

## NATIVE LAND COURT SURVEYS.

The area surveyed by the staff, or by surveyors employed by the Government, during the year was 251,352 acres, in sixty-two blocks, or less than half the amount for the previous year. This is in great measure due to the falling-off in the purchases of Native lands by private individuals, and no doubt, also, to the easy terms on which lands can be acquired from the Government. Outside of the area shown, however, there is a considerable number of blocks that have been surveyed for Native Land Court purposes by surveyors who are engaged by the Natives themselves, and whose work does not appear in these returns, though all the instructions for survey, and the checking of the plans, pass through the department.

## GOLD AND OTHER MINING SURVEYS.

There is a falling-off in the area surveyed last year as compared with the previous period, the figures being: 1892, 78 claims, containing 2,727 acres; 1893, 100 claims, containing 2,262 acres. This decrease has been going on for some years now. More than half the number of claims surveyed were in Auckland, some of them being at the new silver finds in the Great Barrier Island.

## ROAD AND RAILWAY SURVEYS, &amp;c.

The mileage of road, &c., surveyed last year shows a considerable increase, the figures being: for 1892, 333 miles, at a cost of £12 9s. 5d. per mile; and for 1893, 624 miles, at a cost of £13 9s. per mile. The largest amount done was in the Wellington District—288 miles—most of which was executed in the exercise of reserved road-rights and in the legalisation of existing roads. None of this considerable mileage of roads is included in the section work, but is outside it, and generally represents roads which traverse properties not acquired directly from the Crown, but which are just as necessary as in the case of lands subdivided under ordinary settlement conditions. A large amount of this work remains to be done, and, as the time is limited within which the rights may be exercised, it is to be feared that many road-rights will lapse for want of the necessary means to exercise them.

## MISCELLANEOUS WORK.

Under this heading are grouped the different descriptions of work performed by the Survey Department which do not find a place under other headings. It consists principally of the cost of inspection of field surveys, odd surveys connected with boundaries, reports by surveyors, explorations, and innumerable other small services of various kinds.

## CONFERENCE OF SURVEYORS IN MELBOURNE.

For some years past a feeling has been growing up that surveyors' licenses issued by the authorities in the different Australasian Colonies should be made available throughout every colony, without the necessity of further examination. The consideration of this, and other matters pertaining to the surveyors' profession generally, gradually came to a head, when steps were taken by the Surveyor-General of Queensland to test the feeling in the different colonies, and, on favourable responses being received, a conference was decided on with the approval of the respective Governments, at which representatives from all were to meet. This Conference was held in Melbourne in November last, when all the Australasian Colonies, except Tasmania, were represented. The delegates chosen were the Surveyors-General of the colonies and members representing the Surveyors' Institutes. As you are aware, Sir, the coming into operation of "The Land Act, 1892," just at that time prevented my attendance, but, with your sanction, Mr. A.O'N. O'Donahoo—the delegate of the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors—represented the views of the New Zealand Survey Department. The Conference, after mature deliberation, passed a series of resolutions covering the questions which came before them, the principal of which may be summarised as follows, the full particulars being given in the Appendix hereto: The principle of the desirability of reciprocity of licenses was affirmed, and also that all examinations of surveyors should be conducted by a Board constituted by Act of Parliament; that such Board should be composed of members nominated, one-half by the Government and one-half by the Institute of Surveyors; that the regulations for examinations should be common to all the colonies; that the examinations should be simultaneous; besides further recommendations as to the obviating of examinations in certain cases. There are other recommendations of the Conference which do not call for notice here. It is hoped that the general principles laid down above will be introduced into this colony, perhaps with some modifications to meet the peculiar conditions met with here, all of which is brought under your notice in a separate memorandum.

During the year, also, a communication has been received from the Surveyors' Institute of Great Britain, through the Secretary of State for the Colonies, announcing the amended conditions on which colonial surveyors in the service of the Government will be admitted to membership of that Institute.

## CONSTRUCTIVE WORKS, ROADS, BRIDGES, &amp;c.

The past season has been a very busy one in connection with this branch of the department; for, with the more dispersive character of the settlement surveys, and the isolation of some of the blocks, the roads of access must necessarily increase in length. A great number of works have been carried on by the Chief Surveyors, and by the road surveyors attached to the Head Office, besides which, the aid of many County Councils and Road Boards has been given, where the works could not conveniently be undertaken by the department. Details of these operations will be found