

Three hundred and sixty-six leases and licenses have been prepared, for 75,696 acres; and 187 Crown grants, for 8,000 acres; showing an increase of 175 leases and 179 Crown grants over last year's work. The illness of two draughtsmen has much hindered office work, one* of whom is still on sick-leave.

LAND TRANSFER WORK.

Mr. H. Curtis, Land Transfer draughtsman, has prepared 320 certificates of title, and examined and checked 124 plans. This branch has now been got into good working order, but there is still much to be done in compiling record-maps of new districts as surveys are being executed.

Considerable dissatisfaction is often expressed by the public at requisitions being made for surveys, owing to the want of sufficient data on the plans handed in of areas proposed to be dealt with—generally owing to former inaccurate surveys—and also that subdivisions of sections should be marked on the ground at all. It appears rather incongruous that, while one section of the public are complaining of the expense to which they are subjected, on account of defective survey, to secure a clear title for the transfer of land, another section consider the present system as needlessly accurate in putting occupiers in possession—the latter class failing to see, until they propose to deal with the title, that there is no security without an accurate survey, which, if made at first, must be the most economical in the end.

I must again call attention to the urgent necessity of a fireproof safe in Nelson for the preservation of the records of the department, which are rapidly increasing.

JOHN S. BROWNING,
Chief Surveyor.

MARLBOROUGH.

TRIANGULATION.

Of major and minor triangulation combined, 156,000 acres have been completed and mapped.

Of minor triangulation, 55,800 acres, partly observed, the field work of which will probably be finished by the end of July next; and 300,000 acres of major and minor triangulation combined, all the stations of which have been prepared, observing commenced, and, weather permitting, may reasonably be expected, as far as the field work is concerned, to be completed in about three months.

SECTION SURVEY.

Since my last report, which was made up to the 30th of June, 1879, the accompanying returns show that 1,561 acres of section, 25 acres of mining, and 235 acres of revised section surveys have been executed. I may state that the whole has been applied for in small parcels, and adjoining, in the majority of cases, old surveys. This class of survey is necessarily more tedious and expensive than where larger areas are being dealt with, more particularly in those cases where they abut on old surveys, the lines and marks of which, either from defective former survey or lapse of time, have become obliterated, and, having been based originally on independent magnetic meridians, and no fixed points of departure, are very difficult in many cases to be established, involving also much loss of time in searching for indications of old lines and marks.

Minor triangulations having been pushed forward during the last year over the principal portion of this district, where lands are open for selection, all the above surveys have been executed under control thereof, and recorded in their respective block and survey districts; one block only (a mining lease) having to be done on magnetic bearing, true bearing not being available.

OFFICE WORK.

In my report of last year a detailed statement was given of the arrears of work necessary to complete the maps and records of the office up to date, and pointing out the difficulty, and, indeed, impossibility, of coping with those arrears unless more assistance was afforded me. The appointment of a second draughtsman, in August last, has enabled me, however, to make considerable progress in this direction.

The reductions necessary for the compilation of the district to the prescribed scale of one mile to the inch have been completed; plans of twenty-nine survey districts, showing all surveyed, leased, and licensed lands, reserves and roads, and other information, prepared and forwarded to head office to be lithographed. Printed copies of ten of these districts are now on sale to the public at this office. These plans are invaluable, supplying at a cheap rate a want much felt by the general public, the various Road Boards, County Councils, Property-Tax Commissioners and Assessors, and General Government, as well as obviating the time of the draughtsmen being taken up in meeting further calls upon them for the above purposes.

Exhibition maps, also to a similar scale, but showing in addition the general topographical features and lands open for selection, are approaching completion, and will be placed in show-cases in the Public Survey Office.

The above, together with the ordinary routine work of the office, checking and recording surveys, preparation of Crown grants, deferred-payment licenses, pastoral and mineral leases, checking and examining deposited plans, description and diagrams on application, transfers and certificates of title for the Land Transfer Department, tracings for field surveyors, and attending to the requirements of the general public and Crown Lands Office, has kept the office staff fully employed.

HENRY G. CLARK,
Chief Surveyor.

CANTERBURY.

The satisfactory progress in the various surveys under my charge for the year ended 30th June, 1880, has, you will be glad to hear, enabled me to reduce to controllable limits the very large arrears

* Mr. Hiller has since died.