

Town Surveys.—Eighty-five acres have been subdivided into 252 lots, the principal items being township sections in the Pitt Settlement and Rangataua Township.

Native Land Court Surveys.—Surveys for the Aotea Maori Land Board, of two blocks, were carried out by Mr. Stevenson, and there were also 35 Native Land Court blocks surveyed by private surveyors, the total area being 35,044 acres, in 141 subdivisions. Although the cost of this class of work falls on the parties interested, still the Department has to supervise field and office work in the same manner as if done by our own staff; indeed, surveys of this kind as a rule give more trouble than those more directly under departmental control.

Roads, Railways, &c.—Little of this work outside of that forming part of settlement surveys has been undertaken. Mr. Johnston's special survey of fourteen miles for the Main Trunk Railway line being the principal. The average cost per mile, £17·9 for the 25½ miles returned, is not excessive.

Other Work.—A number of various duties are included under this head, distinct from the actual subdivisional surveys, comprising small surveys for other Departments, repairing and replacing trig. stations, standard blocks, redefining old boundaries, timber estimates, small road-alterations, &c., the character of which prevents their being returned under the usual headings. All are very necessary, and attending to them often interferes with our surveyors' duties to a far greater extent than the sums set against each represents.

Inspections.—Mr. Climie inspected 42 surveys during the year, being 31 Land Transfer (cost of which is recoverable) and 11 staff. The work done by surveyors generally maintains a high standard of excellence, often under adverse conditions; the work of one or two surveyors, however, was not found so satisfactory as might have been desired; but this in no way detracts from the good results of our staff and private surveyors, as evidenced by practical tests in the field by the Inspector.

Proposed Operations, 1909–10.—A staff of eleven surveyors is at present engaged in different parts of the district, and has an area of some 137,500 acres of subdivisional surveys in hand, consisting chiefly of bush land adapted for pastoral or mixed purposes, in areas suitable to the character of the lands in the various localities. Mr. Stevenson has the completion of the Whaharangi Block, Native land, Retaruke District, of about 27,000 acres, under his charge, for settlement under the Aotea District Maori Land Board. Mr. Girdlestone is undertaking the survey of the Riariaki Block, Crown land, about 24,000 acres, in the South Waimarino, Manganui District; whilst Mr. Stewart has the Mangatiti Block, of Crown land, comprising about 16,000 acres, in the South Waimarino, Whirinaki District, in hand. Mr. Johnston has the survey of 15 miles of the North Island Main Trunk Railway necessary for the land plans, and about 20 miles of service road for the Public Works Department; and 7,000 acres of scenery reserves. Mr. Campbell has completion for settlement purposes of about 9,000 acres of the Kaitieke Block, Kaitieke District, in view. Mr. Mountfort has the subdivision of Uriwera and Otiranui Blocks, about 16,400 acres, to determine the Crown awards. Mr. Roberts has the completion of the Te Tuhī, Ahu Ahu, and Puketotara Blocks, 14,500 acres; and Mr. Greville has an area of 10,275 acres in the Rangitatau Block, settlement survey, in hand. A considerable area of the above lands is completed in field, but not yet mapped, and as soon as the winter sets in the surveyors will come into the office to overtake arrears in their mapping.

OFFICE-WORK.

Examination of Plans.—During the year 151 plans of sectional and Native surveys, containing 100,686 acres, were received, and 123 finally approved. Ninety-two statutory plans were received, 88 approved, and 130 recorded; 123 were examined, and 71 sent out for proclamation.

Compilations.—Twenty-three drawings and tracings were prepared for photo-lithography, and 8 new Crown-grant maps were compiled, also 1 new trig. map; whilst all approved new work coming from the field was placed on the standard maps of the office, as well as all Crown titles being recorded.

Native Land Court Work.—The time of one officer and assistant is fully occupied in attendances at the sittings of the Court, and supervision of the office-work connected therewith. Sixty-seven nominations for survey were received and 23 authorities issued. Twenty-five applications for survey liens and 485 for land in lieu of lien were put through. Survey liens with interest paid amounted to £1,317 17s. 10d.; while orders vesting 750 acres in lieu of liens were made. Titles, orders, and other instruments to the number of 973 were indorsed with plans, and many other incidental matters were dealt with, including compilation of plans of 2,020 acres in four different blocks.

Land Transfer Office (Survey Branch).—There were 394 plans passed, an increase of 34 over last year, which does not include plans indorsed on transfers, &c., all of which have to be examined. Twenty-four Land Transfer plans and tracings have been mounted and repaired. The year has been a very busy one for this branch, and Mr. Mackay, Land Transfer Draughtsman, and his assistants have had their hands full; one reason being that plans of surveys of areas made early in the year are only now to hand.

Titles.—There were 3,732 deeds and other instruments passed, showing an increase of 562 over last year; 76 single and 2,173 plans in duplicate were placed on certificates of title, being a decrease of 112 as compared with last year. Of Crown leases, &c., a total number of 1,631 copies were prepared, either in duplicate, triplicate, or quadruplicate.

Miscellaneous.—The usual demands were attended to by the office staff. These comprised supplying information to the public generally, data for the execution of surveys by staff surveyors and others. Ninety-seven tracings, 3 general plans, 43 sale-plans, 140 lithos, 97 applications, and 8 plans were remounted or repaired, and a multitude of other duties performed.

In conclusion, I have to thank all the officers for the assistance rendered to me whilst I have been in charge of this district. To the outside licensed surveyors my thanks are also due for their co-operation in the various professional matters in which during the year I have been associated with them.

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Chief Surveyor.