

Of Native blocks an estimated area of 717,016 acres awaits survey of exterior boundaries prior to investigation of title.

In settlement survey, blocks of Crown lands in nearly every land district are available for subdivision. The extent to which this can be done, or rather should be done, will depend very much on what money may be available for expenditure in opening roads and tracks through such unoccupied country as the extensive and valuable area lying between Masterton, Woodville, and the confines of Hawke's Bay, known as the Forty-Mile, Puketoi and Tautane bushes; or the equally-extensive areas of open fern country lying between Napier, Wairoa, and Gisborne; or the still more extensive area of open and bush land abutting on the coast-line between Catlin's River and the Bluff.

There are at present 79 surveyors on the permanent staff and 34 surveyors on the temporary list, as against 86 permanent and 40 temporary twelve months ago. The decrease is due to the disposal of the West Coast Commission surveys, the great body of arrears in Canterbury, and the completion of the sectional surveys of the blocks withheld from the Otago runs.

In the survey offices there are 78 draughtsmen on the permanent staff and 21 on the temporary list engaged in the reduction of the survey plans and their record on the property plans, and preparation of certificates of title. This important work proceeds on a settled system of routine and check, which assures correctness for the thousands of titles which pass through in the course of a year. There are 9 draughtsmen engaged in the Head Office upon maps for publication and the general requirements of the Government.

The compilation of the topographical information into the geographical maps for publication proceeds as quickly as spare time from the other work will permit.

It affords me great satisfaction to state that in the staff of surveyors and draughtsmen now in the department the colony has a very effective means of preparing the country for settlement, and of making known its resources in that respect far and wide, through the numerous maps which are annually produced and distributed extensively both at Home and abroad.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,
Surveyor-General.

The Hon. W. Rolleston, Minister of Lands.