

Mapping.—Within the twelve months the staff and contract surveyors have sent in 126 large and 161 small plans, some of which are already checked and ready for the issue of the certificates of title; 43 block-sheets have been made in the Christchurch office, and 23 in the Timaru office, and additional work has been shown on those previously reported as constructed. The plans checked by Mr. Shanks are entered on the Crown-grant record maps from time to time. Two new district maps and one town record map have been compiled, and the bulk of the work recorded on the sixty Crown-grant record maps already constructed. The current work is well in hand, and the arrears are being steadily overtaken. In the reduction office 10 new district maps have been compiled, 8 traced for lithographing, and 20 traced on linen, coloured, mounted, and sent into the public room for the guidance of selectors and for general reference. Two county maps have been made and traced for the head office, and two county maps were also traced and mounted for the public room in Christchurch. By the end of the current year I trust to have all the county maps so far completed that a new general map of the whole provincial district can be issued, showing all surveys to date.

Of the triangulation, 8 new district plans have been compiled and tracings made for the lithographer, and of this item of the work I hope to have by the end of the year all arrears completed, and the whole issued for the use of public and private surveyors, so that all surveys may be readily fixed to reliable starting-points.

Nine hundred and fourteen Crown grants were prepared under the old system and 213 certificates of title under the new, giving an aggregate of 1,605 sections, containing 188,949 acres. Some little trouble has been experienced in inaugurating the new method of issuing certificates of title in lieu of grants, owing to the delay in passing schedules through the various offices concerned before they reach this department; but after a little time has elapsed the system, which has many advantages over the one it replaces, will be found to work more smoothly, and I anticipate little difficulty in getting the plans placed on the certificates. I think that in two years the greater part of the arrears that have been accumulating for the last ten years can be worked off.

Land Transfer Surveys.—In the Christchurch District Mr. C. W. Adams has sent in plans showing 14 miles 19 chains of standard traverse survey and 39 stone points fixed, but, of this, some 3 miles had been done during the season of 1879-80, though it was not credited to that year, as the completed plans had not been sent in. Mr. Adams was engaged for the first three months of the year in this survey, and he has evidently devoted a great deal of time to the preliminary ranging of the lines. The work is done with his usual commendable accuracy; he has also put in 17 survey stones and has ranged 14 miles of roads. Mr. Maitland was engaged three and a half months also on standard traverse, during which time he completed 27 miles and fixed 78 stone points between Papanui and Rangiora, including the Borough of Kaiapoi, which has stones placed at the corners of the principal streets. Both Mr. Adams's and Mr. Maitland's work show most excellent results, the different circuits closing with an average error of 1 link in $4\frac{3}{4}$ miles, the greatest error being but 1 link in $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

These permanent stone blocks, where the triangulation cannot now be used, will greatly facilitate the checking of Land Transfer surveys, enable the licensed surveyors to base their work on the true meridian of the district in which the surveys are situate, and give reliable points from which these surveys can be re-established in the event of the original marks being destroyed or lost.

Mr. Monro, the officer in charge of this branch of the Survey Office in Christchurch, reports that the following work has been done during the year:—

Plans received and checked, 103, containing 2,833 allotments; Public Works plans received and checked, 13; transfers, 2,870, of which 1,503 required to be checked; number of applications received and checked, 248; number of mortgages received, 2,223, of which 65 required checking; number of leases received, 133, of which 38 required checking; certificates of title issued, 1,716.

The above shows that the general depression in business has but slightly affected the number of transactions recorded in this office compared with the previous year, and with a return of prosperity may be expected a large increase in the work to be done under this heading.

Mr. Monro, in his report, states that "most of the surveys made in Christchurch and its suburbs, in Lyttelton, and in Kaiapoi (since extension northwards of standard survey), have been made to meridian of standard survey, and connected to permanent marks of that survey: this will enable the position of boundaries of properties to be re-established in a conclusive manner in the event of boundary marks becoming obliterated or destroyed. In the case of Timaru a standard survey of the borough and suburbs is much required to produce uniformity in frontage lines and in meridian of surveys. From the absence of uniformity in these particulars, and from the position of section-corners being differently assumed by different surveyors, dimensions on survey plans frequently appear to conflict when there is no actual overlap in boundaries claimed. Surveys of country land have been made for the most part to circuit meridian, and connected with triangulation; but it has been occasionally necessary to refer back plans owing to non-compliance in this respect with the survey regulations."

Arrears and Proposed Operations, 1881-82.—I am glad to report that, notwithstanding the reduction of the staff, the arrears of work are now brought within manageable limits, and during the ensuing season I hope to get a great portion of these done.

The arrears proper on the 30th June last consisted of 2,429 sections, containing 169,058