

The INSPECTOR OF SURVEYS to the Hon. the NATIVE MINISTER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 24th June, 1870.

In continuation of my report of June last, I have the honor to furnish a Return which shows the amount of the work done from the first and during the year in my department, in connection with the Native Lands Courts, and its apportionment to the different Provinces. A slight consideration of this Return will show the extensive character of the change in the tenure of land which is silently going on, notwithstanding the checks it has received from Native alarms and from the diversion of capital into expanded speculation in other directions. It will be seen that the Native land claims maps deposited in my office during the year amount to 425, and that these comprise 567,557 acres of land.

Looking at the scattered positions of these claims all over the Islands, it is easy to conceive the confusion which must hereafter arise if the system of survey, and of recording the boundaries of estates granted by the Crown, should not be adequate to define and substantiate their true positions on the map of the country. It is so obvious that this can only be done by systematic geodetic survey of the whole country, and I have so often dwelt on the urgent necessity of pushing on such surveys, that I need not enlarge upon this subject now, especially as the work is now going on actively and efficiently, though on a very small scale considering what there is to be done.

The triangulation at present in hand, as a winter occupation, is being carried through the Kaipara, with a view to connect Auckland with the triangulation formerly executed by me in the Bay of Islands district, and to determine points in that extensive line of country with which all surveys of Native land claims may be connected. Hitherto the only means by which maps of claims scattered along that congeries of rivers could be collated together, has been by referring them to the marine survey formerly executed by the officers of the Navy; but a marine survey of inland waters must in its nature depend on terrestrial survey of the shores, and, as nothing of the kind existed, the very rapid and perfunctory delineation of the river banks which the Marine Surveyors had to make for themselves, was, in fact, little more than a sketch, and thus all attempts to collate together the topographical maps by such imperfect elements has only resulted in distortion and overlap. I trust that the field work of this triangulation will be so far advanced by November next as to admit of the removal of the excellent officer who is conducting it, to a larger and more important work, which, having its base in Hawke's Bay, will extend across the Ruahine Mountains, over the Patea country, and, uniting with and verifying the triangulation of Taupo, will take in the Upper Wanganui country, and, connecting the southern boundary of the Hawke's Bay Province with the large triangulations in the Province of Wellington, will thus furnish a connected trigonometrical survey from Tauranga to Cook Strait, and over the greater portion of the North Island, ready to be advanced into the remaining parts whenever their political condition may admit of it.

This work is extensive in plan, and, if faithfully carried out, will, I am convinced, be adequate to the growing requirements of the country, and to keep pace with the operations of the Native Lands Court, however extensive they may become. For its execution no large expenditure is required,—the sum which has for the last two years been voted for surveys in connection with the Native Lands Court will be adequate for carrying it out efficiently, provided it is done continuously and systematically.

A good deal of survey work is required for the administration of the confiscated land along the northern shore of Cook Strait, and round to Taranaki. Two years ago I prepared detailed instructions for a triangulation suitable to the local features of that belt of country, and such as any topographical surveys there ought to be based upon. I understand that arrangements are now in progress by which this work will at length be carried out. I hope, and cannot doubt, that it will be conducted in connection with the other triangulations, and so that it also will form an integral part of the extended system which I have sketched out.

Up to a recent period, discussions have been going on with the Government of the Provinces of Wellington and Hawke's Bay in relation to sums of money claimed by them for services in connection with surveys for the Native Lands Court.

These disputes chiefly arose out of imperfect arrangements made in 1868 with those Governments, in the terms of which, the conditions of maintaining for my department complete and uniform district maps, showing all Native land claims adjudicated on, was not clearly set out. As I have always held that this is the first and indispensable condition required, difficulties arose as to making the payments claimed while that service remained unperformed.

As regards Hawke's Bay, I have, with your sanction, now made arrangements for collating together, in the Survey Office at Napier, all the Native land claim maps, with the surveys in the possession of the Provincial authorities, and I may safely say that in a short time the Hawke's Bay maps will be complete, and that all future Native Lands Court work there will be carried out without delay and at a very inconsiderable cost.

In the Province of Wellington, besides the preparation of collated district maps, there remains to be settled the question of contribution claimed towards the cost of the triangulations now in progress.

It forms no part of my duty to enter into the question whether the funds out of which services are paid are provincially or colonially charged, but I apprehend that the position of the question is in this wise,—that these services (triangulation and district maps) being necessary for