

as there is not much likelihood of this class of work being increased, seeing all the land north of the Waiho River has been withdrawn from sale pending the negotiations about East and West Coast Railway construction.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.

CANTERBURY.

For nine months of the year ended the 30th June, 1885, the Canterbury surveys have been executed under the supervision of the Inspector, Mr. Kitson, who had charge of this branch of the department during the time I was away on leave of absence; therefore the work has been done principally under his direction, and has comprised arrears of sectional surveys, gold-mining leases, subdivision of reserves, and trigonometrical surveys, in all of which the returns show that very considerable progress has been made, notwithstanding the reductions in the staff by the resignation of Mr. H. Maitland and the transfer to the North Island of Mr. J. E. Pickett, both excellent officers, whose valuable services I regret to have lost.

Minor Triangulation.—This work has been executed mainly by Mr. H. C. White, who was to have left the department at the end of March last, but whose services are retained until the middle of July to enable him to finish the plans of the work upon which he was engaged—viz., the filling-up of the gap in the trigonometrical survey between the Hakateramea and McKenzie country known as "Gibson's country." The area is over a hundred and fifty thousand acres, and the field observation, topographical work, and calculations have been completed and received at the office. I cannot, however, report on the closures obtained, for, owing to the press of work for the Property-Tax Department, I have been unable to get the calculations checked; but I can state that the closures, as shown by Mr. White, will come within the ordinary limit of error allowed for this class of work. Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Mathias have also completed a few thousand acres of minor triangulation without topography, to enable them to connect sectional surveys with the existing trigonometrical stations.

Sectional Surveys.—Last year's returns showed that there were 36,173 acres arrear surveys to commence the season with; but this area has been considerably augmented by new land-purchases, by sections it was found necessary from one cause or other to resurvey before correct titles could issue, and by reserves it has been decided to subdivide into smaller allotments previous to the Crown Lands Department dealing with them: thus, though our returns show that we have completed 675 sections, containing 35,478 acres, the arrears that this department has yet to overtake are nearly 17,000 acres. The average cost of the field-work—viz., 2s. 1½d. an acre, is slightly less than it was during the preceding year, notwithstanding that the Peninsula bush surveys have proved exceptionally costly this year, owing probably to the sections in several instances being detached from other work, necessitating proportionally a much greater extent of road- and boundary-lines to be cut and traversed than is the case when sections abut upon each other. It may be anticipated that each succeeding year, as the Peninsula surveys approach completion, they will prove increasingly costly, the land now being purchased consisting principally of rough mountain-tops, or nearly inaccessible gullies or mountain-sides, entailing tedious and laborious work to get the boundary-lines cut and chained.

Inspection.—The officers now left on the staff being most of them highly-experienced surveyors, whose work has been often proved, their surveys have not been tested on the ground so often as has hitherto been the practice; nevertheless each party has been visited at least once by the Inspector, who, in addition to his other duties, now acts as Crown Lands Ranger north of the Rangitata, vice Mr. Foster, of the Sheep Department, and is also Inspector under the Forest Trees Planting Encouragement Acts.

Old Surveys in the Timaru District.—The bulk of these surveys having now been plotted on the Timaru plans, and copies thereof made on block sheets and sent to the Christchurch office, this branch of the department has been able to dispense with the services of Mr. W. C. Wright, who was specially engaged to complete the plotting of the old provincial surveys in this district, which, remaining unplotted for so many years, had so hampered the issue of titles to the land. The department is greatly indebted to Mr. Wright for the systematic and careful way in which he has plotted and checked these surveys, the difficulties surrounding which only those can estimate who have been engaged in unravelling work done so many years ago, and then often hastily and imperfectly. Mr. Wright having been transferred to another district, his services, I am happy to say, will not be lost to the department.

Gold-mining Leases.—Ten of these, in the Wilberforce District, have been laid out by Mr. G. H. M. McClure, or, rather, the frontage and ranging pegs, to denote the dividing boundary-lines, have been put in, the places where the back pegs should be being totally inaccessible. Mr. McClure, in one instance, nearly lost his life by falling down a crevasse, the brink of which he incautiously stepped too near to when trying to get round it, in order to reach a point in connection with his work. The cost of these mining-lease surveys is borne by the applicants. Whilst in the Wilberforce District Mr. McClure also surveyed a small township, and three fifty-acre sections for agricultural leases on Moa Flat, on the south side of the Wilberforce River.

Land Transfer Surveys.—The work in this branch of the Survey Department has fallen off during the past year, Mr. Monro, the officer in charge, reporting that it has only reached about three-fifths of that of previous years. Thirty deposit plans, embracing 548 allotments, have been checked; fourteen plans showing lands taken for railway purposes, and twenty-six plans of road deviations, have been passed; 511 ordinary transfers, 207 applications to bring land under the Act, 1,414 ordinary certificates, exclusive of duplicates, and 1,163 certificates in lieu of Crown grants, exclusive of the two copies required of each certificate, have been prepared.

Office Work.—Mr. Shanks reports that the surveyors have sent in during the year 108 plans of sectional work, one township, twelve subdivisions of reserves, and eleven mining leases. Addi-