

TRANSIT OF HALLEY'S COMET.

On my invitation a number of former high officers in the Lands and Survey Department assembled near the Observatory in the Botanical Gardens, Wellington, to observe the transit of Halley's Comet across the sun's disc on Thursday, 19th May, 1910. The observing party comprised Messrs. J. McKerrow, J. W. A. Marchant, and T. Humphries, all former Surveyors-General; Mr. A. Barron, formerly Assistant Surveyor-General; Mr. C. W. Adams, a former Chief Surveyor; and myself; while Messrs. W. G. Rutherford, Chief Draughtsman, Public Works Department, and Mr. C. E. Adams, Chief Computer in the Lands and Survey Department, had charge of the photographic operations. Although careful observations were made with four telescopes, no certain sign of the comet could be detected on the sun's disc. Photographs of the sun were taken at intervals of five minutes from 2 p.m. to 2.55 p.m. (New Zealand mean time), when clouds stopped further exposures. A close examination of the photographs did not, however, disclose any trace of the comet.

DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES.

Consequent on the promotion of Mr. F. W. Flanagan, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Canterbury, to the position of Valuer-General, the following promotions, transfers, &c., were made in the Survey Branch of the Department during the year: T. N. Brodrick, Chief Surveyor, Hawke's Bay, to be Chief Surveyor, Canterbury; C. R. Pollen, Chief Draughtsman, Auckland, to be Chief Surveyor, Hawke's Bay; H. D. McKellar, Land Transfer Draughtsman, Auckland, to be Chief Draughtsman, Auckland, while T. K. Thompson was promoted to that of Land Transfer Draughtsman in his place; D. W. Gillies, Chief Draughtsman, Nelson, to be a District Surveyor, Auckland; F. E. Greenfield, Draughtsman and Surveyor, Blenheim, to be Chief Draughtsman, Nelson; Assistant Surveyor O. N. Campbell, transferred from Wellington to Auckland; J. G. Wilson, Draughtsman and Surveyor, Marlborough, to Land Transfer Branch, Canterbury; Miss Montgomerie, Draughtswoman, Westland, to Auckland. Messrs. C. A. Mountfort, District Surveyor, and H. E. Girdlestone, Assistant Surveyor, of the Wellington Staff, have been attached to the Head Office staff for the purpose of carrying out the standard and triangulation surveys respectively.

The following resigned their positions during the year: Assistant Surveyors J. C. Young and T. A. Johnston.

It is with great regret that the Department has to chronicle the loss by death, on the 14th March, after a very short and painful illness, of Mr. George Paterson Wilson, Draughtsman of the Head Office staff. He was one of the oldest as well as one of the ablest draughtsmen in the service; of a retiring and kindly disposition, and one who took a great interest in his work and that of the Department. It can also justly be said that he was a faithful servant, and who was found at his post to the last.

Mr. H. McCardell, Acting Chief Draughtsman at the Head Office, reports as follows for the year 1910-11:—

One of the principal works of the year was the preparation of the Census Enumerators' districts for the Dominion. This took up the time of practically the whole of the staff for over three months. The information shown on the maps supplied contained the counties, boroughs, town districts, ridings of counties, road districts, electoral districts, harbour districts, mining districts, and provincial districts. There were fifty-eight districts in all, and duplicate copies of each were made.

New additions of the following survey districts were issued during the year: Corwar, Puhipuhi, Whernside, Onamalutu, Spaxton, Tennyson, Aria, Ohura, Mahoe, Tangitu, Rangi, Cairnhill, Ohika, Jacobs River Hundred, Moutere, Forest Hill Hundred, Table Hill, and Awamoko.

The following plans were drawn for photo-lithography: Taumarunui Borough; sheet 4, Auckland, revised and brought up to date; Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and Wellington, as revised by the local offices, were published on both the 4-mile and 8-mile scales.

Land-tenure maps of the following counties were prepared for the Hamilton Survey Office: Coromandel, Thames, Piako, and Matamata.

Twenty-five registration districts were prepared for the Registrar-General.

During the year 202 townships (Government and private) were examined, reported on, and, when satisfactory, recommended for the approval of His Excellency the Governor under section 16 of the Land Act, 1908.

Maps of the following counties were published, viz.: Bay of Islands, Opotiki, Waitomo, Westland (three sheets), Takaka, Clifton, part of Piako and Whakatane, as well as those of the towns of Marton, Hastings, and Tauranga.