

Councils, to aid land selectors in choosing lands. The draughting branch of the department has performed work for other departments amounting to £633 8s. 6d. The Crown-grant branch has placed 3,232 marginal plans on the Crown grants, certificates, and Native title forms, whilst Mr. Sturtevant has drawn also 741 marginal-plans, making a total of 3,973 such plans. The work is quite up to date in this branch. The correspondence shows no sign of decrease; indeed, judging by the criterion of the two past months, there is a considerable increase, as many as 18,000 letters and parcels (exclusive of telegrams) having been received and despatched during the year. Mr. Johnston, the accountant, has passed 1,733 vouchers, representing the expenditure on surveys, roads, home-steads, land purchase, and State forests, amounting to £37,393 4s. 3d.

Work for the ensuing Season.—The surveyors have on hand a good deal of work, the plans of which were not furnished in time to appear in this year's returns, and they have, in addition, instructions sufficient to keep them employed for some time to come, without counting the numerous applications on hand in the office. The dispersive character of the surveys in this district is a source of constant delay and additional expense, all of which, in some measure, retards settlement; but, as little triangulation remains to be done, the surveyors now get at their section-work more expeditiously than formerly. The throwing open of lands for selection before survey will bring in occasionally the aid of the authorised surveyors, when selectors deposit the fees, but hitherto this has not been taken much advantage of. Our duties for the coming season will consist in surveying applications for lands, and in exercising the road-rights in Native blocks.

During the past year two of the cadets, Messrs. H. H. Murray and A. V. Harrington, passed on to the grade of Assistant-Surveyor. It was with deep regret that I had recently to report to you the sad death of the former through typhoid, brought on by exposure and over-anxiety about his work. Mr. Murray was one of the most promising of the many young men who have entered the department, and had gained the highest respect and liking from his brother officers. We have also lost the services of four surveyors by retrenchment and one by retirement, and six draughtsmen through the former cause. The district under my charge has also been reduced in size by the addition of Cook County to the Land District of Hawke's Bay.

S. PERCY SMITH, Assistant Surveyor-General.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Amendment of Land District Boundaries.—In consequence of the alteration of boundaries of the Auckland and Hawke's Bay Land Districts effected by "The Land Act Amendment Act, 1887," I assumed control of the Poverty Bay District shortly after the passing of that Act; therefore, in reviewing the year's operations, it appears to me to be convenient to treat of the district as at present constituted, seeing that the returns and reports are only made up once a year.

Triangulation.—No triangulation *per se* has been executed this year, but local extensions have been made for the purpose of governing the settlement- and road-surveys in progress in various parts of the district. Mr. Armstrong re-observed some triangles in Waimata District, covering an area of 4,016 acres, in order to clear up some doubtful determinations. This was done at a cost of 0.45d. per acre. Much of the minor triangulation in Poverty Bay needs similar treatment, but the field staff has been so much reduced that this desirable work must inevitably be postponed for the exigencies of other more pressing requirements. The same remark applies to some 600 square miles of triangulation still remaining to be done in Hawke's Bay. About 36,000 acres have been under settlement survey, 900 acres of this having been done by Mr. Armstrong at a cost of 1.37s. per acre.

Settlement Surveys.—Mr. Tone completed 7,157 acres at a cost of 1s. 0.43d. per acre. The same officer surveyed 6,461 acres, sufficient for purposes of selection, under the provisions of the Land Act of 1887; that is to say, as regards roads, boundaries, topography, and classification; in fact, everything is done except the marking of section-boundaries. The cost of this was 3.36d. per acre. Mr. Tone has also sufficiently surveyed about 8,000 acres at North Makaretu, in the manner just stated, to admit of the greater portion of this being offered under the Act above referred to. Before passing to the next item, I desire to call particular attention to the large area and small cost of this officer's work. Mr. Rich has surveyed about 12,000 acres, complete in all respects except marking of section-lines, at a cost of 1s. 8d. per acre, including trig. and topographical survey. About 1,400 acres was surveyed in the same manner by Mr. Wilson, at a cost of about 6s. 10½d. per acre. This exceptionally high rate is explained by him to have been brought about through his ill-health, exceptionally bad weather, and difficult country.

Native Land Court Surveys.—Thirty-three blocks, aggregating 17,972 acres, and consisting chiefly of subdivision-orders, have been surveyed by authorised surveyors at the cost of owners in Poverty Bay; and six blocks, totalling 4,893 acres, have been similarly treated in Hawke's Bay.

Land Purchase Surveys.—The boundary-survey of Waikopiro and Manawakaitoi Blocks, estimated to contain 84,400 acres, which was commenced by Mr. Watson and continued by Mr. Price, will probably be complete as to field-work before the report reaches you. Mr. Watson retired from the service in October last, his health having broken down.

Roads, &c.—In Poverty Bay District 65 miles of road-lines have been surveyed, in exercise of road-rights, at an average cost of £10 3s. per mile. In Hawke's Bay 9.3 miles have been laid out, at an average cost of £15 per mile.

Standard Surveys of Towns.—Mr. Busecke, the surveyor who attends to the Land Transfer branch at Gisborne, has spent twenty-two days, at different times, on the standard survey of that town, redefining some points which were obliterated, and determining permanently corners of blocks in relation to these points, for the purpose of street-alignments and for facilitating the work of the licensed surveyors. The Borough of Hastings has had a standard survey of the various private townships included under that name executed under the advice and supervision of this department. This work was much needed in connection with transactions under the Land Transfer Act.