

The provisions contained in "The Land Act, 1892," authorising the disposal of the land within the Rotorua Town and Rural Block, will enable the Government to offer leases to the public, which will no doubt be freely taken advantage of, for building purposes. The expected increase in the number of visitors, so soon as the railway is opened, will require a good deal more accommodation than is at present to be found at Rotorua.

SURVEYS.

The tables appended give full information as to the surveys conducted during the twelve months ended 31st March, 1893, which may be conveniently summarised in the following table:—

	Area.	Cost per Acre.			Total Cost.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Minor triangulation	501,340 acres	0	0	1·92	4,014	11	7
Topographical surveys	297,906 "	0	0	1·04	1,297	11	2
Topographical surveys for selection	306,086 "	0	0	4·2	5,368	0	0
Rural and suburban section surveys (2,608 sections)	621,938 "	0	1	1·8	34,205	0	8
Town section surveys (922 sections)	731 "	0	14	6·0	669	5	2
Native Land Court surveys (62 blocks)	251,352 "	0	0	2·1	2,206	1	9
Mining surveys (100 sections)	2,262 "	0	7	8·6	874	0	4
Roads, &c. (624·32 miles) per mile ... ..	...	13	9	0	8,397	13	5
Miscellaneous work, detention, &c. ... ..	...	...	...	...	6,198	4	3
Total cost of field-work completed during the twelve months ... ..	...	£63,230	8	4			

The most important item in this year's expenditure, as in all others, is that connected with the section surveys; the process by which the Crown estate is divided up into farms for occupation by the settlers. The last year's output of this description of work was large, owing to a greater number of surveyors having been engaged in the work. The cost per acre for this class of survey, so far as field-work is concerned, varies little from year to year, as the following figures will show: 1889, cost 1s. 1·4d. per acre; 1890, 1s. 3·7d. per acre; 1891, 1s. 0·22d. per acre; 1892, 1s. 0·3d. per acre; and for the period just ended, 1s. 1·2d. per acre. The average size of the sections surveyed was 238 acres, but in these figures are included some small grazing-runs with areas running up to about 2,500 acres, which tends to reduce the cost per acre. Taking into consideration the "Topographical surveys for selection" and the "Trigonometrical surveys," both of which should be included in the costs of section surveys, it may be said that this class of surveys cost about 1s. 7d. per acre—so far as field-work and the preparation of the original working-plans are concerned.

TRIANGULATION AND TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEYS.

Together, the two areas which come under these headings sum up to 799,246 acres: most of it lies in the Auckland, Wellington, and Otago Districts, and it consisted principally in filling up gaps left over from previous years. The country over which the triangulation has to be carried now-a-days is generally forest-clad and rough, and frequently a large amount of clearing has to be done before sights can be obtained—the cost, therefore, must be considered very moderate. In Otago, a great deal of the topographical work was rendered necessary by the subdivision of pastoral runs into small grazing-runs; more complete information than existed being required before determining the boundaries. Included in this total is a considerable area in Westland, which was executed in connection with the exploration of the head-waters of the Copeland and other rivers, to ascertain if a practicable route could be obtained across the Southern Alps from that river to the Hermitage, near Mount Cook. A report on, and map of, this country will be found attached.

SETTLEMENT SURVEYS.

Little comment on this class of survey is necessary. It included the ordinary work of subdivision for farms, a total of 2,608 sections having been completed, the greatest number and largest area being in Auckland; Southland coming next—the small grazing-runs having in this district been a distinguishing feature in the year's work. A large portion of the 71,287 acres laid off in Wellington consisted of association blocks, in which the areas average 200 acres, and nearly the whole of it lay in very rough bush country where the road-lines are difficult to define, and will be costly to make. In Otago considerable progress has been made in the dense forest country near Catlin's River, by preparing the country for settlement, and, in addition, a large area in the open interior was, at the same time, subdivided for small grazing-runs.

The difficulties the department has to contend with, in the matter of providing practicable road-lines to the country which is still left for subdivision, is very great; and when laid out, the cost of forming such lines will amount to a large sum. It may be said that the great want of the present time is a large extension of road formation, to give access to the Crown lands, for selection has advanced beyond the facilities of access, and in many districts settlement is delayed by want of roads. Probably in no former period has the want of roads been so urgent as at present. The Crown lands are mostly situated in remote districts, far from railways and main roads, and often without anything better than a foot-track or surveyors' line by which they may be reached. This want of roads acts as a deterrent to settlement, and is frequently used by selectors as an excuse for the non-fulfilment of the improvement conditions under which they hold their lands.

The department has on hand at the present time about 900,000 acres which are being prepared by survey for settlement purposes, in which is included the Cheviot Estate.

During the year the staff was augmented by employing a large number of the authorised surveyors, who have turned out a considerable amount of work.