			£ s. d.
Minor triangulation	708,252	0·49d.	1,454 6 4
Topographical surveys prior to selection	13,758	1·07d.	61 7 10
Rural and suburban section surveys (1,615 sections)	540,485	1·06s.	28,757 17 3
Town section surveys (891 sections), cost per section	1,079	17·08s.	761 2 9
Native Land Court surveys (319 divisions)	330,576	4·3d.	5,933 3 9
Mining surveys (336 sections)	17,642	4·9s.	4,321 9 2
Roads (730·94 miles), per mile	...	£13·61	9,947 12 2
Miscellaneous surveys, inspection, &c.	...	...	8,632 0 2
Total cost of the above field-work for the year	...	...	£59,868 19 5

The total cost for the year is about £5,000 less than for the previous year, due principally to a smaller expenditure in mining surveys and miscellaneous work, whilst there has been an increased charge on rural and suburban section surveys.

TRIGONOMETRICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS.

The largest area under triangulation during the year is shown under Mr. J. H. Lowe's name, but a considerable area in hand is not entered in the return, for the reason that the maps are not yet complete. It lies in the centre of the North Island, around the mountain groups of Ruapehu, Tongariro, Kaimanawa, &c., and forms the connecting-link between the triangulation of Auckland, Wellington, and Hawke's Bay. Mr. Lowe has been in charge of the work, and has covered a large area of country with a network of triangles. The final results are looked forward to with considerable interest. In Taranaki Messrs. Skeet, Sladden, and Laing have made further extensions of the existing triangulation to some extent, and in Nelson a large area lying on the mountainous ranges on the west side of the district has been under survey by Messrs. Sadd, Thompson, and Robinson, though the work is not yet mapped. Preliminary results of the above work seem to confirm the fact that the west coast south of Cape Farewell is slightly out of position on the charts, but nothing of great consequence to navigation. In Marlborough the triangulation and topographical surveys of the country around the Kaikoura Mountains has been in progress, but the maps are not yet completed. This survey will furnish data regarding a part of the colony which is very imperfectly mapped at present.

RURAL AND SUBURBAN SECTION SURVEYS.

A somewhat larger acreage was prepared for settlement last year, some of the estates surveyed being of considerable area, such as in the case of Waikakahi in Canterbury, and Starborough in Marlborough. In the former case six surveyors were engaged in the work, and they completed the whole survey in a short time at a very small cost per acre. The same may be said of the Starborough subdivision. Credit is due to all the gentlemen engaged in these surveys for the celerity with which the work was finished, and the complete manner in which it was done.

Most of the other work finished during the year has been in not very large areas, and generally in rough forest-country, where progress is naturally much slower. The cost per acre, therefore, throughout this class of survey is very creditable to the surveyors engaged. It amounted to 1·06s. per acre, which is a trifle over the average for the previous year. It varies very little, however, from year to year, and, considering the rough nature of the country we now have to deal with as a rule, it must be considered a very low cost. Care is taken to insure good lines of road, and in rough country the boundaries of sections are generally run along ridges to secure fencing-lines. This involves a greater cost; but the advantages to the settler are very great indeed, and, as compared to the old-fashioned "chess-board" system of laying out country, is infinitely superior.

Under regulations dated the 25th January, 1897, the limit of mathematical closure in surveys made with theodolite and chain (or, to be more correct, steel-band or wire—for the old Gunter's chain is now only to be seen as a curiosity) was reduced one-half, or from 8 links to 4 links per mile. It is found that, by the use of the long steel wires, now common, this limit can easily be maintained; indeed, some surveyors are not satisfied unless their closures are less than the limit. It is certain that the introduction of the steel-wire has greatly facilitated survey work, and tended to reduce the cost. In this connection it may be mentioned that Mr. C. A. Mountfort, of the Wellington District, has been very successful in checking his meridian in dense forest-country by