

## SETTLEMENT SURVEYS.

The output of section surveys this last year is much less than that of the previous year, due principally to the decreased number of association blocks surveyed. A large amount of subdivision of estates acquired under the Land for Settlements Acts has, however, taken place, but, as the divisions are small as a rule, they do not swell the total quantity much. The largest amount of section work done is in the Wellington District, of which a considerable portion is on the Upper Wanganui River, where the country is only suited for small-grazing-run holdings. Further subdivisions have also taken place in the Awarua Block. In Auckland some 80,000 acres, situated in several localities, have been cut up, and 42,178 acres in Canterbury, much of which is in the new estates recently acquired. In Otago 41,204 acres, and in Southland 41,640 acres, were also surveyed. These two latter items include the lands set aside in those districts for landless Natives.

As most of the association blocks have been completed so far as survey is concerned during the past period, the number of surveyors temporarily employed has been reduced, though the services of others have been retained to meet the current requirements. There are considerable areas all over the colony being prepared for settlement by survey and roading, but none that need special mention, with the exception, perhaps, of some very fair blocks in the Waipawa County, some considerable areas in the inland parts of Taranaki, also in the Wellington District, including further areas in the Awarua Block, which, it is hoped, will be completed during the coming season. In Marlborough some large areas of good land near Kaikoura and other lands on the north bank of the Waiau are in preparation for disposal. In Otago some runs have to be subdivided for settlement, and further areas in the Tautuku Forest will also be taken in hand. In Southland various blocks will be prepared, including some recent acquisitions under the Land for Settlements Acts, and the survey of the large block lying west of the Waiau River, which is now being prepared for selection by the landless Natives, will be proceeded with as fast as possible.

Nearly the whole of the above surveys are in forest-country, and generally very rough, taxing the best energies of the surveyors to secure serviceable road-lines on practicable grades, and also good fencing-lines.

## NATIVE LAND COURT SURVEYS.

Last year's output of this class of survey comprised 294,124 acres, in 186 divisions, being so much land surveyed to carry out the orders made by the Native Land Court, most of which consists of subdivisions of blocks previously surveyed in larger areas. The area above shows a considerable decrease on the acreage surveyed during the previous year, whilst the acreage completed at the direct cost of private owners, the plans of which have to pass the department, is a gradually-decreasing quantity, owing to the change in the Native-land laws with respect to acquisition of Native lands. The area thus surveyed was about 107,000 acres. If we exclude Tuhoe-land—about 600,000 acres—there is now not a great deal of the North Island that remains to be surveyed for the purpose of passing it through the Court. At the same time, the division of blocks already under Native Land Court title amounts to a large area.

## MINING SURVEYS.

The most prominent feature in the survey year has been the very large area surveyed for mining purposes, due to the great activity in all kinds of mining transactions during the past two years. The bulk of these surveys are in the Thames Peninsula. Here 2,127 sections, comprising an area of 173,252 acres, have been surveyed, the cost being deposited by the applicants. In 1895 the area surveyed all over the colony was 4,959 acres; in 1896, 77,677 acres, in 1,239 sections; in 1897, 206,829 acres, in 2,706 sections, the greatest increase and the largest area ever dealt with, so far as the records show. A few months since there were between sixty and seventy private surveyors engaged in the Thames Peninsula on this particular class of work. The number has decreased since, but still the work is proceeding. All of the plans of this work have to be passed and recorded in the survey offices, and naturally the great increase in the Auckland District has been a heavy labour in addition to current work, and necessitated the employment of several additional draughtsmen. The Nelson District has also partaken of the same increase of output, but to a lesser degree, the number of sections or claims surveyed there being 277, covering an area of 19,364 acres.

## ROAD SURVEYS.

The 569 miles of road entered in the returns for the year include all classes of roads surveyed outside those laid out in the subdivision of the country for settlement, such as those taken in exercise of the rights reserved under the Native-land laws and similar cases. A very large amount of work has been done in the Wellington District in legalising roads which had been laid out by the Provincial Government and by local bodies, but which had not been recorded on the maps. Since 1892 about 364 miles in Wairarapa North and South Counties, and twenty to thirty miles in Wanganui County, has been surveyed and mapped, and more remains to be done.

## MISCELLANEOUS WORK.

The miscellaneous surveys and other work done during the year come under this heading, as it cannot well be given in detail. It consists of field inspection, special reports of all kinds made by the surveyors, explorations, road supervision, engineering surveys, supervision of settlement operations, and odd surveys that cannot be classified under other headings, besides detention through Native or other obstruction, and cost of work not fully mapped, &c.