

Rangitikei, the Waitapu in Upper Manawatu, the Pohangina East, the Makuri, Forty-Mile Bush, and the country south of Eketahuna and Mangaone. These areas are in addition to the blocks in the Forty-Mile Bush District for which roads have been decided upon.

*Native Land Court and Native Land Purchase Blocks.*—Surveys of this class are beset with difficulties similar to those attending the settlement work. In addition to the area surveyed by the staff, authorized surveyors furnished twenty-eight plans comprising an area of 43,703 acres; these were all examined, verified, and approved, and in many cases the surveys were inspected upon the ground. With the addition of sketch plans the total area defined for the Native Land Court amounted to 130,150 acres.

*Roads.*—A large proportion of the road surveys was undertaken in accordance with the powers conferred by statutes to secure and dedicate to the public lines of communication in various localities. It would be difficult to estimate the value of the road surveys, but if account be taken of (1) the saving affected to County Councils and Road Boards in the avoidance of compensation claims; (2) the advantage and convenience accruing to the holders of sections to which rights of way have been provided; and (3) the facilities afforded to surveyors by these standard road traverses, there can be no question as to the great public gain accomplished.

*Town Standard Surveys.*—The standard surveys of the towns of Wanganui and Marton, executed by Messrs. John Annabell and J. F. Sicely, assistant-surveyors, supply a long-felt want; the imperfect and unreliable state of the original plans, and the absence of points of reference upon the ground, have hitherto rendered the demarcation of properties under the Land Transfer Act in those places costly and unsatisfactory. The advantages offered by the standard traverses will be appreciated by the local surveyors and their clients.

*Miscellaneous Surveys and Duties.*—Of the minor duties performed by the field staff, you will observe that much useful explorations of back country have been carried out by Messrs. Dundas, Annabell, and Sicely in the Wanganui, Turakina, and Rangitikei Counties, and by Messrs. L. Smith and Northcroft in the Forty-Mile Bush District; the results have already been furnished to you and the officers of the Public Works Department, to whom the information was, I venture to say, of some convenience and service. The surveyors have restored and permanently marked by iron tubes, &c., a large number of old trig. points; they executed surveys of small sections, such as sites of public buildings; a large amount of redemarcation of section lines in settled districts was done to the satisfaction of the settlers; incomplete plans of old surveys were finished from data found by actual survey. Apart from the survey proper of Crown lands it is manifest, from an examination of the returns, that the survey vote has been heavily taxed to carry out surveys and perform office work for the Land Transfer, Native Land Court, Property-Tax, and other departments of the public service; the sum thus expended in the Wellington District amounts to £3,719 12s. 5d. This may seem a large amount, but I doubt if the same results could be attained by any other agency or means for double the cost to the taxpayers; and I am convinced that much of the duties performed by the staff could not be so efficiently done by others, owing to lack of necessary experience and acquired information.

*General.*—There appears to be no necessity to reopen and discuss the various questions and difficulties referred to in previous annual reports; but it will suffice to state that attention has been given to every point raised in a manner approved by yourself. The requirements of the public, whether made known through the Government departments, local bodies, or by direct application, have been attended to. Field inspection has not been neglected, as my periodical reports will prove. The surveys were generally well executed in every detail; the quality of the work was good, and the field-books and plans are up to requirements. I have much pleasure in testifying to the general efficiency, zeal, and diligence of the surveyors. I have already drawn your attention to special cases of meritorious service.

*Office.*—Under Mr. Mackenzie's supervision good progress was made in overtaking arrears of mapping, and much useful work was performed. Increased duties have devolved upon Mr. F. H. Tronson, in consequence of the transfer of part of the Native Land Court duties to this office. Mr. Mason managed the Land Transfer Branch in a satisfactory manner. The clerk kept the accounts and conducted efficiently his share of a largely-increased correspondence.

*Expenditure.*—The expenditure for the year was apportioned as under: Field-work, £9,149 4s.; office expenses, £4,536 18s.; besides expenses of draughtsmen attending the Native Land Court, £72, and legal expenses, £33 12s. 6d. The liens registered for Native Land Court surveys, as per Return No. 5, sum to £1,129 19s. 7d.

*Operations for the Year 1883-84.*—It is proposed, with your concurrence, to direct the efforts of the staff as follows: Mr. Dundas to continue the triangulation of Otamakapua; to sectionally survey after laying-off and superintending the proposed road construction on Waitapu Block, of 29,000 acres; to make a standard survey of Palmerston North. Mr. L. Smith to survey sections at Eketahuna; two blocks of Native land at Otahoua; complete triangulation of 120,000 acres at Makuri, and extend same; survey the Masterton-Woodville Railway-line, where located about Eastwell's Clearing and Dreyer's Rock; and complete sectional surveys of Crown lands in the same locality and in Makuri District. Mr. Northcroft to complete settlement surveys of 10,000 acres at Rangitumau. Mr. Climie to complete triangulation of Rimutaka, Onoke, and other districts; to lay off and legalize road-lines to Terawhiti Gold Field, and through various blocks and sections in Hutt County, and undertake miscellaneous duties as required. Mr. Annabell to sectionally survey Paratieke and other blocks of 8,000 acres, and West Tokomaru Block of 4,000 acres; traverse Field's Murimotu Road; undertake the surveys of any roads required to be legalized; extend triangulation in back country; undertake any Native Land Court and miscellaneous surveys in the Wanganui District, and the construction of Murray's Murimotu Road. Mr. Sicely to survey and legalize roads in Rangitikei County, and extend triangulation in back country. Mr. Tone to survey and legalize roads in Wairarapa Counties; survey Native Land Court blocks, and complete triangulation of