

Owing to lack of staff and the demands of settlement surveys, minor triangulation has been restricted to that required for the control of these surveys; and revision of old minor triangulation, which it was intended to have carried out during the year, has had to be abandoned, though such revision in several districts is urgently required. An endeavour will be made to make progress in this direction next season.

STANDARD SURVEYS.

Owing to the want of specially trained surveyors and apparatus there has not been the amount of work accomplished that I had desired. The principal items of field-work were the continuation of the standard surveys in the suburbs of Auckland, and in Dunedin. The Auckland work has been executed by Mr. H. M. Kensington, under the direction of Mr. Langmuir, Inspector of Surveys, while Mr. Neill has continued the Dunedin work. The plan-work in each case has been kept going, though from lack of staff that of Auckland is falling into arrear. The principal work done by Mr. C. A. Mountfort has been the plans of Wanganui, Gonville, and Nelson, the bulk of the field-work of which he completed last year. Just before the close of the year Mr. Climie started a standard survey of Vogeltown. All the surveyors have maintained the high standard of accuracy which has always been aimed at in this class of survey.

An inspection of the detailed report on his year's work by Mr. Kensington shows that much of his time has been occupied in reinstating blocks, and remarking them after they have been built up or lowered. This has been rendered necessary on account of the alteration of the street-levels by the local bodies, who therefore pay for the reinstatement. In connection with this, and the appreciation of these standard surveys by local bodies, Mr. Langmuir makes some interesting remarks in his report, which appears as an appendix to this report.

SETTLEMENT SURVEYS.

Under the heading of "Rural Surveys," in Table A, 463,473 acres are returned as having been surveyed during the year. Table B shows the apportionment into the various districts. The average cost of this class of survey for the past year works out at 2s. per acre.

NATIVE SURVEYS.

During the year staff surveyors completed the survey of 102,080 acres, while 414,743 acres were surveyed by licensed surveyors. Table B shows the allocation of these acreages between the various districts.

GOLD-MINING SURVEYS.

Thirty-one applications were surveyed, aggregating 2,373 acres, the largest area (1,142 acres, in nine holdings) being in Westland. The average cost of these surveys is not obtainable, owing to the fees having been paid by the applicants.

INSPECTIONS.

The inspections made from time to time by Chief Surveyors and Inspecting Surveyors show that the work of the surveyors in general is good, though there are exceptions which emphasize the necessity for systematic inspections.

PROPOSED OPERATIONS, 1915-16.

At the close of the year there were in the hands of staff surveyors 1,324,034 acres of settlement land (including village and suburban), and 191,943 acres of Native land; while in the hands of private surveyors there were respectively 10,835 acres and 449,268 acres. The distribution of this is shown in Table 4. Of this a considerable amount of fixed work has been completed, and before the end of June a large area will be ready for the completion of the plans. As usual, where advisable owing to weather-conditions, &c., staff surveyors will be called in for the months of July and August, and will during these months complete their plan-work. Owing to enlistments the field staff has been considerably depleted, and if the usual amount of Crown land and land for settlements is available this year for survey, more use must be made of the contract system; and it is probable that there will be no difficulty in placing contracts satisfactorily, as, owing to the war, private surveyors are finding work rather slack.

There is, as I pointed out in last year's report, an urgent need of standard surveys both in town and country. This work can be done satisfactorily only by having a specially trained staff with the proper appliances. This I hope to be able to arrange for during the coming year. In the meantime the standard surveys of Auckland, Dunedin, and probably Napier, and some of the smaller boroughs, will be carried on by the present staff, while the standard survey and revision of original survey of Vogeltown will be continued by Mr. Climie.

The secondary triangulation and revision of parts of the major and minor triangulations must be pushed on, but, as I have stated, it cannot be done unless the field staff working under Mr. Langmuir's direction is much increased. I hope it will be possible to effect this also.

DRAUGHTING STAFF.

In his report (see appendix) the Chief Draughtsman calls attention to the time lost owing to protracted sick-leave granted to several officers, which has told against the output of work, and hampered the process of reorganization which is being carried out. A perusal of the report gives an idea of the variety of work performed by the Head Office staff. Special features of this year's work are the publishing of maps of the war areas in Europe, the issue of a new form of protractor sheet for Land Transfer plans, and the completion of maps of New Zealand on scales of ten miles and one millionth, which it is expected will be published at an early date.