

Messrs. Gray and Thompson, of the field staff, left with the Expeditionary Force. The work and costs of these two officers has been taken over by Mr. Walshe until such time as opportunity offers for a reallocation of the work.

Mr. Roddick, District Surveyor, attached to the Gisborne office, has been transferred from the field to the office staff, after a long and arduous term in the field, a change which failing health made necessary.

Owing to serious ill health the Chief Draughtsman, Mr. H. Mackay, has been absent on sick-leave for some time, Mr. F. Carrington, of New Plymouth, fulfilling his duties meanwhile.

The recent acquisition of Native lands and the negotiations now proceeding for the purchase of similar blocks along the route of the Napier-Gisborne Railway, and in other parts of the district, will make large demands on the depleted field staff during the coming year.

In conclusion, I wish to tender my thanks to the staff, both field and office, for the active and loyal way in which they have carried out their duties, and generally for their most willing help and co-operation during the year.

W. H. SKINNER,
Chief Surveyor.

TARANAKI.

Minor Triangulation.—No work of this nature has been done during the past year, but a scheme of triangles to control some 150 square miles of the Lower Mokau and Mohakatino basins has been prepared, and the work should be undertaken during 1915-16, as it is urgently needed to check work in hand properly and make a better connection in the triangulation itself.

Standard Surveys.—No true standard work has been done in this district for many years, and a revision and extension of earlier work in Hawera, Stratford, and Patea is urgently needed, as well as a standard survey of main roads from Eltham to Opunake and around the mountain to control the new railway route and the numerous Land Transfer surveys that are expected there. In carrying out his inspections in the places named the office surveyor has had to do a lot of work that can be utilized in connection with a complete standard survey. Now that local bodies are scarifying the roads and laying down tarred and suchlike surfaces, it is stated to be very difficult for surveyors to find and use old marks (placed as they often are in the middle of the road). To avoid damaging these new road-surfaces is one reason why standard surveys are so much needed.

Topographical Surveys for Selection.—Under this heading an area of only 856 acres was completed, and this was for the Land Purchase Board.

Rural.—An area of 35,302 acres is returned under this head, the greater part of which is situated in very rough forest country, where the rainfall is heavy and continuous and location of roads difficult. An additional area of 11,000 acres has been completed in the field, but plans are not yet ready.

Village and Suburban.—258 acres, in 75 lots, were surveyed in the Aria Township Reserve, but as plans have not yet reached me this must appear in next year's return.

Town Section Survey.—An area of 5.35 acres, comprising 8 lots, was surveyed in the Town of Ohura for general Government purposes.

Native Land Court Surveys.—The total area of Native land surveyed during the year amounted to 44,950 acres, the whole of the work with one exception (when a staff surveyor was employed on an area near his main camp) being completed by private surveyors. Of the 57,538 acres returned as under survey last year, 37 plans, of 35,462 acres, have been received and 20 approved. A total area of 60,498 acres is now under survey, which I expect to be completed during the coming year. Some of this work is for the subdivision of areas previously surveyed.

Maori Land Board Surveys.—The subdivisional survey of Mohakatino Parininihi In East, containing 4,425 acres, placed in the hands of a staff surveyor (being close to his main camp), has been completed in the field, but as the plans are not in it must be returned next year.

Roads.—In this class 25½ miles are returned by the staff and two contract surveyors, while the field-work of 20 more miles has been completed.

Inspections.—Seven inspections were made during the year, six of Land Transfer surveys by Mr. Sole, and one of a Native survey by Mr. District Surveyor Wilson. Three of these inspections were the work of a surveyor of the old school, and, although not wilfully incorrect, they showed careless and slipshod work and want of up-to-date methods and proper searching for old marks.

Other Work.—The expenditure under this heading amounts to £188 16s. 1d., and includes the inspections mentioned, repairs to trigs., and various miscellaneous isolated surveys of small areas, where travelling-expenses were proportionately heavy.

Chainage Closures.—The mean of all closures by the staff, mostly in rough-bush country, gave an average of 1 link per mile.

Office-work.—The total number of plans checked under all heads in the General Computing Branch was 153. Of these, Crown settlement surveys were represented by 39 plans, covering 58,399 acres in 171 sections; Native Land Court surveys by 41 plans, of 22,422 acres in 59 sections; road and railway surveys for Proclamation, &c., by 37 plans, covering 56 miles. The balance of 36 plans comprised trigonometrical and miscellaneous surveys. Three candidates sat for examination as authorized assistants; one passed at his first sitting and one at his second.

Land Transfer. In this branch 92 plans, with 213 traverse sheets, were checked and approved, covering 303 lots, of a total area of 7,869. acres. Land Transfer record plans are badly needed here, but I had no one available for this work (the Land Transfer Draughtsman