

office to furnish to the Native Land Court maps of several blocks in which the Government are interested, and of which the titles were incomplete. The cost of survey in these cases could not be ascertained, as the work of many surveyors in former years had to be utilized, so the amount of the lien is given instead in the general return.

Roads.—Notwithstanding that three of the field officers were detached from my staff for duty in the Taranaki District during several months, every attention has been given to the laying-off and legalizing of roads through Crown-granted property. Warrants have been procured for various surveyors in conformity with powers conferred by “The Crown Grants Act, 1866,” and the Native Lands Acts, and they are acting in conjunction with the County Councils, in some localities, in carrying on the surveys before the grants mature. There are few more important questions than this, and I would urge that increased effort be made to assist the counties and Highway Boards to remedy, as far as is possible, the effects of neglect in the past to lay off roads through lands alienated by the Crown. County Councils and local Boards evidently cannot afford to compensate owners of property through whose lands roads have to be forced after the Crown grants have matured; and it must be borne in mind that the warrants only operate in cases where landholders purchased under the original regulations, and obtained from 3 to 5 per cent. by way of provision for future roads. Prompt action is the more necessary at the present time as the arrears of Crown grants have, the Commissioner of Crown Lands informs me, been materially reduced, and in all parts of the country the time is lapsing from day to day, precluding the right of laying-off roads without compensation. Delay is also objectionable to the landholders, who are precluded from fencing and planting, in some cases, owing to uncertainty as to the direction and location of proposed roads.

Topographical Surveys.—Forest conservation, which is being dealt with by the Survey Department, and which I have already made the subject of a special report, appeared to necessitate the co-operation of the field officers; hence advantage is being taken of their thorough knowledge of the climate and country in this part of the colony to obtain their views and suggestions on this interesting question, so as to effect a rough preliminary classification of the forests; and this will also lead to the preparation of a good topographical map of this provincial district.

Office-work.—Mr. James Mackenzie, the Chief Draughtsman, has carried on the office-work in a careful and methodical manner, under such necessary safeguards as tend to reduce chances of error to a minimum. The Crown grant and Land Transfer record maps have been brought forward, and the remainder of the arrears of Crown grants, so far as this office is concerned, have been almost overtaken, and generally the business is conducted without difficulty now that the New Zealand system of surveys has been effectually introduced and acted up to in all respects; indeed, it is found that, though the press of work has been incessant, the majority of the staff and authorized surveyors are now so well acquainted with the rules and requirements of the Survey Department, and are so ready to comply with our requisitions, that the examination of plans, &c., becomes easier and more expeditious. In connection with this subject, I have to record my appreciation of the uniform courtesy and attention which I have experienced from all quarters. Now that the field inspection has devolved upon me, it has the advantage of bringing me in contact with almost every member of the profession employed in the district, and, of course, facilitates the settlement and clearing-up of difficulties which constantly arise in connection with defective prior surveys.

J. W. A. MARCHANT,
Chief Surveyor.

NELSON.

Minor Triangulation.—During the year it has been found necessary to extend the triangulation over some of the roughest part of the district, in order to command scattered mining and sectional surveys.

The area triangulated covers 1,211 square miles, at an average cost of 1·27d. per acre. Of this, 89,082 acres were revision, at a cost of 0·33d. per acre, by Mr. F. Smith, who also executed 140,270 acres in the Grey District, connecting with Westland and the Buller circuit. This work has been carried over exceedingly rough country on the Paparoa Ranges of the western seaboard. Mr. J. Snodgrass has done 142,500 acres, extending from Westport to Mount Newton Geodesical Station on the Upper Buller, for the purpose of connecting the scattered surveys in that part. Both these officers deserve credit for the perseverance they have shown in carrying their work, under great disadvantages, over some of the roughest portions of the Nelson District, the stations being often in bush or lying at altitudes of from 3,000 to 5,000 feet, and the work continually delayed by thick weather. Mr. Montgomerie has triangulated 65,657 acres in the Inangahua District, connecting the Grey and Buller circuits by way of the Grey Valley. Mr. H. Ellison has completed his contract, amounting to 179,794 acres, connecting the Nelson and Amuri circuits through the Wairau Gorge, over a very rough country, but free from bush. The position of boundary-line between Nelson and Marlborough, from Tophouse to Barefells Pass, has been determined by this work. Mr. T. Sadd has done 11,480 acres in the Maungatapu District, connecting Nelson and Marlborough triangulation; also 115,368 acres from St. Arnaud to Mount Newton, in the Upper Buller Valley, thus effecting a connection between the east and west coasts of the Nelson District. One of the results of this last work has been to show that