

a contract surveyor, has also completed the field-work of 100,000 acres from Reefton to Maruia. In all, half a million acres of rough wooded country has been triangulated, and the mapping will be done during the coming winter months.

Settlement Surveys.—Sixty-five rural sections, with an average of 135 acres, have been surveyed, at an average cost of 1s. 11½d. an acre. These were selections before survey, and the great bulk of them, besides being in forest country, were isolated and in distant localities, which necessitated much travelling, and added very considerably to the cost of the work. One hundred and twenty-one town lots were surveyed in the Township of Millerton for the Mines Department, at a cost of £76 5s. 2d.

Gold-mining Surveys.—We have only been called upon to make thirty-one surveys of mining claims, as against one hundred last year. Twenty were made by contract surveyors at schedule rates, the balance by staff officers. In addition, twenty reapplications were made, the surveys of which had previously been done, but in a few of these cases pegs had to be renewed and lines reopened.

Road Surveys.—Thirty-three and a half miles were surveyed, at an average cost of £14 a mile—a slight advance on last year—and was done principally in the exercise of road rights.

Other Work, represented by the sum of £1,198 19s. 9d., is a large amount of miscellaneous work that will not come under the headings of the tabulated return; for instance: Inspection of contract surveyor's work, £169 1s.; engineering surveys, inspection of road-work, and road-exploration, £238 2s.; reports for Mines Department, £11 18s.; inspection of Crown leaseholds; reports for Land Board, £95; and general departmental work at the district survey offices at Westport and Reefton (at the latter place especially, which is always kept open to the public), £576 12s. 10d.

Field Inspection.—I am pleased at being able to report that the surveys inspected this year—i.e., those of contract and licensed surveyors—with slight exceptions, were found to be very creditably done, and it is gratifying to find that the extensive and exhaustive inspections alluded to in last year's report have had the anticipated effect. The reason of the great improvement is that the work has been done by authorised surveyors themselves, and not by irresponsible and incompetent chainmen employed by them, as was found to be so generally the case in the past where bad work was disclosed.

Office-work.—Good progress has been made in reducing the large arrears in the issue of titles, and I am pleased to say that they are nearly up to date. There have been 409 Crown grants, leases, and other titles prepared and issued, and the plans indorsed numbered 1,036. In the Land Transfer branch sixty-one deposited plans have been examined and 100 other documents passed, besides 124 plans placed on certificates of title. The press of general work in the office, increased as it has lately been by the work connected with the transfer of the south-eastern portion of the district to Canterbury, has prevented any material progress in the preparation of survey district maps for photo-lithography. There are at the present time maps of eighteen districts published, seven more are in the hands of the lithographers, and two in course of preparation. These twenty-seven embrace the most closely settled parts, but to complete the districts that have any sectional work there are still twenty-five more to be compiled and drawn. A compilation of the district has been made in skeleton on a two-mile scale, and a map of it on a scale of eight miles to an inch prepared for lithography.

Proposals for Ensuing Year.—Messrs. R. T. Sadd, J. Snodgrass, and J. D. Thomson, and Mr. W. F. Robinson, contract surveyor, who have just completed the field-work of 700 square miles, will finally compute and map it on their return from the field. The three staff surveyors mentioned will continue the work of triangulation about October next, and in the meantime be engaged on sectional and road surveys. There is 4,077 acres of scattered selections in the hands of different surveyors, and twenty-eight miles of road survey, about half of which is in an advanced stage. A further twenty-five miles of road survey, inclusive of fifteen miles of the main trunk road from Nelson to Westport, which has never been surveyed, and is only very roughly sketched on the maps, will be taken in hand; and there will be an additional survey required of some 4,000 acres of selections of unsurveyed lands that will probably be applied for in the ordinary course. Mr. D. I. Barron will be engaged early in the summer in exploring for and grading a road-line from the saddle near the sources of the Taipo Creek (a branch of the Karamea) and the Little Wanganui River to the settled lands on the coast, to form the connecting-link on the prospective Wangapeka-Wanganui Road. The former bridle-track at the Wangapeka end has reached to within three miles of the saddle mentioned, and, as road-works will be continued next summer, it is important that this work be undertaken. Mining claims with an area of 250 acres are in the hands of contract surveyors, which will be supplemented from time to time as applications are made. I hope to be in a position next summer to get a topographical survey made of the mountainous country between the Inangahua River and the coast, which is required as a foundation for a geological survey that it is intended to have made of that part of the country.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

MARLBOROUGH.

Minor Triangulation and Topographical Survey.—There is no work returned under this heading this season, but a considerable amount has been done in the field, but not yet mapped. In Mr. Buckeridge's return a sum of £1,500 is carried forward, a large portion of which is represented by the triangulation of the Seaward Kaikouras.

Rural and Suburban.—115,760 acres has been laid off into 236 sections, which gives an average of 490 acres each. The average cost is under 11d. The Starborough Estate amounts to more than a quarter of the whole area, and cost 10½d. per acre to survey.