

to the public who require information about land. Owing to the progress of the new surveys, these are behind in information and often misleading, and about forty principal districts should be republished, but cannot be prepared owing to other work. There have been 157 field-plots and 416 sheets of tabulations received, also 1,633 letters and 656 vouchers passed through; 147 surveyors' plans, with 338 sheets of calculations and fifty-seven sheets of railway and road plans, with the necessary check calculations, have been examined and recorded on the block-sheets. Fourteen new block- and trig.-sheets have been prepared. A chart of the French Pass and surrounding bays has been compiled for the information of the Admiralty, and a set of observations taken to ascertain magnetic variation, and a survey for the Marine Department, showing the new position of buoys outside Nelson Harbour. A large plan, showing the topography of the North Amuri and Upper Waiau country, has been made for the Rabbit Department for fencing information, and copies of selection-maps for district offices, besides tracings of old surveys furnished to surveyors and others required by the Lands Department. The property-tax plans and schedules are now in progress, being posted up for the last triennial period, on which all the available staff are employed and current work postponed. One staff and one temporary draughtsman have been discharged during the year.

Proposed Work, 1891-92.—The arrears in hand are forty-four sections of 6,816 acres, being applications principally in the Waimea, Takaka, and Collingwood districts, isolated and scattered over long distances; and twenty-seven mining surveys in the Reefton and Westport districts; besides which the survey of current applications for settlement coming in during the year. A block of suburban land, near the Mohikinui Coal-mines, is required to be laid off in about five-acre blocks for the settlement of the miners there, which will be undertaken by Mr. Snodgrass, who has in hand also nine mining surveys. Mr. Montgomerie, at Reefton, has eighteen mining surveys in hand, and when the applications for land in the Midland Railway area can be dealt with, amounting at present to about 180, he will not be able to complete them without assistance. Messrs. Sadd, Greenfield, and Thompson will undertake the work in the Waimea, Takaka, and Collingwood districts, and the last-named will be available for assistance to the other surveyors, who have more work than they can get through in a reasonable time. Mr. F. Smith will complete the work in progress in the Amuri circuit, and has several revision surveys of large blocks before certificates of title can be issued.

JOHN S. BROWNING, Chief Surveyor.

WESTLAND.

Topographical Survey for Selection under "The Land Act, 1887."—The total area—87,480 acres—under this heading, cost 1'6d. per acre, is topography derived from extensions of traverses and exploration surveys during the execution of isolated section and other surveys, and is for better definition of areas for application under the Act quoted, &c.

Rural and Suburban Section Survey.—Eighty-six sections, of a total area of 4,773 acres, cost 2s. 0½d. per acre. These are principally "free selections before survey," of small areas with a few reserves for public purposes, Midland Railway lands selected, and some of the old "built" sections revised and brought under standard. The work is very scattered, the extreme sections being over eighty miles apart in a straight line, situated in some nineteen or twenty survey districts, and in heavily-bushed country, in expensive districts, and entailing considerable bush cutting. The cost of this class of work during the year would have been lighter but for detentions caused by the excessive wet weather and flooded condition of the country when the works were in progress. Wet weather on the west coast of the South Island is a very important factor in out-door work.

Town Section Survey.—One section of one acre only. The comparatively high cost of this survey is owing to its being an isolated survey.

Native Land Survey.—Two thousand three hundred acres, comprising eighty-three subdivisions; total cost, £98 10s. This was a resurvey of the Native reserve in the Lower Arahura Valley and a readjustment of subdivisions, the work being done by Mr. J. N. Smyth, for the Native Trust Department. This was a greatly-needed piece of work to adjust the holdings of lessees; the former subdivisions being very old "piecemeal" surveys, executed at various times, some sixteen to twenty-two years ago, and on magnetic meridian. The greater part of the work was over cleared or cultivated land.

Gold-mining Surveys.—These comprise a total area of 495 acres 2 roods 19 perches in twelve divisions. These surveys comprised special claims and licensed holdings, and were still, as of late years, principally taken up with the intention of working the auriferous deposits by means of dredging operations. There is a considerable falling-off this year in the areas taken up for gold-mining operations on a large scale, due probably to the unfortunately unsuccessful attempts to initiate the gold-dredging industry north and south of Okarito; but it is to be hoped that the experience gained will be profited by in the new ventures in that direction now extant.

Road Surveys.—The mileage noted comprises chiefly trial line for road from Paroa to Teremakau, the balance being mileage completed in work on hand by Mr. Murray, between Cook's and the Mahitahi Rivers during the latter part of last year, and includes his and party's expenses in returning overland to headquarters, and preparation of plans, specifications, &c. There is also included the cost of survey and plans of two pieces of freehold land purchased from owner and used for a deviation of the Christchurch Road at the Rangiriri.

Other Work.—This consisted of survey labour in finding difference between true and magnetic meridian; sundry repairs to survey buildings, fences and stable effected by survey labourers at Ross and Hokitika during bad weather, and general office assistance afforded by field staff, necessitated more particularly during the late departmental changes, and also embracing plotting block-maps, checks and revisions of calculations, and tabulations of old traverse surveys, &c.

Office-work.—The miscellaneous return sent herewith sets out the number of plans placed on certificates of title, ordinary and in lieu of Crown grants; Native titles, leases, and licenses, &c.;