

purpose having gradually brought up to date. I would herein tender my thanks to all the staff, field and office, for the courteous and very willing assistance accorded me during the year.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the valuable services of Mr. Peter Treseder, Chief Draughtsman, who retired on a well-merited pension on the 13th October last after a service of thirty-four years.

JOHN HAY, Chief Surveyor.

### SOUTHLAND.

*Topographical.*—The only work under this heading is the balance of topography completed in the field during the previous year by Mr. Wilmot, but not included in return for that period, as the plans had not been finished. The cost is worked out nearly on the same basis as that of last year. The report previously furnished covers this ground also.

*Rural and Suburban.*—The total area surveyed for the year is 16,568 acres, at a cost of 1s. 35 per acre. The greater part of this was land acquired under the Land for Settlements Act, the balance being bush surveys in Waikawa the district. The work in the Waikawa district was practically a resurvey of a block laid out by a temporary surveyor about four years ago. It was found that the closure was so faulty that I deemed it advisable to have a complete revision of one block, and shall probably have to do the same for more of his bush surveys. The earlier surveys carried out by this officer appear to be fairly right, and it seems that the near approach of his retirement rendered him careless.

*Landless Native Surveys.*—The section-work under this heading is made of the survey of a block at Stewart Island by surveyors Macpherson and Robertson. The former having accepted an appointment as Wallace County engineer, Mr. Robertson was sent to complete the work. The apparent cost of this work is only 11½d. per acre; the actual cost is, however, made up by the addition of the cost of the previous year's operations in roading, coastal traverse, block boundaries, &c. However, with all these added, good results are given under unfavourable circumstances, and Mr. Macpherson completed a good record on the expiration of his temporary service in the department. In what is known as the Waiau 60,000-acre block, Mr. Treseder has continued the roading, boundary cutting, coastal traverse, &c. I had anticipated the earlier completion of this, so as to give the Commissioners an opportunity of marking it off into family blocks for future subdivision, but the extent of the block, the difficulties of roading in heavily-timbered country, and the very broken weather experienced, proved too much for Mr. Treseder. I can now promise an early completion of the roaded block.

*Gold-mining Surveys.*—Nearly all these have been carried out by authorised surveyors at the fees provided under the Mining Regulations. In a great many cases, however, these have been modified where more than one application had to be surveyed in the same locality—that is, the mileage would be distributed over several sections, while the cost of survey and bush-cutting remained a constant charge. I am glad to say the surveyors cheerfully assented to this, although it greatly curtailed what they might have legally charged. Forty of these surveys have been effected during the year, and, with the exception of three or four, those applied for have been completed. During the last six months there has been a lull in these applications, so that apparently the future year's operations in this class of work will be limited.

*Roads, &c.*—The remarks made in last year's report are equally applicable now. I had expected an earlier completion of roading on the Native block. By this year's return all Mr. Treseder's work appears as roading and other work, and is not debited against any work or block. It will, however, as a matter of fact, appear in the future as a charge against the landless-Natives block. This remark will also apply to the work shown under this heading by Mr. Hodgkinson—i.e., it will be a debit against Block XVI., Waikawa District.

*Proposed Operations for Ensuing Year.*—The principal work for the coming year will be the subdivision of the 60,000 acres landless-Native block into family blocks. This I propose should be undertaken by Messrs. Treseder and Robertson; and should the work be urgent, Mr. Hodgkinson would be withdrawn from Waikawa. Probably it might be well to have this done by these two surveyors at contract or schedule rates. That will be, however, a matter for future arrangement. A small block between Merrivale and the Waiau River will also be completed. When Mr. Treseder commenced this work, four years ago, it was intended to make this an improved-farm settlement block. I would not, however, recommend that this be carried out in such a locality. A small run of 3,500 acres resumed for settlement at Athol will also be surveyed and offered for sale. The above will more than fully employ the three surveyors now connected with this district.

*Office-work.*—During the year 112 plans have been examined and passed, 1,171 plans have been placed on Crown grants and other instruments of title, 337 ordinary and twenty-nine lithographic tracings were prepared; 313 maps were mounted; 4,940 letters were received, 3,735 despatched, in addition to posters, &c., being mailed to the various post-offices of the district.

D. BARRON, Chief Surveyor.