

1904.

NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY

(ANNUAL REPORT ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The SECRETARY FOR CROWN LANDS AND SURVEYOR-GENERAL to the Hon. the MINISTER OF LANDS.
SIR,— Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 7th July, 1904.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report on the operations of the Department of Lands and Survey for the twelve months ended the 31st March, 1904.

I have, &c.,

J. W. A. MARCHANT,

Surveyor-General and Secretary for Crown Lands.

The Hon. T. Y. Duncan, Minister of Lands.

It will be convenient, for the purposes of comparison and arrangement, to adhere to the order of the last annual report. The first point calling for attention is,—

THE CROWN LANDS OPENED FOR SELECTION.

In pursuance of the determination of the Government that the settlements throughout the colony should be extended until every acre suitable for grazing or agricultural purposes not otherwise required for reservation or utilisation should be brought into profitable occupation, the whole staff of the Lands and Survey Department continued to be concentrated upon explorations and surveys, with the object of completing the scheme of roads and subdivision of the various blocks of land according to their position, character, and suitability, with the result that very large additions were made to the areas, which have been mapped and properly defined. These steps were followed up by the publication of schedules of the areas and prices, illustrated by plans, and the whole placed before the public in order that those who so desired might lodge applications and secure holdings to which they could devote their energies and capital.

Attention has been drawn in previous annual reports to the fact that it is more difficult as the years go by to maintain a supply of Crown lands sufficiently good in quality, and also reasonably accessible, to meet the requirements of that large section of the people who are eager to undertake their reclamation and cultivation. When it is remembered that vast areas of the excellent lands with which New Zealand is endowed have passed from the Crown, it will be realised that the class of land which the Department now places upon the market is not, either by quality or position, attractive, or easy of development by those who take it up. The Chief Surveyors and their staffs did all that was possible under the circumstances to maintain the supply, and there are few parts of the colony where it is not possible to freely make selections from the available Crown lands. Many of the blocks of land which were hurriedly thrown open last year so as to meet the urgent demands of selectors have since been either completely or partly surveyed, thereby greatly facilitating and assisting settlers in making their choice.