

CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. SHORT, the Chief Clerk, reports as follows:—

The following is a summary of the work carried on in the Chief Clerk's branch of the department during the twelve months ended 31st March last.

There were received 15,214 letters and telegrams besides numerous forms, plans, and other documents that are not the subject of record in this office. The outwards correspondence amounted to 13,300 letters and telegrams, and 2,474 new subjects were recorded.

As compared with the year 1894-95, these figures show a slight decrease in work. This is probably accounted for by the fact that all offers of estates under the Land for Settlements Act and the correspondence thereunder were transferred to the office of the Land Purchase Inspector during the year, and the correspondence under the Act is now limited to the administration of estates actually acquired by the Government. The work in other respects has kept fully up to the average, and that involved under the operation of "The Pastoral Tenants' Relief Act, 1895," has more than made up for any deficiency in actual correspondence.

A complete set of forms for annual reports by Chief Surveyors and others, and several standard forms, were revised and printed during the year. This last is an important matter tending as it does to efficiency and economy; and it is hoped that further opportunities will occur during the present year to reduce the clerical work in the various district offices of the department to one system.

The number of Proclamations, Orders in Council, warrants, and notices prepared during the year was:—

Under Land Act: Warrants opening land under Part III. of the Act, 67; warrants for sale by auction, 23; Proclamations setting apart village-homestead land, 15; Proclamations withdrawing setting apart village-homestead land, 1; Orders in Council fixing or modifying terms and conditions for setting apart village-homestead land, 19; Proclamations setting apart village land, 2; Orders in Council fixing conditions for same, 2; warrants temporarily reserving land, 17; warrants permanently reserving land, 9; Proclamations reserving land for educational endowments, 2; miscellaneous Proclamations and warrants, 20.

Land for Settlements Act: Proclamations declaring land to be Crown Land, 11; Proclamations opening land for selection, 12.

Cemeteries Acts: Warrants appointing trustees, 29; Order in Council delegating Governor's powers, 1.

Public Domains Acts: Orders in Council bringing recreation-ground under the Acts, 25; Orders in Council delegating powers, 45, and revoking powers, 1.

Public Reserves Act: Warrants or Orders in Council exchanging lands or changing purpose of reserves, 11; Orders in Council vesting reserves in local bodies, 20.

Loans to Local Bodies Act: Proclamations, 19.

Public Works and Land Acts: Proclamations and Orders in Council taking land for roads, 67; warrants, notices, and by-laws vesting bridges, closing roads, taking lands and regulating traffic on roads, 37; Commissions to settle disputes of local bodies in respect to vesting bridges, 3.

Reserves Disposal and Exchange Act, 1895: Order in Council, 1.

Miscellaneous: Orders in Council, warrants, &c., 28.

The work under the Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Acts was limited to 514 inward and outward letters.

The number of Crown grants, warrants, certificates, leases, and other documents of title from the Crown that passed through this office for authorisation by the Governor is shown in the attached schedule.

On the 25th and 26th November last I held formal inquiries in Masterton, under commission from the Governor and Minister of Lands respectively, on the subject of a dispute between the Borough of Masterton and the Wairarapa North County, and also as to the widening of Perry Street, Masterton, by the Borough Council, which proposal was opposed by some of the persons interested.

The work of the various officers has been well kept up during the year, and it has been performed with readiness and goodwill.

RETURN of GRANTS, WARRANTS, CERTIFICATES, LEASES, &c., from 1st April, 1895, to 31st March, 1896.

Provincial District.	Number of Grants.	Area in Grants.	Number of Warrants.	Area in Warrant.	Number of Certificates.	Total Area in Grants, Warrants, and Certificates.	Area granted to Natives.	Number of Leases.	Area in Leases.	Corrected Grants, &c.	Duplicate Grants, &c.
		Acres.		Acres.		Acres.	Acres.		Acres.		
Auckland ...	19	1,080	38	87,297	186	91,385	17,683	56	1,557	2	4
Hawke's Bay ...	10	31,173	18	68,938	120	129,365	78,260	2	71	...	...
Taranaki ...	1	60	7	18,013	126	18,073	...	22	9,007	7	...
Wellington ...	5	794	27	105,668	257	154,674	78,634	10	98	4	...
Nelson ...	...	...	12	26,378	124	26,378	20	188	20	...	...
Marlborough ...	1	50	1	4,617	6	5,517	...	6	8,457	...	...
Canterbury ...	1	20	18	16,601	148	16,801	460	8	65,835	1	1
Westland ...	...	...	8	3,465	3	3,465	...	64	8,000	...	...
Otago ...	16	810	20	14,892	122	25,752	115	9	49,071	2	...
Southland ...	...	...	9	9,064	188	9,064	66	1	183	...	...
Total ...	53	33,987	158	354,933	1,280	480,474	175,238	366	142,299	16	5