

Survey Office-work.—During the past year, Mr. Shanks, Chief Draughtsman, was absent for six months on leave owing to serious illness, during which period the supervision of the office-work devolved upon Mr. Burns, who carried out the duties efficiently and satisfactorily. The number of survey plans received from the surveyors was twenty-two large and eleven small; the private surveyors sent in eight of them, defining exchange of lands and lands desired for gravel reservations and other purposes. The staff surveyors' plans delineate the subdivisions of acquired lands and scattered surveys of rural river-bed, reserves and half-caste lands, all of which plans have been examined and checked with the exception of one that shows a part of the Kohika Settlement. The mapping has comprised the compilation and drawing of plans for reproduction by photo-lithography of the Kapuatohe, Puhuka, Tarawahi Hamlets, and the Eccleston, Kaimahi, Maytown, Lyndon No. 2, Raincliff, Rapuwai Settlements, and the plan of the extension of the Hanmer Springs Township. Other draughting work was floor-plans of the Christchurch Club-house and Coker's Hotel required in connection with the Royal visit, and the usual routine work of keeping our district and record-maps up-to-date by the compilation of the current work thereon. Plans were draughted on 554 lease-deeds, and on seventy-two Crown grants and certificates of title. Fourteen of the latter, conveying an area of 15,507 acres, required large and intricate plans, being titles for Midland Railway areas, a few of the plans taking the draughtsman several days to place on the certificates. This office also undertook the preparation of eight duplicate copies, as it was considered outside the specification to ask the contractor to make the copies at schedule rates. The present arrears of lease and license deeds not issued is about eighty-five, of which number fifty-three have been written and now await checking and the plans placed thereon, leaving thirty-two recent ones not begun. However, I trust within a short time to have the whole of them prepared and issued. Additional information was placed on several of the record maps, and sixty-six certificates of title recorded thereon. Tracings of thirty deposit plans and 298 tracings delineating 350 transfer dealings were prepared for the Valuation Department, of which numbers two deposit and forty-three of the others were made in the Transfer Branch. With regard to the latter I may mention that it was arranged that the whole of the tracings should be made in the Transfer Office; but as their work considerably increased the duty was again taken over by this office. Sixty-one valuable tracings of the early Canterbury section and feature traverse surveys were mounted and indexed, and a considerable amount of labour was expended in arranging, lettering, and indexing the survey plans of lands within the Amuri County. Numerous miscellaneous tracings were made for the Land Purchase Board, public bodies and other departments, besides the field tracings supplied to the surveyors and explanatory tracings to attach to correspondence.

Proposed Operations for 1902-3.—The work on hand for the present year is small, as the only urgent survey required is the subdivision of the View Hill and Burnt Hill Runs, in the Oxford Survey District, classed as agricultural pastoral lands, about 8,026 acres; the leases expire on the 1st March next, when it is proposed to utilise part of the lands to give extended holdings to the Crown tenants in the locality. Other proposed work is the continuation of the standard traverse surveys in the vicinity of Christchurch and Timaru, and the survey of a few scattered sections, reserves, and mining areas, as opportunity permits, there being no urgency for survey except as regards the latter. There will also be the many surveys that are generally required, though not decided upon at present. No doubt the acquisition of further blocks for settlement will provide ample work to keep the staff surveyors fully employed.

THOS. HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.

OTAGO.

Topographical Surveys.—Mr. District Surveyor Neill returns an area of 48,000 acres surveyed at a cost of $\frac{3}{10}$ d. per acre. Of this area the field-work of 38,000 acres was completed last year, but was not returned in the annual report. This now completes the work required for the preparation of a plan for the use of the Defence Department. The total area surveyed and mapped was nearly 200,000 acres.

Rural and Suburban.—Only 3,631 acres is returned under this heading for the year, divided into 115 sections, and surveyed at an average cost of 3.75s. per acre, the principal item in this being Mr. District Surveyor Langmuir's return of 2,195 acres of a resurvey and roading of the Otakou Native Reserve. Owing to faulty work in the original survey of these blocks the relocation of boundary-lines involved much consideration and care. Mr. District Surveyor Wilmot's return of 604 acres was made up of very small areas, and the work was widely scattered. Mr. McCurdie's area of 769 acres is made up of six different surveys, and half the area was in heavy bush country. Messrs. Calder and Mackenzie also surveyed a few small areas in the Upper Taieri, Strath Taieri, and Cromwell Districts.

Town Section Surveys.—Eighty-six sections were surveyed at an average cost of 26.37s. per section, the principal item being Mr. Wilmot's survey of part of the Town of Alexandra. A few sections were also surveyed by Messrs. Langmuir and Neill, in the Town of Oamaru and Township of Hull respectively.

Gold-mining Surveys.—As anticipated in last year's report, a very large decrease in this class of work, when compared with last year's return, will be noticeable. Only sixty-five sections or claims, having a total area of 1,835 acres, were surveyed during the year, at an average cost of 4.49s. per acre, as against 14,270 acres, representing 367 sections, and costing 4.77s. per acre, for last year. The work was nearly all done by private surveyors. Besides the above-mentioned surveys the staff and private surveyors made thirty-six inspections of mining applications for the various Wardens, and furnished them with tracings and reports, &c., on same. The total amount for which vouchers were passed under this heading during the year is £598 12s.