

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

SURVEYS OF NEW ZEALAND.

REPORT FOR 1890-91.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 2nd September, 1891.

I have the honour to furnish the following report on the operations of the Survey Department for the twelve months ending the 30th June, 1891.

The usual extracts from the reports of the Chief Surveyors of the ten land districts, with tables showing detailed information, and two special reports, one on the glaciers of the neighbourhood of Mount Cook, the other on the topographical survey of the neighbourhood of Tongariro Mountain, with illustrative maps, will be found in the Appendix.

The result of the year's output of work is briefly summarised in the following table:—

		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Minor triangulation (without topography) ...	829,187 acres	0	0	0·88	3,027	2	1
Topographical survey ...	595,776 "	0	0	0·35	871	5	2
Topographical surveys for selections under "The Land Act Amendment Act, 1887" ...	207,830 "	0	0	4·53	3,527	13	0
Rural and suburban section surveys (2,283 sections)	424,761 "	0	1·22	0	25,931	4	8
Town section surveys (433 sections) ...	436 "	1	6·57	0	575	6	1
Native Land Court surveys (213 blocks)...	1,091,510 "	0	0·11	0	6,228	4	3
Mining surveys (355 sections) ...	13,821 "	0	5·73	0	3,959	8	1
Roads, &c., 519·03 miles, per mile ...	...	11	1	5	5,751	13	11
Miscellaneous work, detention, &c. ...	...	...	...	...	8,050	17	1
Total cost of field-work finished during the year ...					£57,922	14	4

The total amount spent in the field-work of the department during the year was £56,116 17s. 10d., and the difference between that sum and £57,922 14s. 4d. is partly represented by the field-work over from last season only now taken credit for. The total cost of field-work, office supervision, publication, &c., was £88,998 17s. 5d., from which has to be deducted refunds for services performed amounting to £18,585 14s. 1d., leaving the net cost of the department for the year at £71,413 4s. 2d., or £2,342 15s. 11d. less than for the previous period. The lesser cost during the year is due to a larger amount accruing from refunds than for the previous period.

The average cost of the various classes of work varies little from year to year, though the total expenditure increases or decreases according to the amount of land prepared for settlement, the principal item of cost being of course the rural and suburban lands surveyed. In 1889 the average cost per acre for rural and suburban sections was 1s. 1·4d.; for 1890, 1s. 3·7d.; for this year, 1s. 0·22d.; or an average of 1s. 1·4d. per acre for the three years. Ten years ago the average price was 1s. 4·1d., thus showing an apparent decrease in cost of about 3d. per acre; but this is apparent only, for in order to obtain a just comparison there should be added to the cost of recent surveys a small sum now chargeable to surveys of land for "selection before survey." Were this done the cost for recent years would about equal that of previous years for a long period past. For all practical purposes the cost of surveying lands for settlement may be stated at 1s. 3d. per acre, which is a very moderate price when the completeness and care with which they are done is taken into consideration.

TRIANGULATION AND TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS.

The two first items in the table given above may be grouped under this heading, and it will there be seen that 2,226 square miles have been surveyed during the twelve months, or 346 square miles less than last year; whilst the cost per acre remains very nearly the same, or not quite $\frac{1}{2}$ d.