

*Topographical Surveys for Selections under "The Land Act Amendment Act, 1887."*—The blocks completed under this heading comprise an area of 25,700 acres, at a cost of 6½d. per acre, being the North-east Puketoi Block of 14,000 acres, land to the north of the Oroua Coal Creek, 6,200 acres, and the Wharita Block, north of the Manawatu Gorge, of 5,500 acres. The first-mentioned has been offered for selection with marked success, and the others are almost ready to put in the market. Other blocks, such as the Eastern Puketois, Upper Pohangina, Waimarino, &c., could have been prepared under this Act if desired, but it was decided to allow them to be taken up under the Farm Homestead Regulations.

*Rural and Suburban Surveys.*—Operations under this heading to the extent of 67,718 acres, in 286 sections, were completed at an average cost of 1s. 2½d. per acre, which, considering the fact that the whole of the country was, generally speaking, hilly-forest land, the price is highly satisfactory. These surveys, with the exception of Mr. M. C. Smith's work on the McKenzie Farm Homestead Block, consisted chiefly of the pegging of selections in various districts of land taken up in previous years. I need hardly remind you that every year the pegging of sections back and front in rough bush country, from its inaccessibility and other causes, becomes more expensive and involves greater hardship on the surveyor.

*Township Surveys.*—Three hundred and seventy-three allotments, of an average area of a little over 3 acres each, were laid off at a cost of £1 10s. 8½d. each. The bulk of these were lands offered on village settlement conditions, and the sales, particularly in the Forty-mile Bush district, were highly successful.

*Native Land Court Surveys.*—Under this heading 48,825 acres were completed at the Crown's expense, at a cost of about 3½d. per acre. Work of this class has been confined to blocks in which the Crown has an interest, and of which it was desired to complete the purchase. In addition to the above, however, forty-five blocks, comprising a gross area of 313,426 acres, were surveyed by authorised surveyors at the instance of the owners of the land. These were scattered over the entire provincial district, and require the same supervision, if not more than our own surveys, both as to field inspection and office check and record, which, together with the numerous requirements of the Native Land Court, issuing of titles, &c., becomes a very important part of the year's operations, and one requiring constant and close attention.

*Road Surveys.*—Over 156 miles of roads have been laid off, at a cost of £11 15s. 11d. per mile. These may be divided into three classes—(1.) Those under the Governor's warrant, through Native blocks, where the right to take roads under the Native Land Acts had not expired. (2.) Survey of roads that have been in existence for years but of which no record has been made, and which to all intents and purposes are legal through usage, many of them, doubtless, having been conveyed to the various local bodies at some time or other, or the proprietors have allowed them to be made, and public moneys spent thereon. The advantage of having these roads surveyed is obvious, for, in addition to having a complete record of existing highways to put on the published maps, we can, when any dealings are registered under the Land Transfer Acts, exclude the roads from the titles, and we have also the full data for amending the Crown grants for the same purposes should such amendment be so required. (3.) Roads engineered into Crown lands for construction under the Loans to Local Bodies' Act, and under special Acts of Parliament. All of these, in their way, are highly necessary, and their importance cannot well be overestimated; but to attend to road-work properly other than that coming within the ordinary scope of sectional work would require a much larger staff of surveyors and engineers than is now employed in this district; but this question will form the subject of a special report, which it is my intention to address you upon shortly.

*Other Work.*—During the past nine months £2,054 5s. 2½d. was spent in miscellaneous duties that could not come under the ordinary classes of work, the full particulars of which you will find in the schedules supporting this report. I would, however, like to draw your attention to the fact that of the above sum £1,053 10s. 10d. was spent in back-pegging and re-scheming about 44,000 acres of land in Mangahao, Mangaone, Kopuaranga, Tiffen, Wainuioru, Gorge, and Wairoa Districts. This is a class of work that is exceedingly troublesome, through differences disclosed on prior surveys, and the time lost in going over work done, some of it many years ago. The supervision of the unemployed cost £472 15s. 4d., and £142 10s. was the cost of Mr. Ll. Smith's ordinary inspections.

*Work for other Departments and Road Votes, &c.*—You will observe that the return for the above embraces the usual work of a miscellaneous character executed by this office for other departments, which it is expected will be refunded to the Survey and Lands vote. For the field this amounts to £1,049 7s. 8½d., and for the office, £344 8s. 2d; total, £1,393 15s. 10½d.

*Office Work.*—Mr. Mackenzie, Chief Draughtsman, reports that during the nine months the bulk of the office-work in the general branch has been confined simply to the preparation of data for the field, and others, particularly in connection with special-settlement blocks, Road Board, tracings on which to make proposals for expenditure of thirds by local bodies, sale-plans for land being put in the market, and working-tracings to assist the Crown Lands Rangers in making reports and valuations of improvements done by selectors of land under the various systems, in addition to which, however, the following plans were examined, passed, and recorded: 15 road plans, 45 Native, 20 ordinary settlement, 7 township; 258 Crown grants or certificates of title in lieu thereof, representing 774 actual copies; 26 plans were prepared for photolithography of lands offered for sale or selection, and one 40-chain district map was completed.

*Native Land Court Branch.*—Nine hundred and ninety-seven plans were indorsed on the various forms of ordinary Native title required by law; 60 plans were placed on land-purchase deeds in which the Crown were interested; 32 plans to save expense of survey were compiled, and the necessary action on the following miscellaneous matters was attended to, namely, applications for hearing upon survey, 80; surveyors' nominations for survey, 206; surveyors' lien vouchers for survey, 53; Native Land Court Judges' orders for survey, 13; formal notices to Natives, 3,842.