

ment in the determination of individual interests. Of this area, some 80,000 acres are within the boundaries of the Auckland Province.

*Rural.*—Under this head an area of 34,499 acres has been returned, of which 9,439 acres, forming the Poroporo Settlement, was thrown open for selection towards the end of the previous year. The Falloon Settlement, containing 1,035 acres, was settled during the year, and of the remaining area about 2,300 acres will shortly be available for settlement. About 20,220 acres of the Waimarino Block have been completed, but it is probable that certain constructive road-works may precede the actual settlement. At the present time four staff surveyors have in hand the subdivision of about 26,670 acres, the greater portion of which should be ready for settlement early in the coming year.

*Village and Suburban Surveys.*—This head returns 302 acres, of which some 26 acres will be used as homestead-sites for sections in the Waimarino, and the balance, being sections of from 1 to 10 acres near Kakahi and Ohakune, will be offered shortly.

*Town Surveys.*—The return is comparatively small, and represents an addition of about 39 sections, aggregating 17 acres, to the present Town of Raurimu.

*Native Land Court Surveys.*—The total area of surveys returned during the year under the authority of the Native Land Court amounted to 86,993 acres, and was all accounted for by private surveyors at schedule rates. An area of 58,022 acres is in hand for the coming year, authorities having been issued to private surveyors.

*Roads.*—The roads returned are independent of settlement surveys, but have been laid off in two instances to provide access to Crown land and for a deviation in the remaining case.

*Other Work.*—The main body of settlement survey is surrounded by a fringe of small surveys, reports, inspections, &c., usually undertaken in the winter recess, and which cannot be conveniently classified under main headings.

*Proposed Survey Operations.*—Our staff surveyor will go on with the subdivision of the Waimarino A Block, of about 14,850 acres, and, as the complexities which surrounded this block have, I believe, been satisfactorily disposed of by the Native Land Court, I am in hopes that this year will see the completion of the survey. Three staff surveyors will continue the present work in hand of about 26,670 acres in the Whirinaki, Retaruke, Ruahine, and Gorge Survey Districts, and thence proceed with such surveys as may be necessary. The services of one of the staff surveyors will be required for some time to assist in unravelling the intricacies of the Putiki Native Reserve near Wanganui, a reserve which has earned an unenviable notoriety in respect to its titles, which, however, through recent legislation are in a fair way to be rectified.

*Examination of Plans.*—The number of plans approved during the year was 548, of which 241 were for the Land Transfer Department, 107 for the General Staff Branch, 112 for the Native Branch, and 88 for the Statutory Plans Branch, and in most cases the examination is conducive to a large and varied amount of investigation and correspondence. The new plans in the General Branch covered 33,860 acres, embracing 168 sections, and in the Native surveys 94,531 acres, comprising 384 subdivisions.

*Land Transfer.*—In addition to the 241 plans approved, the branch also examined 52 applications, 1,431 transfers, 211 leases, 84 mortgages, 202 Native Land Court orders, 32 Orders in Council, 56 Proclamations, 412 new and balance certificates, and 23 other dealings, besides placing 3,987 diagrams on certificates of title. New and improved sectional indices are now near completion, and 83 index tracings with plan references have been compiled, which, though only a portion of what is required very much, will be of great convenience to the office and the public.

*Native Land Court.*—Under this heading a large volume of work passes; 112 authorities, representing 345 partitions aggregating 63,966 acres, have been issued; 431 charging-orders representing costs of survey amounting to £7,886 13s. 11d. have been made, and 300 releases of liens, representing £4,700 0s. 1d., have been sent to Registrar; plans have been endorsed on 691 partitions and other Court orders; and with the additional work of checking costs and attending to the despatch of plans to the various Courts, the staff has been kept busy. The total area of surveys approved during the year was 94,531 acres.

*General Draughting.*—Satisfactory progress has been made in this branch, despite the general depression which has been caused by the great Continental strife. Irrespective of the very large amount of miscellaneous work from all transactions affecting land, the following actions may be mentioned: The preparation of 19 new plans, the compilation of 9 district maps and of 70 tracings for photo-lithography, together with 1,235 tracings for various purposes, and 1,358 diagrams were placed on instruments. This branch of the staff has suffered many losses and changes during the year owing to the war and departmental adjustments, the net result being that at the present time we are four officers short of what we begun with—viz., two belonging to the field and two to the office. We shall also certainly lose Mr. Lamason on the 22nd April, but we hope to get Mr. Crawford back from the Head Office, and to be allowed to retain the services of Messrs. Freeman and De Castro until some of those who joined the Expeditionary Forces return. Now that Mr. Climie is about to retire I need a District Surveyor in Wellington to inspect surveys, to survey blocks near at hand, do scattered surveys, and put in the rest of his time in this office. The details of the changes mentioned above are as follow: In order to fill gaps and overtake the arrears of work mentioned in my last annual report, four computing draughtsmen were temporarily engaged—viz., Messrs. W. F. Burgess, Lamason, Freeman, and De Castro; Messrs. Blake (Assistant Surveyor), C. L. Purdie (Computing Draughtsman), R. F. Burgess (field cadet), and E. H. Whiting (cadet) joined the Expeditionary Force; Mr. J. R. Strachan, District Surveyor, who had been at work in this office for the previous twelve months, was transferred to Nelson; Mr. Roe was transferred to another district, and Mr. Crawford is lent to the Head Office; Mr. T. A. L. J. Armstrong was here for a short time, but has now gone to another district; the work for which Mr. Burgess was temporarily engaged being completed.