

and relative position of estates granted by the Crown, or to determine in any satisfactory manner the geography of the country. Very creditable efforts, it is true, have been made in some Provinces to remedy the defects of their earlier surveys, and to place them on a safe geodetic basis; but these attempts, though to a great extent successful, have been embarrassed,—in some cases by the vast arrears of faulty or wholly neglected work,—in others by the pressure of immediate requirements compelling them to confine their efforts to the land required at the moment for settlement, to the exclusion of the larger area of their territory,—while in most cases the means available to the Survey Departments have been, as formerly, barely sufficient to enable their officers to meet the current demands upon them, by marking out lands as they were required, by the readiest and most perfunctory method that could be found; and, in all, the want of any established standard of qualification necessary to authorize any one to act as a surveyor, and the low status of professional capacity which has arisen from the mechanical way in which surveys have been conducted in the Colony generally, has been a source of difficulty, and has led to doubts as to the trustworthiness of much of the work of detail.

It is clear that the difficulties which the greater part, if not all, of the Survey Departments in the Colony have had to contend with, have not arisen solely from the shortcomings of surveyors, but that they have flowed necessarily from the political circumstances of the Colony. Detached communities,—beset with urgent want of lands subdivided to different dimensions, according to the nature of the country and of the agricultural or pastoral requirements of the settlers,—each necessarily had to deal with the difficulty according to the means in its power, and the mode of survey was not, in most cases, based on any previously thought-out system or design, but rather grew out of the force of circumstances. A bad system once introduced, no skill or energy could struggle against it; and even had the systems in the several localities been good, they would inevitably have been discordant, and would have been found deficient now that they are coalescing into a whole.

The Conference has been irresistibly led to the conclusion that the only remedy must lie in the establishment of a general system applicable to the whole Colony, and in so co-ordinating the work of the several Provinces that they will fit into and form part of a connected whole.

In making this general recommendation, they are urging no untried novelty or scientific theory; they only insist on the necessity of extending to this Colony the system which has been found necessary in every part of the civilized world. Not only every State in Europe, but the vast Asiatic possessions of Russia, and the whole territory of India, have been covered with a complete system of triangulation, far more elaborate and exact than is now proposed for these comparatively small islands; and although the ultimate expense of the work now proposed will no doubt be great, the Conference is satisfied that, far from involving an additional and gratuitous expense, the system proposed will actually greatly diminish the cost of surveying, besides affording a security as to boundaries of properties, and a completeness to the geography of the country, utterly unobtainable by any other means.

The Conference, moreover, is satisfied that, sooner or later, such a system must inevitably be extended to this Colony, and that the longer its introduction is delayed, the larger will be the mass of faulty surveys with which it will have to deal, and the greater will be the expense ultimately incurred, apart altogether from the confusion and possible litigation which may result, and the certainty of greatly increased expense in the conduct of detail surveys from the want of it in the meanwhile.

The Conference has abstained from entering into the details of the system of triangulations it has recommended, and from discussing the heads of the code of instructions the necessity of which it has indicated.

It has been felt that the preparation of the plan of works of such magnitude and future importance would require a degree of elaboration, and an unity of design, not to be looked for from a body of officers burdened with other duties to which they are anxious to return.

It trusts that, should the Government think proper to adopt its general recommendations, it will certainly not fail to place the construction of a system of rules for carrying it out into competent hands, and that full opportunity will be given for the consideration of them; and that, in simply indicating the necessity of an early change in the system of surveys, and the general direction which remedial measures should take, the Conference has carried out the duty with which the Government has intrusted it.

The resolutions come to by the Conference are appended.

I have, &c.,

THEOP. HEALE,
Chairman.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Enclosure in No. 2.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT CONFERENCE OF CHIEF SURVEYORS, HELD AT WELLINGTON.

I. That the following subjects be taken into consideration in the order given:—

- (a.) The actual condition of existing surveys in the several Provinces.
- (b.) The necessity of basing all surveys upon triangulation, and the mode in which such triangulation should be carried out.
- (c.) Ought the sectional surveys to be, as heretofore, under the direction of the Provincial Governments, or should the General Government undertake the whole charge of these surveys?
- (d.) Whether a code of instructions should be published for the general guidance of all survey staffs in the Colony; and whether there should not be an "Inspector of Surveys" appointed by the General Government to see that such instructions are carried out in the various Provinces?