

*Native Land Court.*—Twenty-six blocks, comprising ninety-two subdivisions, containing 13,747 acres, were surveyed by private surveyors; and seven blocks, comprising 137 subdivisions, containing 233,636 acres in which the Government is interested, having advanced the cost of surveys or undertaken the same by staff officers and taken out liens in the Native Land Court. So that the total surveyed by staff and authorised surveyors is 247,383 acres.

*Roads and Railways.*—The 127 miles traversed and mapped comprise 19 miles of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, 11 miles of which have only the field-work completed, and is carried forward to next year. The principal object of the road surveys has been to secure the dedication of them to public use, and to establish permanent points of reference throughout the district.

*Other Work.*—This includes the general miscellaneous work incidental to survey operations and inspections of surveys, timber assessments, explorations, extension of standard and alignment surveys, valuations and reports, road-deviations, and subdivisions of selectors' holdings.

*Inspection of Surveys.*—Mr. Inspector J. D. Climie reports that he inspected eighteen surveys during the year, for the purposes of the Land Transfer and Native Land Court Acts; he also made fifteen valuations for advances to settlers, at a total cost of £211 13s. 10d. Generally, the work on examination was found to be satisfactory. In a few cases only corrections had to be made.

*Office-work.*—Apart from much of the routine of office duties, which it would be impossible to enumerate, I may state that throughout the year 134 plans of sectional and Native surveys, containing 176,877 acres, were received. 148 plans, comprising 700 allotments, containing 272,857 acres, were approved, reduced, and recorded on Crown-grant and Land Office maps. Nineteen drawings and tracings were prepared for photo-lithography, five county lithos. prepared showing the tenures, and two 40-chain district maps of Pencarrow and Belmont Districts were completed. Five new road-record maps showing net areas, three Crown-grant maps, and two plans of North Island Main Trunk Railway were compiled, and three 40-chain trig. maps completed.

*Reservations of Land.*—During the year the reserves ledgers have been kept up to date, also index and detail maps of each county posted up. All reserves have been gazetted, and those usually placed under the control of local bodies have been recommended for vesting.

*"Thirds" and "Fourths."*—The duty of handing over to the local authorities the due proportion of rents under the various systems, as laid down by "The Land Act, 1892," was systematically carried out. 252 proposals for expenditure on roads, bridges, &c., were made by the local bodies. These were examined, and 202 were submitted for the consideration and approval of the Land Board. Eight certificates for hypothecation were also submitted for approval of the Board, and issued under the sign-manual of the Chairman. The amount of "thirds" and "fourths" to the credit of local bodies in the Receiver-General's Deposit Account was £19,798 15s. 6d. on the 31st March last. In the face of this accruing accumulation, which is chiefly due to the action of some half-dozen of the local bodies refraining from making proposals for the expenditure of the funds at their disposal, the Land Board has brought under the notice of the Surveyor-General the advisability of bringing before the Hon. the Minister of Lands the need for amendment of the Land Act, so as to enable the Roads Department to undertake the expenditure of accumulated "thirds" and "fourths" that local bodies neglect to spend, although the settlers where "thirds" and "fourths" moneys are lying idle, in many instances, are undergoing much hardship for want of improved road-communication.

*Land Transfer Office, Survey Branch.*—342 working-plans were received, showing an increase of twenty-two over last year, but a decrease in the transfers and other instruments. Over 1,200 Land Transfer plans have been mounted and repaired, as a number of the plans were in a dilapidated condition.

*Titles.*—The officers intrusted with the duties of preparing leases, licenses, and warrants report that 195 leases, thirty-eight licenses, and 207 freehold titles were prepared and issued. The arrears on the 31st March amounted to forty-three titles.

*Proposed Operations for 1902-3.*—Six staff and five temporary surveyors are at present engaged on field-work in different parts of the district. 317,390 acres of subdivisional surveys are in hand, consisting mainly of pastoral lands in large sections. Mr. Climie will continue the inspections where necessary, and be available for other work as required. Mr. Lowe will complete the reobservations of the major and minor triangulation in the Rangitikei-Manawatu District, which will take him a considerable time to finish. Mr. Thompson has in hand the roading and subdivision of the Taonui and Maraetua Blocks in the Ngamatea District. Mr. Wheeler will complete the sectional survey of the Rangitatau 1b Block, Nukumarua District. Mr. McKay has the roading required through the Raketapauma Block in hand, and Mr. Strachan will complete the subdivision of the Retaruke Kirikau Blocks. These surveys will take the greater part of the current year to complete. Mr. Mountfort will take up the standard survey of Masterton, and Messrs. Morice and Lewis will continue the explorations and roading of parts of the Awarua and Waimarino Blocks respectively. Messrs. Marchant and Girdlestone, Assistant Surveyors, will for the time being assist Messrs. Thompson and Wheeler with their sectional surveys.

*Miscellaneous.*—The usual demands made on the office staff were attended to. These comprised the supplying of information to the public generally, and of data for the execution of surveys by staff surveyors and others. 225 general and Native plans, including tracings, fifty-one sale plans, 190 applications, ten block sheets, and 124 lithos. were mounted, and twenty-five plans repaired, reducing and recording data on maps, and a multitude of other duties. More good draughtsmen are required to overtake the large arrears—viz., about seventy-four 40-chain district maps, 750 new block sheets, the completion of trig. maps, standard surveys, and townships; also preparation of plans for reduction by photo-lithography. 1,257 block sheets have been bound with silk and repaired, and nine 10-chain tracings of old plans have been made in order to prevent loss through old age and dilapidation.

I took charge of the Wellington District Survey Office on the 1st January last, the late Chief Surveyor, Mr. J. W. A. Marchant, having been appointed Surveyor-General of the Colony of New Zealand.

JOHN STRAUCHON, Chief Surveyor.