

1875.
NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL OF LAND.

(FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1875.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

Office of Registrar-General of Land,
Christchurch, 20th July, 1875.

SIR,—

I have the honor to lay before you the result of the working of the Land Transfer Act for the year ending the 30th June, 1875.

The revenue for the year, exclusive of Assurance Fund, has been £11,727, the expenditure about £8,900.

The receipts for the ensuing year may be estimated at £13,000, the expenditure at about £9,500.

The department has for the last two years been more than self-supporting. The returns appended show a large increase of business during the past year.

With the view of instituting a comparison between the working of the Land Transfer system in New Zealand and in the Australian colonies, my predecessor, by the aid of the Government, collected the information a summary of which (D) is appended. The Australian returns are for the year ending December 1873, as against those of New Zealand for the year ending 30th June, 1875. The comparison is nevertheless, in point of time, somewhat unfair to New Zealand, on account of the longer period during which the system has been in operation in the other colonies, which more than compensates for the difference in the dates of the returns. Taking this into account, it will be seen that relatively to population the business returns for this colony compare favourably with those of other colonies, whilst for economy of administration the comparison is very favourable to New Zealand. The contrary might have been expected, seeing that in each of the Australian colonies the business is conducted from one centre, whilst in New Zealand it is found necessary to maintain ten District Registrars. It is probable that this, although at first sight a disadvantage, has by the facilities afforded been conducive to the rapid extension of business, and thus more than compensated in revenue for the additional expenditure incurred.

Notwithstanding some exceptional difficulties, chiefly in relation to Native lands (but which have now for the most part been removed), the Land Transfer system has, I believe, here as elsewhere, answered all reasonable expectations, and may be justly claimed as an important reform in the practice of conveyancing.

Those who ignore the difference in point of responsibility between this and other systems of registration, occasionally take exception to the strictness of practice which it is found necessary to enforce in matters of survey and otherwise. When it is considered that registration under the Land Transfer Act involves absolute responsibility for title, it will be seen that a vigilant regard for accuracy is the only principle on which such a system can be conducted. It is not claimed for the Land Transfer system that it renders possible the abandonment of the ordinary safeguards of business, or the evasion of restrictions imposed by law on dealings with real property. Its merit as a system of conveyancing consists mainly in this, that it divests the subject of complications and technicalities, and brings it within the range of ordinary business capacity. How effectually this is done is evidenced by the fact that a large and increasing proportion of the dealings with land under the Land Transfer Act is conducted with perfect facility by persons without any professional knowledge or experience. Exclusive of solicitors, there are upwards of fifty licensed land-brokers practising under the Act. With regard to the cost of dealing with land, the reduction of which is one great object of the Land Transfer system, it may be observed that the office fees have been fixed on as low a scale as is consistent with the due maintenance of the department, being in some instances lower than in the Australian colonies. There is reason, however, to believe that the attempt to regulate business charges under the Act has been only partially successful.

The Government is, I presume, fully informed as to the unreliable character of the public surveys in many parts of the colony. Much evil has been predicted to the Land Transfer system from this source, and it cannot be denied that there exists a serious liability to complications of the nature suggested, though, I think, by no means to the extent anticipated. The tendency is practically towards the settlement of such questions on the basis of occupation.

In connection with this subject, I may observe that the absence in this colony of a department corresponding to that of Surveyor-General in other colonies, has always been felt as a disadvantage by this department in dealing with questions of survey, and in deciding on the qualifications of persons applying to be licensed as surveyors under the Act.

I append returns—(A) Of the business transacted under the Act during the past year; (B) of the fees received during the same period; (C) of amounts secured by mortgage under the Land Transfer Act during the past year, and remaining so secured on the 30th June last; and (D) comparative summary before alluded to.

Deeds Registry.

The falling off in the receipts of this department which was anticipated in consequence of the introduction of the Land Transfer Act has so far not been realized. The receipts for the year ending 30th June, 1875, were £15,840, being in excess of those for the preceding year. The expenditure for the past year was about £8,800.

The receipts of the Deeds Registry Department for the ensuing year may be estimated at £16,000, the expenditure at £9,230.

I am not aware of anything further which calls for special notice in relation to either of the departments.

I have, &c.,

GEO. B. DAVY,
Registrar-General of Land.

The Hon. the Minister of Justice, Wellington.

A.—STATEMENT of BUSINESS TRANSACTED under the LAND TRANSFER ACTS for the YEAR ending the 30th JUNE, 1875.

DISTRICT.	APPLICATIONS.				TRANSFERS.				MORTGAGES.				CROWN GRANTS.				General Searches.	Caveats agst. dealings.	Maps deposited.	Leases.	Powers Attorney.
	AREA.		Value.	No.	AREA.		Consideration Money.	No.	AREA.		Amount Secured.	No.	AREA.		Value.						
	No.	Town and Suburbs.			Country.	Town and Suburbs.			Country.	Town and Suburbs.			Country.								
														A. B. P.		A. B. P.					
			£	s. d.			£	s. d.				£	s. d.								
Auckland ...	133	52 3 30	11,508 1 24	271	178 2 39.7	233,513 0 8	90,184 2 10	151	150 2 37	333,069 3 23	119,968 17 11	222	387 8 4	281,675 2 29	330 ...	142 ...	27 12	34 14			
Otago ...	345	122 2 3	14,612 0 25.4	865	440 0 28	27,254 2 20.4	164,294 15 0	449	169 2 21.6	61,940 1 38.5	301,576 15 0	1030	682 1 6.4	468,231 3 8.3	1023	2 485	44 8	33 72 2			
Canterbury	618	133 1 25	23,838 3 0	31012	315 1 11.46	97,348 0 8.5	218,958 18 10	767	158 2 0	180,724 1 37.5	635,877 6 1	635	94 1 27	280,097 2 4	1205	4 334	40 14	33 87 53			
Wellington	124	98 2 9.7	7,238 0 16	588	1,176 2 2	88,882 0 14	90,730 10 8	184	95 3 24	42,218 2 26	94,570 7 2	111	68 0 6	44,161 3 3	459	1 92	1 5	12 11 8			
Nelson ...	105	45 2 34	30,207 3 28	162	30 2 33	5,342 3 15	20,077 15 10	111	24 0 1	27,362 3 4	54,033 1 10	424	304 2 2	1,490 3 3	132 ...	57 ...	4 1	11 1			
Southland ...	216	54 3 30	6,721 0 15	190	87 0 0.95	35,980 1 29	59,285 3 0	172	27 0 36.5	95,616 0 3	177,003 5 11	50	14 2 12	6,649 0 31	208 ...	195	21 5	2 21 4			
Hawke's Bay	91	66 3 18.9	8,927 0 10	153	156 1 19.90	30,244 2 39	40,474 15 2	74	543 3 6.45	47,439 1 26	133,569 7 3	118	289 1 0	45,374 3 10	209	2 62	3 6	10 22 7			
Westland ...	73	10 0 25	386 0 25	114	18 2 11.4	2,265 3 19	9,434 8 0	39	4 1 8.3	1,155 1 26	5,864 18 8	101	25 3 36	...	99	1 13	7 ...	3 1 3			
Taranaki ...	7	1 0 33	324 3 36	34	5 1 28	1,945 1 9	6,594 5 6	26	10 3 39.7	4,228 0 20	19,585 10 0	47	272 1 17	1,658 0 26	17 ...	21 ...	1 2	2 ...			
Marlborough	51	21 0 12.5	1,610 1 12	99	13 1 3	5,259 0 37	8,542 7 0	39	12 1 24	4,937 0 34	25,805 5 0	33	12 1 17	1,460 0 0	92 ...	12 ...	1 3	3 ...			
Total ...	1763	607 1 22	105,374 3 31.4	33488	2,422 0 17.41	528,036 0 38.9	708,577 1 10	2012	1,197 1 38.55	798,752 1 38	1,565,854 14 10	2771	2,150 3 7.4	730,799 2 34.3	3774	10 1413	116 71	111 264 92			

**B.—FEES received under the LAND TRANSFER ACTS, for the YEAR ending the
30th JUNE, 1875.**

DISTRICT.						General Fees.			Land Assurance.			Totals.		
						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	...	...	...	...	...	921	8	2	103	6	6	1,024	14	8
Otago	...	...	...	...	...	2,789	0	0	638	19	6	3,427	19	6
Canterbury	...	...	...	...	...	4,057	2	8	789	0	3	4,846	2	11
Wellington	...	...	...	...	...	1,214	14	0	225	13	0	1,440	7	0
Nelson	...	...	...	...	...	820	3	0	150	12	3	970	15	3
Southland	...	...	...	...	...	746	11	5	92	9	6	839	0	11
Hawke's Bay	...	...	...	...	...	508	8	0	89	17	5	598	5	5
Westland	...	...	...	...	...	310	12	4	16	10	4	327	2	8
Taranaki	...	...	...	...	...	95	9	2	15	13	10	111	3	0
Marlborough	...	...	...	...	...	264	3	0	30	3	9	294	6	9
Total	...	...	...	...	...	£11,727	11	9	£2,152	6	4	£13,879	18	1

**C.—RETURN showing Total Amount in Money remaining secured by MORTGAGE under the
LAND TRANSFER ACT, on the 30th JUNE, 1875.**

DISTRICT.						Total Amount secured by Mortgage under the Land Transfer Act, during the year ended the 30th June, 1875.			Amount of Mortgage paid off during the same period.			Total Amount remaining secured by Mortgage under the Land Trans- Act, on the 30th June, 1875.		
						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland	...	...	...	...	...	119,968	17	11	39,146	5	5	192,018	3	7
Otago	...	...	...	...	...	301,576	15	0	64,575	0	0	611,274	8	5
Canterbury	...	...	...	...	...	635,877	6	1	42,196	6	9	1,219,871	14	9
Wellington	...	...	...	...	...	94,570	7	2	38,179	5	4	174,779	3	0
Nelson	...	...	...	...	...	54,033	1	10	15,289	2	4	78,697	6	9
Southland	...	...	...	...	...	177,003	5	11	42,692	9	3	334,305	13	9
Hawke's Bay	...	...	...	...	...	133,569	7	3	48,246	18	10	165,587	8	5
Westland	...	...	...	...	...	5,864	18	8	1,076	17	0	9,398	0	8
Taranaki	...	...	...	...	...	19,585	10	0	1,058	1	0	31,320	19	0
Marlborough	...	...	...	...	...	23,805	5	0	2,598	0	0	30,473	14	0
Total	...	...	...	...	...	£1,565,854	14	10	£295,058	5	11	£2,847,726	12	4

**D.—TABLE showing the Work done and Fees received in the Offices for Registration of Title in
the Australian Colonies, Tasmania, and New Zealand, and the Cost of Maintenance of those
Offices in the several Colonies. (The particulars for the Australian Colonies and Tasmania
are from Official Returns for the Year 1873; the particulars for New Zealand are for the
Financial Year ending 30th June, 1875.)**

COLONY.	Population of Colony, 31 Dec. 1873.	No. of Applica- tions to bring land under the Act.	No. of Trans- fers.	No. of Mort- gages.	Receipts (exclusive of Assurance Fund).	Cost of Maintenance.	Profit.	Loss.
					£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Victoria	790,492	1,149	7,758	2,204	18,380 2 10	14,216 13 4	4,163 9 6	...
New South Wales	560,275	258	1,283	434	3,240 6 8	5,000 0 0	...	1,759 13 4
South Australia	198,075	738	3,014	1,667	7,253 19 0	*5,930 0 0	1,323 19 0	...
Queensland	146,690	213	2,397	363	3,367 1 1	3,432 13 0	...	65 11 11
Tasmania	104,217	118	137	117	678 10 6	1,300 3 11	...	621 13 5
New Zealand	†320,000	1,763	3,488	2,012	11,727 11 9	8,900 0 0	2,827 11 9	...

* This sum includes the cost of a Register of Deeds, from which no revenue is received.

† The population of New Zealand is estimated approximately on the basis of the Census of 1874, and is exclusive of Maoris.