

Road-formation is partly carried on by officers of the department and partly by local authorities. The work done by the twenty local bodies who have had control of expenditure during the year has amounted to £14,982 10s., and that done by the officers of the Survey Department to £33,363 6s. 3d.

In the Head Office the chief work is still the publication of the one-mile district maps, of which twenty-three have been drawn during the year, and thirty-eight printed. I regret that this useful series has been retarded by urgent miscellaneous work.

The number of impressions printed from lithographs during the year was 603,341, of which 349,721 were for the Survey Department, 67,943 for the Public Works Department, 57,067 were for the Museum and Geological Survey, 27,650 for the Railway Department, and the balance for twenty-two other departments of the service.

The geographical map of the northern part of the Middle Island, which was in hand last year, has been completed for the press, but its publication has been deferred by other work of a pressing kind in the litho-printing office.

A map of New Zealand, on a scale of eight miles to an inch, measuring 7 feet by 10 feet, and designed to show the physical geography of the colony, is now in hand for the Colonial Exhibition, to be held in London next year, and a replica will show the tenure of the lands in the colony.

The maps which have been prepared for Assessors under the Property-Tax Act have occupied nearly two months of many of the draughtsmen in this and the district offices.

The preparation of about 2,740 maps has been a work of some labour; but ascertaining the subdivisions which have been made since the Crown disposed of the lands has been an equally arduous task. Where lands have been dealt with under the Land Transfer Act the operation is simple, if laborious; but where the properties are held by conveyance the utmost carelessness abounds in the plans and descriptions engrossed. For example, in a case which is a type of many: A piece of, say, 50 acres is sold out of a property of 2,000 acres, and, apparently without any survey to ascertain in what part of the property the piece is situated, a conveyance is drawn and a plan placed in the margin, but the situation of the portion conveyed might be in the north, south, east, west, or middle of the estate. In another case a conveyance is given of a road which has never been closed, and includes also an education reserve alongside. These possibly are good holding titles; but some one will succeed to trouble through them some day. Under the Deeds Registration Act any instrument is registered without check. Under the Land Transfer Acts titles are checked by experienced Government Survey Officers, and the Government guarantees their correctness. In the district offices the work of ascertaining and mapping subdivisions of properties was crowded into a very small space of time, and I have to express my pleasure at the cordial, untiring efforts of the Chief Draughtsmen to complete the many maps at the appointed period. Had not they and their assistants most willingly toiled—some from 9 in the morning until 10 at night—it would have been impossible, even with the large number of temporary hands employed, to have accomplished the task in anything near the time required. It would be of great value to future assessments, if they are to be made, were all subdivisions now recorded, and kept up from time to time either in the Property-Tax Office or in the Registry Offices of the districts.

My thanks are due to the officers employed in the Head Office for able and willing assistance in carrying out the instructions received. Messrs. Lakeman, Bull, Boscawen, and Danby, in the clerical and account branch, have performed laborious duties well and cheerfully. Messrs. Flanagan, Grant, Kemp, Wilson, McCardel, Taylor, Malings, Watt, Farquhar, and Graham, in the professional branch, have done very good service during the year. Many tedious calculations have been made and checked by Messrs. Grant and Farquhar. In the photographic gallery I am glad to notice considerable improvement in its arrangements. Mr. Earle and his assistant printers have turned out a large number of maps and other lithographs, many of them in a highly-finished state.

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Office Surveyor.