

MINOR TRIANGULATION.

The area completed and returned this year is greater than usual, but was found necessary to properly govern the large extent of settlement surveys—slightly over a million acres—that have been undertaken during the past two years. It consists chiefly of breaking down from the major or secondary series, and as the greater part of it covered forest country and the season was unfavourable for the work, the average cost of slightly over 1d. per acre is to be considered satisfactory. The chief part of it was in the North Island, Taranaki contributing 111,500 acres, Auckland 87,687 acres, Hawke's Bay 78,000 acres, and Wellington 50,500 acres; the remainder, 27,385 acres, being in Nelson and Westland.

In the older-settled parts of the colony, especially in the vicinity of cities and large towns, the triangulation of earlier days has lost much of its usefulness on account of buildings, plantations, hedges, &c., obstructing the view. The only alternative is a further extension of the standard survey along the roads, with well-established reference-marks of a permanent character at intervals. The principal centres and some of the larger towns have already been so treated, and in part their suburbs, but there is great need for further extension of this special work in many parts of the colony, so as to furnish connections for Land Transfer surveys, especially those of subdivisions for building purposes, both in the case of new townships and the extension of established ones, which have been so general during the past few years.

TOPOGRAPHICAL.

The area returned under this heading—viz., 345,670 acres—consists of two classes of work. In Westland, exploration surveys have been made of 101,577 acres of hitherto practically unknown country, with a view of ascertaining, and in a general measure locating, the geographical features, and at the same time acquiring a knowledge of the country's possibilities, especially from a settlement standpoint. The information thus obtained unquestionably justifies the expense incurred.

The remaining 244,093 acres was purely provisional settlement surveys—in other words, the prospecting for and laying-out of roads, approximately locating streams, ridges, &c., and acquiring other data for the preparation of suitable sale maps for disposal of the land under the system of "selection before survey," which was forced upon the Department in consequence of the abnormal demand for land during the past two years, which could not be readily met if the land had to be sectionised before disposal. By this departure from the usual procedure the immediate demand was largely satisfied, and, as will be seen further on, the extra pressure being now removed, opportunity has been afforded to make the final and complete surveys of a very large area selected under this system.

RURAL AND SUBURBAN.

This year has seen the completion of the subdivision into 2,035 sections of 605,425 acres of this class of work, a greater area than has been returned in any single year since 1895. Auckland takes the lead with 194,701 acres, followed by Wellington, Taranaki, Marlborough, and Nelson, with 96,862, 71,211, 61,478, and 52,116 acres respectively, the remaining 129,057 acres being divided amongst the four most southern districts. As already indicated, there is included in the above figures, in accord with the practice of former years, work that was in hand and incomplete at the date of last report but finished during the year.

The cost, which is at the rate of 1s. 7d. per acre, is higher than last year. This was to be expected, for the season has been particularly unfavourable for survey operations, and a considerable part of the area returned was in rough bush country.

A large proportion of the area returned has been the sectionising of blocks that were provisionally surveyed and thrown open for selection in previous years, principally in Auckland, Taranaki, and Nelson. There is also included the completed sectional survey of twelve estates purchased under the Land for Settlements Act.

TOWN SECTION SURVEYS.

The coming into operation of "The Workers' Dwellings Act, 1905," combined with the surveys of townships in land-for-settlement blocks, the provision of sites for miners' homes at Golden Bay, and the resurvey of two old townships in Westland where the occupations were at variance with the titles, has had the effect of increasing the amount of this class of work, a total area of 939 acres having been subdivided into 1,678 allotments.

NATIVE LAND COURT SURVEYS.

Seventy-eight blocks, comprising 28,766 acres, were surveyed by staff officers or contract surveyors under the direction and control of the Department. This area is less than usual; but surveys of 106,046 acres in 138 blocks have been made during the year by licensed surveyors at the cost of the Native owners, the authorities for such surveys being issued on application to the Department, and the maps checked and recorded.

GOLD-MINING SURVEYS.

Ninety-six claims have been surveyed, comprising 4,191 acres; 65 claims, or about two-thirds of the total, falling to Otago, 14 to Southland, 12 to Auckland, and 5 to Westland.

OTHER WORK.

This was of the usual miscellaneous character, the total cost being £10,419 9s. 5d., as shown in Table 1. Generally speaking, it includes the cost of inspection of surveys, renewals of and repairs to trig. stations, defining and reporting on timber areas, surveys and reports for Land Boards, and for the Mines, Tourist, Education, Public Works, and Native Departments, and numerous other miscellaneous matters which will be found mentioned in attached reports by the several Chief Surveyors.