

Tongaporutu-Mokau Road through several Native blocks and private lands for nearly half the total length shown. The different surveys were widely separated, and, with the exception of Tongaporutu-Mokau Road (which is partly open, scrub, and light bush), were through heavy bush-country, the cost in one instance being greatly enhanced by the length of necessary connections.

*Other Work.*—In addition to field inspections made by myself throughout the district, Mr. District Surveyor Skeet made others in the Rata-tomokia, Taumata-mahoe, and Pukengahu Blocks; while Mr. W. H. Skinner investigated on the ground a number of Land Transfer surveys in the south-western portion of district, among them being the apparently-interminable Taumaha and Hursthouse Road disputes, which have assumed a magnitude out of all proportion to the value of lands in question. As you are aware, these surveys were originally done (and apparently well done) many years ago under circumstances of great personal risk to the surveyors engaged thereon, through Native hostility. Through lapse of time, clearing, &c., many—indeed, most—of the original pegs and marks have disappeared, and can only be replaced as nearly as possible by reference and connection to such undoubted marks and points as still exist in the neighbourhood. This we have done at considerable expense, but up to the present moment have been unable to come to a final settlement with the other parties interested.

Under above heading is also included the cost of measuring up the areas of bush felled in the Whanga-momona Improved-farm Settlement, total area being 2,310 acres, on 118 different sections, at a mean cost of 9d. per acre; the redefinition of six miles and three-quarters of old railway survey-lines in the Taumata-mahoe Block; the exploration of the Whanga-momona River from Ohura Road to its junction with the Wanganui River, and the cutting of twenty-two miles of walking-tracks in the same valley, and cost of preliminary report on suitability of block for settlement; the renewing of sundry trig. stations and searching for others reported to be lost; the periodical soundings and survey of the harbour at Moturoa; fixing a few standard points of reference; cost of short deviation survey of Maude Road; redefinition of lost points in roads; inspection and preliminary survey of road through Native lands, Stony River, also picking-up of old marks outside of blocks under survey and one survey for Criminal Court purposes; cost of defining disputed town-section boundaries (Land Transfer), and cutting back lines not formerly cut in old surveys; a pilot-station reserve and proposed site for wharf were laid off on Native lands on south side of Mokau River, some slight opposition being shown to latter, as also to a similar one on north side of same river, near Mokau Township. A small survey of road deviation and encroachment was also made in the Awakino, District of Auckland.

*Field-work in Progress.*—Mr. Skeet has yet in hand 150,000 acres of major triangulation in order to secure a thorough and complete connection with the northern work; this, with the supplementary series of triangles referred to around Mount Egmont in last year's report, would finally complete this class of work. Of minor triangulation, forty-four square miles for checking and connection purposes are also in hand, by seven of the other surveyors. Rural and suburban section surveys in hand total 81,000 acres, of which, as before noted, 25,000 acres is well in hand. Railway surveys for land plans through Native blocks at south end of Stratford-Ongarue line are now in progress for some sixteen miles. Road surveys through parts of Native Blocks Tutae-ariari, Toko, and Matemate-a-onga, before the right to take the roads expires, are also now in progress, and are necessary to give access to the back country. The early and desirable acquisition of further lands from the Natives in north-eastern portion of district will considerably increase section survey work.

*Proposed Course of Work for Ensuing Year.*—The value of unfinished work on the 31st March, 1896, amounted to £3,807 7s. 4d. This, with exception of £799 6s. for survey of Kai-tangi-whenua Block, now in hand, has all been absorbed in the completed work now scheduled. The value of incomplete work now in progress, including the £799 6s. above referred to, and to be carried forward to next year, is £2,823 12s. 9d. This is for trig. work, section and road surveys in hand, and wholly or partly finished in the field.

I do not propose this year to call in the field staff (during those months which have always been estimated to be "winter" months) to do their plotting at the District Office, as I have not found it satisfactory. During the past two years the months of June, July, and August have not been so wet as the later months, which during that time have proved phenomenally wet and unsuitable for outdoor survey-work, and I anticipate the proposed change will result in a substantial increase of work done at the end of next year. The various surveyors will complete the triangulation, section, and road surveys now in hand, and then continue such further settlement and township work as may be most urgently wanted.

*Office Work.*—This shows no decrease as compared with last year, but rather the contrary. The preparation of maps and schedules required under the new Valuation of Lands Act has necessitated the putting-aside of all but the most pressing of the ordinary current work, to enable the staff to cope with the sudden call for these maps, &c. It was found that many of our office plans were far in arrear concerning subdivisions, &c.; this, and the total want of county maps and proper Land Transfer record maps, has considerably enhanced the cost of production as well as retarded the progress.

I trust the Valuation Department will be satisfied with the plans now prepared, every effort having been used in order to make them as complete and correct as possible. So far, 80 large mounted tracings of survey districts, towns, town districts, boroughs, &c., 70 small mounted tracings detailing subdivisions, and 101 mounted lithos., or a total of 251 plans, have been prepared, marked up with subdivisions, coloured in tenures with indices, and labels, &c. The bulk of section-sheets have been examined, checked, and revised, the final revision up to 31st March and passing only being now on hand. These plans and section-lists comprise forty-five local districts.

*Proposed Office Work.*—To complete the strong-room records and indices, compile a two-mile index plan of trig. work, draw plans for photo.-lithographing on 20- and 80-chain scales, complete