

bush-clad sections surveyed for sale, the number of sections surveyed in bush being 95, and the acreage covered by same being 6,516. The township surveys throughout the year have been of trifling extent, there being only some 76 allotments laid off, embracing 37 acres, of which some 22 allotments, covering 23 acres, were in bush, the average cost throughout being 15s. 9½d. per allotment. The work this year has been unusually dispersed, the result being that considerable time and expense have been entailed travelling. This cause, joined to the large proportion of bush surveys, has made the acreage cost of survey necessarily larger than would otherwise have been the case. The retarding effects of bush have been particularly experienced by Mr. John Hay, who, in the survey of the timbered country between Orepuki and the Waiau River, found it necessary for a distance of some 6½ miles to execute a road traverse averaging 15 chains from the coast-line, along which latter a traverse had also necessarily to be carried. It would be but justice also to Mr. Blaikie to state that in addition to his work being unusually dispersed, a large number of sections were laid off by him in Seaward Moss, where, owing to the chronic wetness of the ground, aggravated by heavy rainfalls during the period of surveys, considerable difficulties and discomforts required to be overcome. The work, though rough and wet, was, I am glad to be able to report, well and carefully executed. An analysis of the total work of the year would show that a large proportion of the surveys was for the purposes of deferred-payment settlement. Some 80 sections, embracing 15,000 acres or thereby were laid off expressly for this purpose; and there are other blocks, such as those between Orepuki and the Waiau River, which will partially, at least, be dedicated to this mode of settlement. It would appear that the agricultural deferred-payment system has, upon the whole, received a most successful application in Southland; and there can be little doubt that in many localities it is rapidly changing the surface of the country. The free selection surveys throughout the year have only been 23, but these embrace the comparatively large area of 11,912 acres. Considering that by far the best and the greatest bulk of the land has long since passed into private hands, I would look upon the sales as a very fair year's average, and a practical proof of confidence in the future of the district. The areas that have been laid off for saw-milling purposes number 11, covering an acreage of 1860. This would give an idea, though a somewhat imperfect one, of the importance which the saw-milling industry has assumed here—an importance, I should think, which is likely to increase for many years to come. The remainder of the surveys consists—apart from a few township sections, half-caste claims, and some special value lands—of the blocks already mentioned between Orepuki and the Waiau, and of some blocks in Seaward Moss, the selection and settlement of which latter can only be expected to be a matter of very gradual process, and attainable only by giving selectors the easiest possible terms.

*Office Work.*—Apart from much of the routine of office duties which it would be impossible to particularise, I may state that throughout the year 539 certificates, in lieu of Crown grants, have been prepared. It being necessary to have plans of these prepared in triplicate, it will be seen that this branch of the work involved the preparation of 1,617 plans. Of the ordinary certificates of title 659 were prepared, and, each being in duplicate, the number of plans prepared under this head has been 1,318. The number of surveyors' plans examined and passed in connection with the Land Transfer Department has been 36. These plans cover 166 original sections, the number of subdivisional allotments being 2,540, and the acreage embraced being 38,824. There being 240 applications to bring land under the Land Transfer Act which required examination, the time and trouble involved in testing the consistency and accuracy of the diagrams and descriptions must also be taken into account. The Crown and ordinary certificates of title, I need not say, required careful recording on the office maps; and in connection with this, I might say, that 55 fresh transfer record maps and 7 Crown grant record maps required preparation. The number of lithographed maps got ready to guide land selectors and the general public has not been so great as during the previous year. 7 maps of villages and deferred payment blocks, entailing 850 prints, were drawn and lithographed locally. There were also maps of 4 survey districts, comprising Oteramika, Waimumu, Invercargill, and Campbelltown Hundreds, prepared and forwarded to Wellington for purposes of photo-lithography. Each of these comprises a large number of sections, and embraces an extensive acreage. In addition to these, a topographical map of the whole Southland district, showing all the chief natural and artificial features, was prepared, on a scale of 2 miles to inch, and photo-lithographed in Wellington on a scale of 4 miles to inch, and subsequently on a scale of 8 miles to inch. This map, the necessity of which was very urgent, owing to the previous issue being out of print, was designed to supply the place of one seventeen years old; and as in the matter of roads, railways, and fresh townships the district has made immense strides in the interval, the new map, as a record of the features up to date, will be of great service in various ways. It has served as a convenient basis for the recent maps, showing the pastoral runs; while for property tax, electoral, statistical, and similar purposes, it is certain to prove of great utility.

*General.*—While the free selection surveys, and those of the outstanding deferred payment blocks, have nearly been brought up to date, a comparatively large acreage of land, situated in different localities, has recently been reserved for deferred payment purposes; and this, along with bush and village reserves, the subdivision of which is more or less urgently required, will afford scope for our comparatively small staff for some considerable time to come. As intimated in my last report also, the time is fast approaching when the comparatively large areas comprised in the whole of Seaward and in the southern fringes of Longwood Forests, will require subdivision for purposes of settlement. Meanwhile the sawmillers are successfully utilising the superior timber, not only to supply the local building, &c., wants but those of Otago and Canterbury. On the heels of the sawmilling will follow the firewood trade, and hand in hand with this, or following closely upon it, will come agricultural settlement. In the case of Seaward Forest particularly, it is impossible that such a large expanse of rich vegetable mould, lying so close to the centres of settlement, can long be left uncultivated. In anticipating the future, the subdivision of these areas must therefore be looked upon as work to be done.

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