

I have the honour to bring under your notice the necessity which exists for a general extension of the standard surveys of the colony so as to facilitate the work of the licensed surveyors engaged upon the definition of properties for the purpose of the Land Transfer Act. It has been found that throughout the colony, the original survey-marks, even including the trigonometrical stations in some districts, have been destroyed, generally necessarily so in the erection of fences and buildings, and in the carrying out the construction of roads, railways, and various other public works. It is absolutely essential for the Land Transfer Department that every property dealt with shall be precisely located with relation to recognisable standard points of reference, to the avoidance of confliction of titles and resultant claims for compensation, which, if established, fall upon the Assurance Fund of that Department. It is a question whether the General Survey Department should continue to provide the necessary funds to carry out this resurvey of the colony, but, however that may be, I cannot too strongly urge and recommend that provision be made to enable the work to be systematically undertaken and extended in all districts where the absence of standard points enhances the cost of surveys to the people at large, and embarrasses the operations of the Land Transfer Department.

PROPOSALS FOR THE YEAR 1902-3.

The Auckland survey staff will be engaged in subdivision of 200,000 acres of rural land, chiefly in the Kawhia, Opotiki, and Whakatane districts, 540 acres of town lands, and in addition the survey of 420 acres acquired under the Land for Settlements Act.

Operations in the Hawke's Bay District will be confined to land for settlements, with some road surveys, and extending the triangulation to unsurveyed areas and standard work.

The Taranaki staff will be engaged mainly upon subdivisional surveys of Crown lands to supplement areas available for settlement. A major series of triangles is in course of observation to control scattered work about Mount Egmont. A new base is to be measured, in terms of the proposed uniform standard, as the foundation of the triangulations.

It is satisfactory to observe that 317,390 acres of subdivisional surveys are in progress in Wellington. Here, too, a major series of triangles is being extended over the various scattered disjointed minor series lying between the Wanganui and Manawatu districts. Several standard surveys are also proposed.

The Chief Surveyor, Nelson, has arranged for the completion of a trigonometrical and topographical survey of the southern part of the district; and also for the cutting up for settlement of 8,800 acres.

Sectional and other miscellaneous work has been assigned for the Westland staff. The removal of the Midland Railway Company's restriction has released 8,026 acres of Crown lands in the Oxford Survey District for survey and settlement: this, with the extension of standard surveys and attending to subdivision of land for settlements blocks, will keep the staff engaged.

The dearth of Crown lands for settlement is also felt in Otago, where the surveys will be confined to spotting and mining surveys of various classes, subdivision of rural, and the completion of the revision of the triangulation adjustment of boundary and road-lines in the Peninsula District.

The definition of 15,000 acres for settlement purposes, a large area for landless Natives, together with revision surveys, is proposed in Southland.

OFFICE.

The Chief Surveyors detail the duties performed and contemplated by the indoor staffs. It will, therefore, only be necessary to touch upon the more salient points. A great volume of work was attended to. Numerous plans of subdivisions of Crown and Native lands, and of land for settlements blocks, also of surveys under the Public Works Act and for other purposes, were received at the various survey offices, and a corresponding number were subjected to examination and approved of, reduced, and recorded upon the Departmental compilations. There was the usual output of titles, involving careful search and checking. Some progress was made in the construction of or compilation of district and general plans. A multitude of tracings was made; besides which the usual mass of routine work, such as preparation of vouchers, repairs to plans, and attending to the requirements of the public and other departments was executed, with, it is hoped, satisfactory results.

UREWERA SURVEYS.

The extensive traverse and topographical surveys of the Urewera Country, comprising an area of 656,700 acres, necessitated by the passing of the Urewera Reserve Act of 1896, and its amendment in 1900, have now drawn to a close. These surveys cover the country extending on the northern side to within fifteen miles of the ocean at the Bay of Plenty; on the south to below Lake Waikaremoana; whilst their eastern and western boundaries reach to within thirty-five miles of Gisborne, and Lakes Taupo and Rotorua, respectively. The operations which were necessary to enable the special Commission appointed under the above-mentioned Acts to ascertain the titles of the several tribes and hapus were started in 1899 and brought to a close early in 1902, three surveyors and their respective parties, namely, Messrs. O. M. Creagh, L. Simpson, and R. C. L. Reay, being employed from first to last. The work has been arduous, owing to the very broken nature of the country, which is densely forest-clad throughout, and seamed and scarred by river gorges. The *modus operandi* which has been followed throughout has been to break down from the sides of the major trig. stations a series of small triangles, either to fix the main points on the boundaries of each subdivision required by the Commissioners, or from such minor or subsidiary points to fix by cross-bearings the boundaries required. In many cases traverses had to be made in rough gorges and rushing water, such as that of the Whakatane River, which intersects the Urewera