

Appended hereto are extracts from the reports of the Commissioners of Crown Lands, Chief Surveyors, and other officers of the department, which give the details of the various operations carried on by the department. The strength of the department consists now of 236 officers, at head-quarters, and scattered through various parts of the colony, besides a number of extra officers who have been employed from time to time. The increase of the work in all branches is very noticeable; each new departure in dealing with the lands, &c., brings increased work and responsibilities, which, it is pleasant to say, are cheerfully borne by the officers of the department. It is right to add that many of them are overworked, and, in consequence, cannot give the attention to detail so necessary to the proper working of a large department.

The expenditure by the department during the year has been :—

On lands and surveys	£133,618
On roads and constructive works	116,236
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	£249,854

In conclusion, it is again desired to bring under your notice the urgent necessity for better accommodation for the photo-lithographic establishment. This branch is worked at present under very discouraging circumstances, and its usefulness greatly impaired. The buildings wherein the work is at present carried on are such as no private firm would tolerate, and the annual loss caused thereby is very considerable.

DEPARTMENTAL AND GENERAL.

With new tenures of land running concurrently with the old, changes of one tenure to another, revaluations, inquiries into old soldiers' claims, inspections, and numerous other calls upon the officers of the department, the work increases largely from year to year. The correspondence with associations alone amounts to a very large quantity, in addition to the ordinary work of the department. The systems of tenure under which the lands are now held will necessitate the retention of a considerable staff of officers, even if there are no more Crown lands to deal with; these tenures imply a large amount of book- and account-keeping, which will last as long as the systems last.

During the year another edition of the "Crown Lands Guide," Vol. xii., was issued, and, as usual, distributed far and wide.

HEAD OFFICE.

MR. SHORT, Chief Clerk, reports :—

I have the honour to report the following as the work done in the Chief Clerk's branch of the department during the twelve months ended 31st March last :—

Twelve thousand letters and telegrams were received and recorded, besides numerous reports and other papers, and 10,200 letters and telegrams were dispatched. The press copies of these latter occupied nine letter-books of about nine hundred pages each, and a very large proportion of the letters were type-written. There were also forty-two official circulars, embracing about nine hundred copies, issued, and 3,540 new subjects were recorded.

Under "The Land Act, 1885," forty-eight warrants opening lands for optional selection were issued, and under "The Land Act, 1892," seventy were gazetted, including seventeen relating to land that had previously been in the market. Eighteen Proclamations, setting apart small grazing-runs, twenty relating to village settlements, and forty-one warrants dealing with reserves were also issued.

Eighty-nine Orders in Council, Proclamations, and warrants dealing with domains, cemeteries, and miscellaneous matters were also issued; besides which many other certificates, warrants, and formal papers relating to the administration of Crown lands and public reserves were prepared.

During the year, new Land Guides were issued as follows: Auckland, 1,000; Hawke's Bay, 500; Taranaki, 500; Wellington, 1,300; Nelson, 500; Marlborough, 250; Canterbury, 1,000; Otago, 2,000; Westland, 500; Southland, 1,000; in addition to which 2,000 copies of the general Crown Lands Guide were printed and widely circulated in the neighbouring colonies and in other places; and, immediately after the new Land Act was passed, a digest of the land-laws, "Our Crown Lands," was issued.

Under "The Public Works Act, 1882," and amendments, twenty-eight Proclamations and Orders in Council relating to roads and bridges were issued.

Apart altogether from the Public Works Acts, twenty-eight warrants authorising the taking of land for roads in pursuance of the Native Land Court and other Acts, were prepared and sent out, and seventeen *Gazette* notices of the taking of similar lands were published.

Under the Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteer Land-claims Acts, 169 remission certificates were issued, the value of scrip being £4,835: 265 applications were received for debentures in exchange for remission certificates; and applications were made to the Treasury Department for the conversion of scrip into debentures to the amount of £10,595 10s.

A large number of offers of land under "The Lands for Settlement Act, 1892," were recorded, and special books were opened in connection therewith.

Thirty-six blocks of Government land were brought under the provisions of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, in respect of loans required for roads, amounting in all to £34,068; and the usual certificates, schedules, and other documents for Treasury and Audit in connection therewith, and relating to previous loans, were prepared.

Special-settlement Associations: There has been much labour and correspondence involved under this heading. The lands granted to thirty-five associations were gazetted, and forty-five new applications were received and dealt with.

As regards the issue of titles to land from the Crown: 212 warrants and eighty-eight Crown grants were sent forward for Governor's signature. These represented a total area of 284,793 acres.