

Native Land Court Surveys.—The survey of Mohakatino-Parininihi No. 3 Block, 483 acres, immediately north of the White Cliffs, and the extension of the confiscation boundary as far as the Tongaporutu River, was considered sufficient for the compilation of a plan of the Mohakatino-Parininihi No. 1 Block, 62,843 acres, for the purposes of the Native Land Court. This was done on contract by Mr. T. K. Skinner at a cost of £180.

Roads, Railways, &c.—A length of 48.35 miles of road has been graded and surveyed—namely, 3.6 miles by Mr. Buckeridge through the Huiakama Block, at £15.72 per mile; 24½ miles by Mr. Bullard, under warrant through the Huiakama, Toko, and Matemateonga Blocks, at £32 per mile; and 20½ miles by Mr. A. C. Turner up the Whenuakura Valley and well into the Kaitangiwhenua Block, at £27.4 per mile. The apparently heavy cost of the last two items was caused by the very broken nature of the country, necessitating a great deal of exploration.

Other Work.—This includes harbour soundings and scattered surveys by Mr. W. H. Skinner, of the office staff; inspection and report by Mr. Skeet on Mr. Donkin's line from Urenui to the Moki, &c.

Field Inspection.—I regret to say that, owing to the increasing office-work, particularly in connection with the Crown lands branch, I have not been able to devote much time to field inspection. I examined a few Land Transfer surveys about Stratford and Hawera, and spent a few days with Mr. Bullard going through the Matemateonga Block and into the Kaitangiwhenua Block, as far as the head waters of the Whenuakura River. I had fully intended to devote the greater part of the month of March to outdoor work, especially a visit to the Rawhitiroa country; but the protracted Land Board inquiries and my subsequent visit to Wellington in connection therewith prevented my doing so.

Work for Next Year.—Although I shall not have the honour and privilege of directing the operations for the ensuing year, I think it is most probable that the major part of the work will consist of the survey of farm-homestead association blocks, which amount in area at the present time to 79,500 acres, and 16,000 acres under survey by Messrs. Skeet and Murcott for ordinary selection. As under the new regulations the associations can nominate their own surveyors, it is probable, and, I think, desirable, that at least two of the staff should devote their energies to the preparation of blocks for ordinary selection after survey. I am inclined to think that the introduction of the "unsurveyed land" system, which is new to this district, will to some extent lessen the keen competition which has characterized the land-sales during the past three years, and will also result in the land being taken up in scattered sections.

There are some township sites—notably in the Mimi, Mangaire, and Mangamingi Blocks—which will probably be cut up, or portions of them: but I think it would be wise to have them felled and grassed beforehand.

Road-lines to be Surveyed.—Mr. Bullard is at present exploring for a line across the centre of the Kaitangiwhenua Block from the Matemateonga Range, to connect, if possible, with one of Mr. Frith's lines in Rawhitiroa, which will eventually no doubt be continued easterly to Pipiriki. Mr. Bullard will at present make a magnetic traverse, marking the line well, so that the section surveyors may afterwards complete the survey. During the worst part of the winter Mr. Bullard will probably complete the survey of the Wingrove Road through the Pukengahu Block, and also lay off one or more roads under warrant through the Tutaeariari Block. It will also be probably desirable to continue the Mimi road northwards into the Tongaporutu Valley, and down that stream to the present crossing of the main north road.

As this is probably the last occasion upon which I shall have the honour of forwarding a report from this district, I may be pardoned perhaps for expressing my deep sense of the loyal and able support in the discharge of my duties which I have always received from both the field and office staff, and also from the private members of the profession when engaged upon work for the department.

SIDNEY WEETMAN, Chief Surveyor.

HAWKE'S BAY.

Minor Triangulation.—The minor triangulation this year has been limited principally to the reobservation of 35,000 acres of very old work in the Patoka Survey District, which was proved to be totally unreliable, and in its uncorrected condition unfit for the control of traverse-work, as its rate of error was in places greater than is permitted in the class of work it is intended to govern.

The minor work of over a million of acres has been recomputed by the methods of polygon and ray-trace, the obviously faulty work discarded, and the remainder brought into systematic harmony.

There is now over the area but one value for each station and side, in the place of sometimes three and four different ones as heretofore, which has been the cause of great confusion and loss of time.

Topographical Survey for Selection under Act of 1887.—This method of preparing lands for selection has been found to be well suited for the outlying part of this district, and has for this reason been generally adopted during the past few years. Thirty thousand acres in the Motu and Nuhaka-North Survey Districts have been, by the laying-off of roads and survey of the exterior boundaries, prepared for selection this year, at a cost of 5d. an acre. It has since been thrown open, and the greater part taken up in holdings from 300 to 2,000 acres; and the sectional work is now proceeding.

Rural and Suburban.—Of the 15,027 acres completed this year, 9,000 represents the Pohue Block, in sections varying from 150 acres to 900 acres, and the Liberal Small-farm Association Block, situated not far from Danevirke, on the lower slopes of the Ruahine Range. This was divided into sections of 200 acres each; and, owing to bad weather having been experienced throughout, the cost of survey has been slightly higher than usual. The balance is the marking-off of "unsurveyed selections" in the Motu and Nuhaka Survey Districts.