

annually laid off in the settlement surveys, it behoves the Survey Department to see that the most is made of the natural facilities in each district, by having the best practicable road-lines laid off before the settlers come on to the ground. There is no obstacle in the way of effecting this desirable result in those land districts where survey precedes selection; but where the contrary prevails, and the settler is first on the ground, there is always more or less difficulty in the matter of locating roads suitably. In the case where surveys are long in arrear this difficulty is greatly increased. With the exception of the Auckland, Nelson, and Canterbury Land Districts, there are no arrears. In these districts the aggregate still amounts to about 200,000 acres, but the work is well in hand.

The surveys for the Native Reserves Trustee made on the west coast of Taranaki amount to 21,731 acres, divided into 161 sections, at a cost of £1,734. They were executed mostly by the staff, and the expense will be recovered from the rents as they are leased.

NATIVE SURVEYS.

The operation of "The Native Land Court Act, 1880," in providing that all surveys of Native lands for investigation of title must come under the direction of the department, and the cost of the same will be advanced by the Government when so desired, is having the effect of inducing the aborigines to bring their land to a greater extent than formerly under law and registration, thereby rendering it negotiable. During the year, 110 blocks, aggregating an area of 432,919 acres, were surveyed, at the cost of £6,399, advanced by the Government, and 124 blocks, of an area of 441,955 acres, the cost of the survey of which was paid direct by the Natives. Much the greater part of these surveys were executed by authorized surveyors at schedule rates. Applications for survey are constantly coming in, and it is only a matter of a few years at most until the whole of the Native estate, extensive though it be, will have been surveyed and the titles thereto settled and individualized.

The surveys for the West Coast Commission amount to 70 blocks or divisions, containing an area of 73,700 acres, costing £3,252. These were executed by staff and surveyors temporarily engaged for the purpose.

The Native land purchase surveys have diminished from former years owing to change of policy. Seven blocks, comprising a total area of 32,718 acres, were returned for the year.

The liens registered against Native lands on account of surveys now amount to £46,901. During the year £1,757 were paid off.

MINING, ROAD, AND LAND TRANSFER SURVEYS.

The surveys of mining-lease areas on the gold fields, and of road-lines through freehold and Native lands, before the expiry of the right to do so has lapsed, have been prosecuted in the usual manner, and do not call for any special explanation, except that it may be mentioned that a road survey in the Chatham Islands has been in progress since April, 1882, and will be completed about the end of 1883. The surveys under the Land Transfer Act, being surveys of freehold lands, are executed entirely by private authorized surveyors for the landowners and at their cost, but subject in all the technical details of field survey and of record to the direction, check, and approval of the department.

PIONEER ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

It has been found of the greatest importance that the opening of bridle- and dray-tracks through the Crown lands should precede their occupation. It would, indeed, be of advantage if the pioneer roading could in all cases precede even the subdivision or sectional survey. This is being done in several districts, but more frequently the order of procedure is reversed. The total length of road-lines under the various stages of bush felling and clearing, of side cuttings and formations, for the year is 491 miles, at a cost of £81,788. In this sum is included the cost of erecting several bridges. These works are all under the general direction of the Chief Surveyors, aided in some cases either by the officers of the Public Works Department and of the local bodies, or entirely by the Survey officers, as is found most convenient. Full details are given in the Appendix.