

sub-divisions of old blocks, to carry out orders of Court. Some extensive surveys are now going on in the Taupo country to prepare lands for adjudication on by the Court, otherwise there is a general cessation of surveys of this character all over the Province, due in a great measure to the difficulty the Natives find in procuring the necessary funds to pay for their surveys.

*Native Land Purchase Surveys.*—Only 8,877 acres, in seven blocks, have been surveyed during the past year for the acquirement of title by the Crown.

*Roads, Railways, and Water-races.*—The survey staff completed the survey of 247½ miles of road and railway (twenty-five miles), nearly all of which was in exercise of the rights reserved under the different Acts. The twenty-five miles of railway surveyed was the first portion of the Main Trunk Line southwards from Te Awamutu. The demands on the services of the staff for other and more pressing surveys prevents us from exercising the road rights in a large number of cases, with the result that the rights are lapsing from the effluxion of time, causing serious trouble to those who have purchased native lands, and who now find that there is no way to, or from, them, without purchasing it.

*Other Work.*—Under this heading appears, as usual, the cost of field inspection, and sundry duties performed by the survey officers, which do not come under the tabular headings.

*Standard Surveys of Towns.*—The only work performed of this nature has been an extension of the City of Auckland survey into the suburbs, performed by Mr. Williams during spare time, when not inspecting, and which was rendered necessary by the spreading of subdivisions of property prior to bringing it under the Land Transfer Act. Mr. Williams reports the continued disregard of the stone standards, which have been placed at great cost by workmen connected with the local bodies, gas company, &c., and frequently we have to replace stones at great cost and difficulty. It has been pointed out in previous reports that to render the standard survey of the benefit that it might be, it is essential to commence a street alignment survey, for, until this is done, the Government are running a continual and increasing risk in granting titles under the Land Transfer Act in places where the buildings are rapidly increasing.

*Land Transfer Surveys.*—Mr. Foster reports that he has passed 208 plans containing 2,095 allotments, shewing an area of 32,880 acres, and Mr. Buscke, at the Gisborne office, 35 plans with an area of 16,580 acres. We have on hand, and referred back to the surveyors, 73 plans, a number far greater than should be, and which is the cause of constant enquiry by those interested in them. The examining staff of draughtsmen is not sufficient to keep pace with the influx of plans, nearly all of which require the most minute and searching enquiry, and this is made most difficult and tedious by the general absence of the original maps of the city and suburbs of Auckland, where most of the surveys under the Act lie. If the street alignment survey as proposed were once carried out, the difficulty, as far as the city is concerned, would be very much lessened, both as regards the department and the interests of the public. Mr. Williams speaks in terms of praise of the general accuracy, as surveys, of those cases which have been tested in the field. It is hoped that the new regulations—as soon as they are in the hands of the profession—will somewhat facilitate matters with respect to these surveys.

*Field Inspection.*—Mr. Williams is kept continuously at this work, the Land Transfer Surveys alone occupying quite half his time. He has made a start at a systematic inspection of the staff-surveyor's work, but the more pressing needs of the Land Transfer surveys caused him to interrupt it. He will, however, continue this work shortly. He has during the past year computed a new set of geodetical tables, derived from the latest data as especially applicable to New Zealand, which will shortly be submitted to your approval. Mr. Barnard, in addition to his duties of supervising the whole of the surveys for the Government and those made under the different Acts within Cook county, keeps an efficient and constant check on the surveys in the field, about sixty per cent. being actually so tested, and the results show that, as a rule, the work is faithfully done. The large extent of country he has to travel over, and the difficulties of communication, make the field inspection in his district particularly onerous.

*Examination of Surveyors.*—Mr. Inspector Williams held an examination for young men who wished to obtain the departmental diploma in the beginning of the year, when twelve candidates presented themselves, six of whom passed. It is found that the unsuccessful ones usually fail in a clear understanding of the regulations for surveys and the legitimate deductions to be drawn therefrom. Faulty draughtsmanship is also a frequent cause of failure.

*Office Work.*—The returns, supplied by the Chief Draughtsman, show in a concise form such matters of the daily routine of office work, as are susceptible of being entered in tabular forms; but the bulk of the work of the indoor staff is, of course, incapable of being noticed in these rigid forms. The results of the year's work of the Gisborne staff, under Mr. Featon's charge, are, of course, embodied therein. I regret to say that there are very considerable arrears of work in both offices, due to the reduction of the staff last year and to the complete stoppage of all survey work to aid the Property Tax Department in completing maps and schedules for their triennial assessment, the effects of which we are still feeling. Mr. Kensington informs me that we now have 1,543 ten-chain block sheets prepared, on which all survey work is entered as received; and in view of the estate surveys which will shortly come in, in the so-called King Country, this number will be greatly augmented during the coming year. Some progress has been made in the preparation of secondary record maps—a work which has been too long delayed. I am glad to report that on my late visit to Gisborne I found this branch of the record system to be well up to date. The increase of maps of all kinds which are yearly received, again requires me to notice the insufficiency of the safe accommodation. The map curator is put to all kinds of shifts to find room for the maps under his charge, whilst the letter records are in constant danger from being left in a wooden building, subject at any time to be burnt down. It is with great satisfaction that I am able to report that there are no arrears of Certificates or Crown grants, excepting those held back for want of surveys, and what the number of these latter may be it is impossible to estimate, for I constantly receive requisitions from the Commissioner of Crown Lands for grants for which people have never applied until now, though often entitled to them many years since. No doubt this is due to the destruction of the Provincial records by fire in 1874. During the past year only twenty-two lithographs have been published, though many more might advantageously be drawn. Some progress has been made with a new series of county maps to replace those made in 1877, which had become so worn as to be almost useless, and the ensuing