

arrived at, having regard to expedition, economy, and accuracy ; but as this branch of the public service is not included in my department, I may only venture to suggest that it might be very profitable if the question of the surveys of the Colony were handed over to a competent Commission for examination and report. With regard to the expense of placing the surveys of the Colony on a proper footing, I would, if permitted, state my belief, notwithstanding any alarm which might follow, that a sum of at least £100,000 will be required. I trust, Sir, that no apology will be necessary for my having ventured upon what I am aware must be a disconcerting and unwelcome disclosure of opinion.

The very considerable arrears in the issue of Crown Grants is a circumstance which materially retards the operation of the Act. This is a subject which is deserving of the very prominent notice of the Government.

Although, with excellent economic effect, the two departments of Land and Deeds Registry have been combined in the several districts, in so far as that the registrarship of each department is held by the same person, still, for the satisfaction of the public, it has been thought advisable that the departments in all other respects should be entirely distinct. By this means, the public can be readily made aware of the exact expenditure and revenue of each department.

As will be seen by the comparative statement annexed, notwithstanding the great depression which has visited the Colony, the fees for deeds registration have been nearly as large as during the preceding year. I anticipate no material difference in the current year's revenue from this source. I am not prepared to advise any reduction whatever in the charges made in this department.

I have been enabled, with the sanction of Government, to make material reductions in the permanent staff of the Deeds Registration Department, which reductions have been carried out in conformity with the provisions of "The Civil Service Act, 1866." By this arrangement, with other combinations, the Government will have effected a permanent retrenchment of over £1,500 as compared with the vote of last year.

Generally, I may report that the Deeds Registration Department is in a most effective condition and that its organization admits of very little improvement. By the system in operation, the Registrar-General of Deeds is reliably informed, every month, of the exact particulars of the business transacted in every part of the Colony, and is enabled at any time to institute comparisons of the performances of individual clerks.

Shortly after accepting office, I prepared a comparative statement of the working of all the Registration Offices in the Colony, showing the cost per folio of the recording of deeds. This statement, which I had the honor of submitting on the 14th of January, disclosed astonishing differences of cost, which, although very surprising at the time, have been explained upon a subsequent investigation of the causes. The prevailing explanation in all cases has been, that the services of the Clerks, whose salaries were charged against Deeds Registration, have been largely used in other departments of the Government. Having satisfied myself that the rate of exertion has been tolerably equal, there remains no objection to the officers of this department being made available in the working of other branches of the public service.

I have, &c.,

W. S. MOORHOUSE,

Registrar-General of Land and Deeds.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

RETURN showing the Number of APPLICATIONS to bring Land under the provisions of the Land Transfer Act for the Year ending 30th June, 1871.

Months.	No.	Area.						Value.		
		Town and Suburban.			Country.					
		A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.
February	19	5	2	14	747	0	6	7,300	10	0
March	40	34	0	22·4	2,346	3	29	16,851	10	0
April	72	230	0	33·6	3,757	1	24	40,557	0	0
May	152	478	0	13·45	11,213	3	8	53,271	10	0
June	126	220	1	36·9	14,127	2	27	48,350	15	0
Total	409	968	2	00·35	32,192	3	14	166,331	5	0