

it is subdividing into hapu divisions, varying from 1,000 to 15,000 acres. Another part is rural-section work of the severest type, in the locating of compensation awards to the precise acre, and of which there are 13,500 acres. These sections vary from twelve to 500 acres, the smaller predominating, as instance a case at Onairo, where 760 acres are cut into thirty-eight sections averaging twenty acres each. Since I have taken charge 103,400 acres of this work have come into the office to be dealt with, but the return only shows what has actually been done since that time, now nine months. Having in view the ultimate subdivision of the hapu divisions for leasing, road-lines have been run and made the boundaries wherever practicable, instead of arbitrary lines, which would of necessity have created great confusion in the cutting-up. This course has made the work more expensive, but will be a saving in the end, and is preferable in every respect. The bulk of the work is now done, everything is completed south of New Plymouth, and, with one or two exceptions, the Crown grants are either executed or now in preparation. To the north of New Plymouth 12,200 acres are surveyed, but there still remain about 24,000 acres to be done, 1,800 of which is in hand. What is before us is in very broken forest country, and the greater part compensation awards, so that the survey will be necessarily slower and more expensive than what has already been done. Notwithstanding this, I anticipate seeing the end of this particular work a few months hence. During the year there have gone out from the office 101 draft Crown grants to Natives, representing 103,440 acres, and seventeen more are in preparation, comprising a further 49,270 acres; these will be cleared off in July.

*Native Reserves Trustee.*—This is the subdivision for leasing of the lands that have been set apart for the Natives by the West Coast Commission. Notwithstanding that the exterior boundaries of the several grants have been surveyed, a considerable amount of work is entailed in laying-off roads through the larger blocks, and in scheming the sections, which latter are often altered as the work progresses, to suit the requirements of the Natives. In some cases work has had to be abandoned for this reason. These surveys were commenced in the latter part of November, and since that time there has been an average of three surveyors upon them, resulting in the subdivision for leasing of 21,731 acres. A further 3,000 acres is in hand on the Continuous Reserve, and the balance of that portion of the Opunake Block at present proposed to be leased.

*Roads and Railways.*—The rates on some of these items appear high, but when the circumstances are considered they are not unreasonable. The road over the Whitecliffs range has been a very difficult and tedious work. Trial lines have been cut through the forest and graded for miles in different places; but finally a line for the main road to Mokau has been determined upon, the steepest grade being 1 in 15. It will be an expensive road, but is the only practicable one through this piece of rugged wooded country. Again, the railway surveys have been costly, in consequence of two miles out of the five running through town and suburban lands; in fact, right into the centre of New Plymouth, and this amid surveys of forty years ago.

*Other Work.*—This item of £2,771 19s. 5d. includes the cost of surveys in progress (amounting to 23,000 acres), inspection, exploring, and a number of other works which could not be classed under any of the headings in the return. The latter is especially the case with the peculiar and intricate work of the West Coast Commission.

*Inspection.*—Having had as many as twenty-two parties in the field, I have been compelled occasionally to avail myself of the services of Mr. Bird, the senior Staff Surveyor. During the year I have made thirty-seven inspections, and Mr. Bird eight. Constant attention has been needed with the surveys for the Reserves Trustee, as so many questions arise beyond the power of the surveyor to decide. In the work that has been returned this year, 213 miles of road have been run, mainly in the forest. Inspection in this particular is very necessary, but, while a great deal has been done in this way, it has been impossible to go over all the lines. With regard to the character of the surveyors' work I have pleasure in reporting it to be thoroughly good. The closes, both instrumental and measurement, are quite equal to those of preceding years. While the work as a whole is excellent, I do not venture to say that there may not be a slip in such a mass of work, such as in laying-off a section-line.

*Office Work.*—After what has preceded, it is almost needless to say that the office work has been very heavy, and were it not for the additions latterly made to our small office staff we should have been overwhelmed with the great inrush of pressing work during the last six months. There has been pressure on all sides: From the Crown Lands to prepare land for the market; from the West Coast Commission to issue as speedily as possible the Crown grants to the Natives of the lands awarded to them; and from the Reserves Trustee to get the land ready to be leased with the greatest expedition. In justice to the officers, I must say that they have done well, and to their utmost have endeavoured to meet the demands. Both Commission and Reserves Trustee's surveys entail a great amount of office work, it all having to be arranged here, and complete schemes of the subdivisions made and given to the surveyors to work from. Of Crown grants plans and descriptions in quadruple, 146 have been prepared, comprising 103,824 acres; certificates of title, in lieu of Crown grants, 436, representing 1,854 plans; 1,020 plans placed on ordinary certificates of title; 46 land transfer surveyor's plans passed, and 22 drawings for photo-lithographing have been made.

*Future Operations.*—The triangulation, which has now reached Pukearuhe, I would recommend to be continued through to Mokau, and, as topography is always combined, it will give a good insight into and valuable information respecting a part of the country of which at present so little is known. The Native difficulty, which has for so many years been the obstacle to our operations in this direction, I have reason to believe is now removed. In the settlement-work we have to complete the forest land at the back of the Waimate, and I would propose that some should be done during the coming season in the Waitara Valley, near Kawau and Taramokou, where there is good land, both agricultural and pastoral, and will be but about twelve miles from the railway-line. We have, as stated before, 24,000 acres to complete for Sir William Fox; and the Reserves Trustee will be requiring, beyond the 10,000 acres we have in hand, a considerable amount more at Stony River and north of Waitara.

THOMAS HUMPHRIES, Chief Surveyor.