

a correct recordable survey is made. This class of work is invariably more tedious and troublesome than any other, and although, as a rule, it is only taken up when other work has to be done in the same locality, yet in these two land districts the old inaccurate surveys are a serious drag on progress, and an ever-recurring cause of complaint on the part of the settlers who have not received their grants. As this class of cases occurs in many different places it will be several years at the present rate of progress before they are all overtaken, and the grants issued.

NATIVE SURVEYS.

The return for the year of surveys for the Native Land Court for investigation of title is 273 blocks, and a total area of 505,879 acres. Of this, 151 blocks and 312,678 acres have been paid in advance by Government, and a sum of £5,563 9s. registered in lien, to secure future repayment. The survey of 122 blocks and 193,201 acres has been paid for by the Natives to the surveyors. Part of these surveys were executed in former years, but, as they have only been brought recently to account, they appear for the first time in the returns for the twelve months ending the 30th June, 1885. There have been numerous applications by Natives for surveys which have never been entered on, because the Natives cannot pay the cost, and, private surveyors having no power to register a lien, they have no security for future repayment, and, as a rule, now decline to execute Native surveys. The Government can register a lien, but, as it also declines to advance the cost, the number of surveys of Native lands for investigation of title has necessarily very much diminished.

The Native land purchase surveys return four blocks, of an aggregate area of 17,339 acres. This class of surveys being now almost confined to the completion of transactions entered into in previous years, and no new purchases of any magnitude being negotiated, it also has a tendency to diminish. The purchase of the Mangatainoka Block, of 70,000 acres, which for many years had been under negotiation, was recently adjudicated on by the Native Land Court, and subdivided according to the interests of the several proprietors; about 40,000 acres of land well adapted for settlement being allotted to the Crown, and which is now under survey for definition of boundaries and section of road-lines.

LAND TRANSFER SURVEYS.

The facilities given for the conveyance of land under the Land Transfer Act, the numerous sales and subdivisions incident to the settlement of a new country, where as yet no great sentiment attaches to land—it being treated more as a commodity to be bought and sold for profit than as a family possession—together with the fact that in the rapid development of the country, and the great changes which occupation is making on its surface, where there are no ancient landmarks as in other countries to stereotype possessions, all point to the necessity of having boundaries and marches referred to a network of trigonometrical or standard points, so that the position of every piece of land brought under the Land Transfer Act may be easily ascertainable ever after, irrespective of the changes on surface referred to. An accurate recordable system of survey is therefore the basis of the success of the land transfer system. As the State gives its guarantee to the title of every piece of land brought under it, all survey plans are carefully examined before being passed for registration of title. At each of the eleven principal district survey offices the work requires the constant attention of one or more officers.

There is occasional delay in passing plans, from having to refer them back for further information to the private authorized surveyors, by whom this class of surveys is almost wholly undertaken. As a rule, however, the authorized surveyors show every desire to co-operate with the department, but considering the large number of practitioners, and the difficulties in unravelling the entanglements of some of the old surveys, it will be manifest that delays must sometimes ensue before all the requirements are met, and the plan passed on to the District Land Registrar. There is, however, the satisfaction that in the investigation of every difficult case the subsequent dealing with all the adjacent land is rendered comparatively easy, so that, by keeping steadily to system, the work of inspection and check will gradually become less tedious and difficult. A great aid to the efficient working of the land-transfer system is the entering of the boundaries of the lands dealt with on a record plan of the town, suburb, or district, as the case may be. This shows at a glance the existing state of the tenure, and is a valuable index to the ownership of the land.

In the recent preparation of rolls for the Assessors under the property-tax very great difficulty was experienced, as explained in Mr. Barron's report, in finding what portions of a