

There are one or two other and less direct ways in which part of the revision may gradually be achieved. Much, for instance, may be looked for from the closing in of new surveys upon old. Still more from the working of the Land Transfer Act, under which persons wishing to subdivide and deal with their lands will doubtless themselves have resurveys made for the purpose. To aid and encourage such undertakings, and to afford accurate *data* connected with the triangulation upon which private surveys might be closed, roads passing through imperfectly surveyed areas ought to be very carefully traversed, and marked at intervals with permanent pickets. Landowners would then have every inducement to get their lands privately resurveyed, from the assurance that now at any rate the work could be done properly once for all. Due checks should be established on the accuracy of such surveys. Perhaps the best plan would be to allow the Government revising staff to undertake them at a fixed scale of rates. The working of these various direct and indirect modes of revision would necessarily be slow. But gradually all would be brought, bit by bit, into position on the cadastral map, and this at a comparatively very slight cost to the Public Treasury. The principle—now I believe pretty well established—that possession is to be taken as the chief proof of ownership, in cases where errors and discrepancies are not inordinately large, will no doubt contribute materially to a quiet settlement of such difficulties as may arise.

I have now touched—I hope at not undue length—on the chief matters for consideration, except the political question how the surveys are to be paid for, which I have purposely avoided as being beyond my province; I must ask your indulgence for such errors and shortcomings in this report as may be due to my not having been able to give as much time and study to the subject as I could have wished, and to my somewhat brief acquaintance with the colony. There can be little need for me to urge further the necessity for complete reform. No more instructive lesson on the enormous waste which is inseparable from bad systems of survey could well be given than that furnished by the history of this country during the last thirty-five years. Not that there is anything so very remarkable in the present state of affairs. The case has its parallels. Every country finds out, sooner or later, that the hasty and perfunctory methods of surveying which at first answer well enough and are often an absolute necessity, must be replaced by surer and more scientific processes. In New Zealand there has been rather a long delay in applying the needful remedies, so that the cost of cure and the time it will take have been proportionately increased. But this cost and this time will go on increasing every year that things remain in their present state. The sooner, therefore, reform is set about, the greater will be the ultimate saving of money and time, to say nothing of the advantages gained in the substitution of order for the present disorder, and in the suspension of widespread litigation and dispute. System and organization and vigorous superintendence are benefits which the surveys of this country stand sorely in need of. I believe that a plan such as I have sketched would gradually reduce them to a state of accuracy in which all might have confidence, and to a system intelligible to every one. I believe, too, that it would amply repay its cost, and prove a wise and beneficial outlay of public money.

I have, &c.,

H. S. PALMER,
Major, Royal Engineers.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

APPROXIMATE ABSTRACT OF STATE OF SURVEYS IN NEW ZEALAND,¹ 1ST MARCH, 1875.

PROVINCES.	DETAIL SURVEYS.						TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY.			
	Section Surveys. ²		Topographically, or block-surveyed only.		Native Claims Surveyed.	Reconnaissance only or unsurveyed.	Total Area of Province.	Triangulated Correctly.		
	Accurate.	Needing more or less revision. ⁴	Trust- worthy.	Needing verification or resurvey.				General Government	Provincial Government.	Total.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
Auckland ...	...	3,390,000 ⁵	...	850,000	2,330,760	10,429,240	17,000,000	7,500,000	7,500,000
Hawke's Bay...	150,000	976,000	...	...	1,124,000	800,000	3,050,000	2,242,560	2,242,560
Wellington ...	1,099,200	412,800	...	...	1,235,027	4,252,973	7,000,000	880,640	3,376,640
Taranaki ...	10,000	130,000	...	...	...	1,997,000	2,137,000	...	12,000
Nelson ...	25,000	200,000	...	1,350,000	...	5,425,000	7,000,000	...	...
Marlborough ...	107,100	154,700	...	622,000	...	2,116,200	3,000,000	...	...
Westland ...	39,600	...	940,400	...	...	2,065,760	3,045,760	...	...
Canterbury ...	500,000 ⁶	1,142,000	...	...	...	7,048,000	8,690,000	...	500,000
Otago ...	2,800,000	...	4,200,000	...	...	9,038,400	16,038,400	...	7,000,000
Totals ...	4,730,900	6,405,500	5,140,400	2,822,000	4,689,787	43,172,573	66,961,160	10,623,200	10,008,000 ⁷	
									20,631,200	

¹ This abstract does not include work in progress.

² The Canterbury and Otago totals include 21,769 acres of Native lands.

³ Includes all unsurveyed Native lands.

⁴ That is to say, they are not in their present state sufficiently trustworthy to be accepted as parts of a cadastral survey.

⁵ Including the Confiscated lands.

⁶ By estimation only.

⁷ In addition to 1,200,000 acres needing revision in Canterbury, and some small imperfect triangulations in Hawke's Bay, Marlborough, and Westland.

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