

and successfully prosecuted, notwithstanding the remoteness and inaccessibility of that part of the country. It is expected that within four months' time complete plans of over half a million acres will be ready for the Native Land Court, sketch plans of that area have already been prepared, and have served for investigation of titles.

The settlement surveys were chiefly extended in the Otairi (Clifton Block), Otamakapua (Pember-ton Block), Mangatainoka and North Tiraumea blocks, Wainuioru and Kaiwhata districts, and on the hills near Featherston and Cross' Creek in South-west Wairarapa district.

This office also prepared specifications for, and supervised, contract surveys comprising 81,000 acres of land selected by ten associations under the Special Settlement Regulations.

The staff surveys have been carried out in accordance with requirements, as have, also, the majority of the contracts. Much expense and time have been devoted to the inspection of the latter.

The only town or village surveys were those of Pahiatua, Kopuaranga, and Cross' Creek, and the town and suburbs laid off by the Pahiatua-Puketoi Association in their Tiraumea block.

In the Upper Waitotara district surveys and complete plans were made of several large blocks of land for the Native Land Court, besides the extensive provisional plans of the Murimotu and Upper Wanganui claims, including Waimarino already mentioned, and the northern sub-divisions of Mangatainoka block.

Railway and road surveys were carried out as required by the Public Works Department and local bodies, also, in cases requiring legislation, but much of the latter class of work had to be deferred in consequence of other pressing demands upon staff-officers' time.

As indicating the extent to which assistance has been given to other departments and local bodies, I may mention that the cost of such services amounted to £3,240, which may be taken as representing the work of ten officers throughout the whole year.

To meet the increase in the Land Transfer Branch business another draughtsman was engaged temporarily, and he has given efficient assistance in inspecting the work of the licensed surveyors at and adjacent to the city. For some time to come his attention must be devoted to indoor duties.

From what has been stated it will be understood that the duties of this office have increased, the number of recorded letters alone amounts to 4,449. The clerks cheerfully worked much in overtime to keep down arrears.

I have much satisfaction in testifying to the zeal and ability bestowed by the staff-officers, one and all, on their particular duties.

The operations for the year 1886-7 might advantageously be directed as follows—(1) the extension of major and minor triangulation in the north-eastern portion of the Wellington district, to a junction with similar surveys by the Auckland staff, and likewise over the country served by the proposed North Island Trunk Railway, Marton-Te Awamutu; this class of work, combined with topographical survey, would prove invaluable in the preparation of plans for the Native Land Court, and for furnishing data to enable the Government to deal with the opening up by roads of the whole area of unoccupied lands of the interior, and the settlement, occupation, and improvement of the same on a general and comprehensive scheme. (2) Settlement surveys should be prosecuted in Otairi, Otamakapua, Waitapu, Upper Oroua and Pohangina, as well as in the Forty Mile Bush, Puketoi, and South Wairarapa districts.

The staff are already at work in most of the localities enumerated; and it only requires that ample and prompt advances be made for road-works to ensure a substantial expansion of settlement.

The lands specified are of such good quality, and the natural advantages and attractions of the country are such as to warrant the expenditure of the necessary money to make the occupation of the lands possible.

J. W. A. MARCHANT, Chief Surveyor.

NELSON.

Standard Survey.—It has been found necessary to extend a line of standard bearings through the lower gorges of the Buller Valley. This work has been completed by Mr. Jennings, who has erected and observed at six stations in a distance of 19 miles from Trig. E, closing on the Buller Circuit Initial Station with a difference in bearing of 46".

Minor Triangulation without Topography.—An area of 135,076 acres has been executed at a cost of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre; 60,000 acres of this area has been extension for sectional work at Mokihinui and West Wanganui by Messrs. Snodgrass and Lewis, and 74,856 acres, covering old surveys by Messrs. Smith and Thompson in the Amuri.

Trigonometrical and Topographical.—Of this class of survey 12,764 acres have been completed at a cost of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre by Messrs. Smith and Thompson, in the Percival, Lyndon, Dillon and Tekoa Survey Districts. The field work of 165,000 acres has been completed, but not mapped, by Messrs. Smith, Thompson and Murray, these officers working in the back country during the summer season and plotting during the winter months. Mr. Murray has closed his triangulation on the Marlborough district on side Tawhitinui Geo. Stn. on island, and Reference Geo. Stn. in Pelorous Sound, with a difference of 8" in bearing, after correction for convergence, and an equal length in distance. Mr. Snodgrass extended triangulation to connect mining surveys up the Mokihinui, and made two attempts to obtain a reconnaissance survey of the upper portion of the valley with a view to obtaining a line of road from the Wangapeka saddle, but was driven back by bad weather on each occasion. In the Amuri triangulation by Messrs. Smith and Thompson, in forty triangles the mean error in summation was 6"1, the largest 18", the least 0". In fourteen polygons the mean error was 03"·34, the largest 10"·3, and the least 0".

Sectional Surveys.—Three hundred and ninety-two sections have been surveyed by the staff and authorised surveyors, containing 54,812 acres at an average cost of 1s. 7d. per acre. The survey of some large areas in the Amuri district has contributed to establish a low average cost, while the remainder, being for the chief part separated by long distances in a rough and timbered district, have ruled at a