

NATIVE-LAND SURVEYS.

The general report upon surveys will be dealt with by the Surveyor-General in his annual report, but the question which presses heavily upon the head of the Department is the paramount one of being able to advise both yourself as Minister of Lands and the Hon. the Minister for Native Affairs how to provide the necessary number of surveyors for the urgent work of subdividing the areas dealt with by the Maori Land Boards, and of carrying out the orders of the Native Land Court, so that the dealing with lands may not be blocked. It is quite clear that in order to enable the Maori Boards to place their lands in the market at a reasonable rental the cost of survey must be very moderate. In addition to this it must be remembered that few of the Maori Boards have any accumulated funds from which to pay private surveyors, and, therefore, to carry out the policy of speedily opening Maori lands at the least possible cost, the Native Minister has to enlist the services of the survey staff of the Lands Department, both for the preliminary work of supplying schemes to the Maori Land Boards, and the subsequent carrying-out of the same, because in the cases of the services of Government surveyors the cost can be repaid by instalments, and spread over three or four years. The only drawback hitherto to this policy has been the lack of Government surveyors who could be spared from the vigorous prosecution of the Crown-lands surveys. However, it is hoped that within the next year six or more Government staff surveyors can be liberated from the immediate work of settlement surveys, and take up in lieu thereof the work of Native surveys.

PAYMENT OF "THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS" TO LOCAL BODIES.

The total amount distributed to counties and Road Boards amounted to £29,064, whilst £2,303 was expended by the Chief Engineer of the Roads Department. A return has just been compiled showing that no less than £16,271 which might have been paid over for expenditure by local bodies has not been claimed within the time provided for by law, and will now be placed at the disposal of the Roads Department for road upkeep and formation.

"TIMBER AND FLAX ROYALTIES ACT, 1905."

Under the provisions of the above Act, a sum of no less than £12,569 2s. 11d. has been passed to the Local Bodies' Deposit Account, the two largest contributors being Auckland, £7,571 5s. 4d., and Westland, £3,405 19s.; Nelson and Southland coming in third and fourth, with respectively £574 13s. 6d. and £558 6s. 2d.

LAND-FOR-SETTLEMENTS ESTATES.

The reports by the several Commissioners of Crown Lands give a detailed statement of the progress of the estates in their districts, and, generally speaking, the progress is very marked and the outlook hopeful; but heavy floods in the summer in the Auckland District, and an exceptionally dry season in parts of Canterbury and Otago, somewhat militated against the Crown lessees in those portions of New Zealand. Ten additional estates have been opened for selection during the past year, and a portion of an estate acquired previously, but not then opened, making a total area for selection of 189,633 acres, the number of new selectors for the year being 198, and the area selected 105,239 acres, yielding a rental of £22,513

TABLE G.—ESTATES OFFERED for SELECTION during the Year ending 31st March, 1907, under "The Land for Settlements Consolidation Act, 1900," and its Amendments.

Land District, and Name of Estate.	Area acquired.		Number of Selectors.	Area selected, 31st March, 1907.		Annual Rental payable on Lands leased.			Date of Opening.				
	A.	R. P.		A.	R. P.	£	s.	d.					
Auckland—													
Selwyn (northern portion) ..	*107,332	1 3	28	34,743	1 29	1,239	0	4	23rd April, 1906.				
Mangapouri	2,572	1 13							†	†	†	†	25th March, 1907.
Mangawhero	7,987	3 33											
Hawke's Bay—													
Mangatahi	12,290	3 16	22	12,272	0 34	4,245	3	4	5th February, 1907.				
Taranaki—													
Huinga	1,980	1 13	7	1,266	1 0	801	4	0	4th October, 1906.				
Wellington—													
Hikawera	2,615	2 33	5	2,605	0 0	663	13	10	5th June, 1906.				
Mahupuku	7,064	2 25	10	7,027	0 0	1,534	6	0	5th June, 1906.				
Dyer	16,657	0 0	35	16,439	1 10	4,328	19	0	25th June, 1906. 17th Sept., 1906.				
Otago—													
Steward	21,935	2 7	48	21,729	1 28	5,021	12	6	9th April, 1906.				
Plunket	6,136	0 0	18	6,126	0 9	2,165	6	6	5th February, 1907.				
Totara	3,161	0 22	25	3,031	0 23	2,513	15	0	25th March, 1907.				
Totals	189,633	3 5	198	105,239	3 13	22,513	0	4					

* Includes 57,166 acres set aside as a forest reserve.
of the financial year.

† Transactions as to disposal of land not completed before the close