

surveys were arrears. About 220,000 acres only were surveys before selection, and of that area 50,000 acres have been surveyed for public bodies; leaving 170,000 acres as the area the surveys of which have been initiated by the Government and the Land Boards. The interest of the public in the surveys centres, as it were, in this 170,000 acres; for included within that area are nearly all the blocks that were offered during the year for selection under the systems of deferred-payment, agricultural-lease, and village-settlement. As yet, only about two-thirds of the 170,000 acres have been offered for selection, and it was taken up, nearly all, as soon as offered. In other words, the rate of settlement very much depends on the area of suitable land the Survey Department can prepare for selection. Thus, in Taranaki and Otago, where the surveys are not any in arrear, but, on the contrary, are kept in advance of the selector, the greatest amount of settlement has taken place. Wherever the land is suitable for occupation the surveys should be pushed on. There is no fear of getting too far in advance of the requirements of the country. The surveys have never yet, in those land districts where the law is survey before selection, got so far in advance of settlement that a time did not soon come when all the land surveyed was taken up. It is quite true that in some blocks there may be a residuum of inferior sections that do not go off for a while, but that is no reason why other blocks should not be prepared.

On the 1st July last there were in arrear 719,075 acres of section or settlement survey, of which 580,000 acres are arrear surveys which must be done to place purchasers in possession. The balance of 139,000 acres are surveys of deferred-payment and other blocks, ordered by Land Boards and Government. The department should pretty well dispose of this area during the current year.

#### NATIVE SURVEYS

Comprehend 106,303 acres, surveyed in forty-six blocks, for investigation of Native title before the Native Land Courts; and 939,449 acres, surveyed in ninety-three blocks, of lands under purchase from the Natives by the Government. These surveys have all been conducted on true meridian and connected with the triangulation; so that, apart from their utility for the purposes of the Native Land Court, they are valuable as contributions to a correct knowledge of the topography of the country.

#### GOLD-MINING SURVEYS.

Two thousand six hundred and thirty-two acres were surveyed as quartz-mining leases, cement, special, and sluicing claims. None of these areas exceed  $16\frac{1}{2}$  acres, except special claims, which the Governor, in the exercise of his discretion, may grant in greater areas in cases where there are heavy preliminary expenses for bringing in water or opening out ground. Although many of these claims are held only for a short time and then abandoned, it is necessary to have all the mining surveys very carefully done, and connected to an independent point; for, where the ground proves valuable, questions of encroachment are sure to arise, and, unless the original survey can be reproduced on the ground, endless disputes and litigation ensue.

#### ROAD SURVEYS.

Under this heading are comprehended the survey of roads taken through Native lands and lands which have been Crown-granted subject to a reserve of 5 per cent. for roads, with the right to exercise the selection for fifteen years after the date of grant in the case of Native lands, and for five years in that of Crown lands. There still remains a great deal of this work to be done; it requires to be pushed on before the times elapse, and also for the reason that the longer the road selections are delayed the more difficult it becomes to make them, as fences, homesteads, and other improvements come in the way.

#### LAND TRANSFER SURVEYS.

These surveys are executed by the private authorized surveyors, but, before passing into the Land Registry, are checked and certified to by the Survey Department. From defects in some of the original surveys, and the meagreness of their records, the satisfactory re-determination of boundaries often proves a