

licensed surveyors, so that little or no trouble now arises in at once placing the city and suburban surveys in their places on the standard working plans. Mr. F. Simpson has also made a standard survey of the Town of Whangarei, which will enable us to compile a proper map of that town for publication, and towards the cost of which the Town Board contributed. All the points are marked with solid stone blocks.

*Land Transfer Surveys.*—Mr. Foster has passed 175 plans, containing 43,846 acres, and Mr. Buscke, at Gisborne, fifty-six, with an area of 190,174 acres. The character of the surveys as surveys is always good, but the omission of many matters required by the regulations is very frequent indeed, rendering a reference back to the surveyor a matter of every-day occurrence. The trouble and delay that this gives rise to is very serious. There are four draughtsmen engaged in this branch of the department, two in Auckland and two at Gisborne, but they are not able to keep the work up to date, as already reported to you.

*Inspection.*—Mr. Williams has inspected a large number of surveys by the authorized surveyors during the year, and reports that on the whole he found them fairly accurate, with a great improvement on the ground-marking since last year. His diagrams are transmitted to you from time to time. From the long distances he has had to travel, and the difficulty of reaching many of the surveys inspected, the expenses are very heavy. Mr. Barnard, in addition to his other duties, has made twenty-seven inspections, covering an area of 54,793 acres, and reports (as before mentioned) that the surveys are generally faithfully done. The extent of the district in which surveys are going on prevents so complete a field-inspection as would be desirable: as a matter of fact, scarcely 10 per cent. of them are checked, and then only in cases when the office examination tends to show its necessity.

*Examination of Surveyors.*—The Inspector held one examination for young men desiring to be placed on the authorized list during the year, when ten candidates came up, but only three passed. The points in which most of them fail are those where a more intelligent study of the regulations and system of record would have enabled them to pass. The number of surveyors in the province is now more than equal to the requirements of the public, and therefore greater stringency in the examinations may well be insisted on without interfering with the question of supply and demand.

*Office Work.*—The chief draughtsman and indoor staff have got through a commendable amount of work, both at Auckland and Gisborne, the latter branch being under Mr. Featon's direct management; but, notwithstanding, there are large arrears in all branches. There are now 1,275 block-sheets prepared, on which more or less work is shown, being an increase of ninety for the year; and in addition there are 150 record maps and the same number of trig. maps of survey districts prepared. We have drawn thirty-five plans for lithographing, of which 5,250 copies were struck off: they are principally 20-chain maps of survey blocks, which, being carefully prepared, can easily be joined together to form general plans, for which purpose they are very useful. The cost of lithographing was £50 2s., whilst the sales amounted to £65. Twenty-four tracings of survey districts for photo-lithographing to the 80-chain scale have been sent to you, but only thirteen have been published during the last two years. Three maps of meridian circuits, showing all the major triangulation in them, have been sent to you for photo-lithographing, two of which are published. The second sheet of the four-mile map of the province is in hand. The Crown Grant Draughtsman, Mr. Kennedy, has placed on the forms 1,894 marginal plans of grants, certificates, and Native titles, in addition to eighty-six Native titles prepared at Gisborne; Mr. Sturtevant has drawn 1,704 marginal plans on the District Lands Registrars' forms: thus making a total of 3,684 diagrams of title for the year. There are on hand passing through the office 503 various forms of titles, of which 152 are Crown grants or certificates of titles, which cannot be prepared for want of surveys, and 207 are Native Lands Court subdivisions or orders, also waiting for survey, and, as the department has no means of urging on these latter surveys, they are likely to remain as arrears. The Crown grants will be worked off when the surveyors are in the district where they lie. In the clerical branch, Mr. Johnston has passed 1,830 vouchers, representing a sum of £65,523 12s. 8d., which includes expenditure on surveys, roads to open up Crown lands, Great North roads and wharves, homestead surveys and land-purchase surveys. The sum received for refunds on Native surveys during the year is £514 4s. 6d., leaving a balance due by Natives of £22,175 9s. 9d., secured on the land. The correspondence connected with the various duties of the department, both in English and Maori, continues to increase. There are considerably over five thousand letters and telegrams received and an equal number despatched during the year. Should the records continue to accumulate during the next few years at the same rate as they have done during the past six or seven, it will soon be necessary to provide a special "muniment room" for their safe-keeping, there being no space for them in the safe, which is already overcrowded with maps.

*Work for the ensuing Season.*—The surveyors have already completed in the field, but the maps of which are not yet in and therefore not shown in the return, 26,400 of rural sections, 1,608,800 acres of triangulation, 12,000 acres of land-purchase block, 10.75 miles of road, and 14 miles of boundary-line, all of which will come in during the ensuing year. You will observe from the monthly abstract forwarded herewith that, including the above, the surveyors have had instructions issued to them for 3,002 square miles of triangulation, 62,280 acres of section work, 17,300 acres of Native Land Court blocks, and 279 miles of road; whilst there is on hand 77,180 acres of Crown land to be surveyed in 404 localities for sale, and for issue of Crown grants, 141 sections = 15,790 acres, for which instructions have not been issued as yet to the surveyors. Most of this will be worked off during the season if the staff remains at its present strength. In these figures, however, are not included any estimate of the applications which are likely to be received from the Land Board during the year. These no doubt will be considerable, but, as the best lands for settlement in the province have already been dealt with, it is likely to be a diminishing quantity until the large areas of good land now totally inaccessible to the settlers for want of roads is rendered available. It would be useless to attempt to form any estimate of the area of Native land that will be surveyed