

permit of some bushfelling being done this winter. In addition to this, the survey of nearly all the land taken up by selection before survey has been completed or is in progress, so, with the exception of a few isolated sections, the survey of all the land taken up in this manner is now finished in the field or is in course of being done.

During the year plans have been sent in of 71,287 acres, completed at an average cost of 1s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. As stated, preliminary plans have been sent in of a large area of farm homestead association blocks sufficiently advanced to allow of the sections being balloted for, or, if to be opened for selection on the optional system, to allow of their being placed in the market. It has been difficult to ascertain the proportional part of the cost of the preliminary survey, as in some cases, to allow of the land being balloted for as soon as possible, only a compass traverse was made of the roads after they had been graded, and in other blocks parts of the roads were properly traversed and part only compass traversed, so I have charged from 4d. to 6d. per acre, according to the nature of the survey, charged to the preliminary survey.

There have been 5,336 acres of sectional surveys executed by contract, at a cost of 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. This is for pegging the section and partially cutting the back boundary-lines, and does not include the cost of the preliminary survey and roadwork, which had been previously done by the staff surveyors.

*Road Surveys.*—Mr. F. A. Thompson has sent in plans of a hundred and one miles of road surveys in the South Wairarapa County, partly completed in the field last year and partly the previous year, the average cost being £9 13s. 1d. per mile. This, considering the careful manner in which Mr. Thompson executes his work, and the great attention he gives to all the complicated details of many of his surveys, is a very moderate cost per mile, and he deserves every credit for his excellent work. Mr. A. Simpson has also sent in plans of fifty-two miles and a half of road surveys in the North Wairarapa County, executed at a cost of £10 13s. 4d. per mile. I trust one more season will enable Mr. Thompson to finish the road surveys required in the South Wairarapa County, and we shall be able to get these roads, some of which have been in existence over twenty years without being surveyed, finally mapped and recorded on the county plans. Mr. J. R. Annabell sent in plans of thirty miles and a half of roads laid out in the Rangitatau, Mangaporau, Mangapapa, and other blocks, the average cost being £16 4s. per mile, but it was heavy bush-country, and a very great proportion of the work lay a very long way back, necessitating the provisions being swagged a great many miles, thereby necessarily increasing the cost of the work. As Mr. Annabell, to my regret, resigned, and could not complete the work, Mr. Simpson had to be removed from the North Wairarapa County, where, however, the old road surveys are nearly completed, to go on with the surveys of the roads in the Rangitatau Block, where the right to take them will shortly expire, but owing, he states, to the roughness of the country, I am sorry to say very little progress has yet been made by him.

The rest of the road survey comprises road engineering surveys, of which a hundred and four miles have been done to enable co-operative contracts to be let for the formation of the special-settlement roads. These surveys have cost from £5 5s. 10d. to £14 12s. per mile, according to the nature of the country, the average being about £11 per mile.

*Native Land Court Surveys.*—Only a very small area has been undertaken this season, and only includes about 5,265 acres done, at a cost of 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per acre. About sixty-two miles of river-traverse in the Awarua Block, of the Hautapu and Rangitikei Rivers, were undertaken by Messrs. Ward and Reardon by order of the Judge of the Native Land Court, at a cost of about £15 per mile, to be charged against the cost of the survey of the Awarua Block.

*Survey Inspections.*—The Inspecting Surveyor, Mr. L. Smith, has visited during the year the camp of every surveyor engaged on staff-work, and thoroughly checked their work on the ground, inspecting their survey equipment and instruments used in their work, testing the chains, or measuring bands used by each surveyor. He reports very favourably on the quality of the work being done as a whole, but some of the work, from various causes, is more expensive than similar work done by other surveyors; but the work is accurately done, and can be thoroughly relied on. Five Native Land Court or Land Transfer surveys done by private surveyors have also been inspected on the ground, and in one case I have had to notify to the surveyor that I cannot undertake the responsibility of certifying to the accuracy of the plans sent in by him. During the ensuing year I intend to make the Inspector, as opportunity occurs, test the accuracy of the surveys sent into the Land Transfer Office, as the Government practically becomes responsible for the correctness of the titles issued therefrom, and, unless the computer detects some mathematical error in the work, they are all approved of, and time alone will show whether the actual field measurements are reliable or come within the limit of error allowed.

*Resignation of Staff Officers.*—I very much regret to have to record the loss of the services by resignation of several of the officers—Messrs. A. E. Ashcroft and R. P. Greville on the permanent staff, and J. R. Annabell on the temporary staff, all excellent surveyors that we could ill afford to lose, but, as they saw opportunities to better their position, they embraced them, as they thought the chance of promotion in the service by way of an increase to their salary was remote.

*Miscellaneous.*—Under this heading comes the great bulk of the work in the office, which embraces the answering of all sorts of inquiries about lands, surveys, Native matters, road rights; preparation of tracings on 40-chain scale, showing details of country likely to be settled on; tracings of all road districts on which to record road proposals for the expenditure of "thirds" and "fourths" approved by the Land Board; tracings in connection with special settlements, schemes, balloting, roads, &c.; tracings and data for staff surveyors, Crown Lands Rangers, selectors of land, special settlers, local bodies, other departments, &c.

The work of the clerical branch has gone on rapidly increasing during the year, principally owing to the large number of farm homestead associations formed, and the consequent increase of correspondence, &c., in connection with the surveys of the blocks and settlement of the members on the land.