

In the absence of our staff surveyors, who were, at the end of last September, temporarily transferred to other districts, Mr. F. Stephenson Smith has made several surveys for the Department, and has in hand at present about 600 acres in various districts.

Office-work: Examination of Plans, &c.—The total number of plans received in the ordinary Survey Branch was 63, with 85 traverse sheets, comprising 11 departmental plans with an area of 8,850 acres in 24 sections; 6 Native Land Court plans with 24 sections, and an area of 3,592 acres; 20 plans in triplicate (60 copies), covering 18 miles of the Picton-Blenheim Railway; 16 plans of 19 miles of road; 7 compiled plans, and 5 plans for Governor's approval. 349 tracings were prepared, 186 diagrams placed on Crown leases, &c., and 7 tracings made for photo-lithography.

Land Transfer.—In this branch 34 plans and 68 traverse sheets were received, covering an area of 17,256 acres, with 85 subdivisions; 442 diagrams were placed on certificates of title.

Changes of Staff.—The only changes made in the personnel of the staff was the resignation of Mr. H. P. Fougère, clerical cadet, his place being taken by Mr. C. E. Mountfort; and the transfer of Miss C. M. Watterson, who had been ten years in this office, to New Plymouth, Miss W. E. C. White, of that office, taking her place. Messrs. A. Hodgkinson and L. Hunt, the only staff surveyors in the district, were temporarily transferred for urgent work, the former to Auckland and the latter to Canterbury.

In conclusion, I beg to thank the staff for their active co-operation and assistance in the year's work.

W. H. SKINNER,
Chief Surveyor.

WESTLAND.

Triangulation.—The total work under this heading comprises 1,500 acres by District Surveyor A. N. Harrop, at a cost of 15'4d. per acre.

Standard Survey.—A survey has been made under this heading of a portion of the Town of Cobden by District Surveyor A. N. Harrop.

Topographical Surveys.—Messrs Morison and Cunningham completed 2,400 acres under this heading at an average cost of 4'8d. per acre.

Gold-mining Surveys.—No work has been done by the staff under this heading.

Rural Surveys.—The total area surveyed under this heading for the year amounts to 9,622 acres, in 64 sections, at an average cost of 3'56s. per acre. Much of this has been isolated spotting surveys, nearly all in rough bush country and entailing a great deal of travelling.

Village and Suburban.—Under this heading Messrs. Morison and Cunningham have surveyed 125 acres, in 16 sections.

Town Surveys.—District Surveyor Harrop returns 23 sections under this heading, at an average cost of 30'0s. per section.

Roads.—Only 1 mile is returned under this heading, at a cost of £11.

Other Work.—This work chiefly consists of adjustments of scenic reserves and settlers' boundaries, inspections, defining boundaries of timber-areas, and clearing and repairing old trig. stations. I might here note that two of the field staff were absent in Canterbury three months, and another absent for nine months on extended leave.

Inspection Surveys.—District Surveyor W. Wilson has inspected the work of each surveyor, both staff and private, in this district, and the inspections generally disclose very satisfactory results. Unfortunately I have been unable to carry out my intention to make a personal inspection of every party, on account of pressure of work.

Office-work.—During the year the draughting staff has been occupied almost wholly with current work. The several resignations and changes having left the office again very short-handed, it has been impossible to work off many arrears. Ninety-three plans were received and examined, classified as follows: 26 Land Transfer, 19 statutory, 8 mining, and 40 relating to land-settlement. 732 copies of plans were placed on the deeds—namely, on Crown leases 508, and Land Transfer titles 224. Two 40-chain plans were compiled, and 28 tracings for photo-lithography were prepared, representing 157,000 acres of land for selection, 150,800 acres being pastoral runs and 6,200 acres of land for settlement. A litho was also prepared of Cobden Township and one of Waiwhero Survey District. 241 survey data tracings have been prepared for the field staff, and 497 miscellaneous tracings and numerous coloured lithos have been made. Plans have been compared with the office records for the District Land Registrar and others. The readjustment of the whole of the timber records has been completed, and the timber maps are now up to date. Various tracings and descriptions have been prepared for *Gazette* notices. Returns and plans have been forwarded giving the area of available land in Westland—revised area of the whole of Westland, and information for the Forestry Commission. The routine work of recording, cross-indexing, &c., is up to date, and many of the old plans have been repaired and remounted.

Proposed Operations, 1913-14.—There is on hand 14,774 acres of application surveys scattered all over Westland, which, having all my field hands at work again, I hope to see mostly finished during the coming season, besides current work in the shape of new applications. Further, I intend to have surveys of from 10,000 to 12,000 acres of lands for settlement made and offered if the disabilities under which we labour with regard to mining grants, &c., can be removed.