

King-country, and Messrs. A. D. Wilson, John Annabell, J. R. Annabell, and J. A. Thorpe in the Waimarino. In the Middle Island Mr. F. S. Smith and Mr. F. A. Thompson completed about two hundred square miles of triangulation and topography on the high back-run country of the Amuri. Mr. W. D. B. Murray connected by a Ray-trace triangulation the scattered surveys in the districts along the coast-line from Wangamoa to the French Pass. In Westland the triangulation, which for several years past has been gradually extending southward from Hokitika, is now completed, the whole of the intervening coast districts to Martin's Bay being now trigonometrically and topographically surveyed. This is a great work excellently performed, directed throughout by Mr. Mueller, and executed under great hardships and privation by Mr. G. J. Roberts and Mr. W. G. Murray.

SETTLEMENT SURVEYS ON RURAL AND SUBURBAN LANDS.

This class of survey comprehends the selection of the district and occupation road-lines, and the marking-off on the ground of the farms or sections for settlement. The areas of lands so treated aggregate to a total of 343,590 acres, subdivided into 3,704 sections, at an average cost of 2s. 1d. an acre. This is 3d. per acre higher than last year. The extra cost is due mainly to the average size of sections being less than ever before, on account of the number of sections under fifty acres each laid off for village settlements. As the settlement surveys are now almost entirely in bush and hilly districts, the tendency will necessarily be towards a greater cost per acre, for many of the road-lines have to be graded, and in bush sections back-corner pegs are now put in. On a less careful and complete system the surveys might be executed at a less initial cost, but the few pence per acre saved would be a sorry compensation for badly-selected road-lines and vaguely-marked boundaries.

NATIVE SURVEYS.

For the purpose of investigation of title and of individualisation of same, 167 blocks or sections, comprising 68,465 acres, were surveyed by the staff, and 160,526 acres, in 159 blocks, by authorised surveyors; and there is in the Awarua and other adjacent blocks in the Upper Rangitikei about 300,000 acres now under survey.

In Native Land Purchase surveys the Taupo-nui-atia blocks on the west side of Lake Taupo and the Waimarino Block, in all nearly 800,000 acres, were under survey by staff and authorised surveyors, and there is an area of about 80,000 acres now in progress of survey in the Takapau and Mangatoro Districts, Hawke's Bay.

LAND TRANSFER SURVEYS.

This class of survey is concerned entirely with freehold lands, its object being to afford correct plans and descriptions of the subdivisions and other dealings with private estates. Every survey is carefully examined and checked in the office and occasionally in the field, to clear up discrepancies, which frequently exist from imperfect original surveys, from obliteration of boundaries, or from encroachment, before the plan is passed on to the District Land Registrar for issue of guaranteed title.

GOLD-MINING AND ROAD SURVEYS, ETC.

The mining surveys are for the quartz-mining applications, special claims, coal and other mineral areas, which are held on lease; 208 applications, covering 6,509 acres, were dealt with.

The road surveys were principally in the exercise of the right to make road reserves through Native blocks before the expiry of fifteen years from the date of the grant from the Crown. The right lapses after that. It would have been in the public interest had the period been longer within which to exercise the right of taking land for roads; for, as it is, in many blocks the time has run out before there is any actual need for defining the road, so far as use is concerned. From this cause and pressure of other work the time has been allowed to lapse without the right being exercised in some cases, where, as the country gets settled, the omission may cause the inconvenience and expense of taking roads under the Public Works Act. On the other hand it is quite likely that some of the roads which have been laid off in anticipation of the country's requirements, so as to come within the limit of the statutory time, may be found not to be so well placed as they would have been could the surveys have been postponed until it was seen how the country was likely to be occupied.