

There has been an increase of 27 per cent. in the number of plans and 59 per cent. in the area of saleable lots dealt with during the past year compared with the returns of last year. These plans deal with the subdivision of land for residential lots outside the boundaries of cities, boroughs, and town districts.

The marked increase in the percentage of area taken for reserves is due to a large area of 129 acres comprised in a subdivision of the late Sir Francis Bell's estate in the Wellington district. Except for this area the aggregate percentage closely approximates that required by regulation—namely, 5 per cent.

The area of new roads represents a length of approximately 8 miles of new roading for subdivisional purposes.

Draughtsmen and Computers' Examinations.—At the annual examinations held in October, 1936, twenty-six candidates presented themselves for examination. The results were as follows:—

First-grade Draughtsmen—

E. T. Healy (Auckland).
E. N. Muir (Auckland).
C. R. Lyons (Christchurch).
G. L. Redward (Napier).

Second-grade Draughtsmen—

W. F. Cree (Head Office).
J. Leather (Auckland).
J. R. Johannson (Dunedin).
E. A. Williamson (Gisborne).

Second-grade Computers—

R. R. Harris (Auckland).
A. Rocard (Auckland).
C. R. Lyons (Christchurch).
N. J. Neal (Napier).
J. K. Woodley (Napier).

The candidates for these examinations show that a keen interest is taken in the routine and technical qualifications required by draughtsmen in the Department. The examinations have proved to be of considerable benefit to the individual officers and the Department. The high standard maintained, particularly in the draughting, is a credit to the candidates.

Standard of Length.—The following is a return of the number of chain lengths tested with the standard of length for the year ending 31st March, 1937: Number of bands, 50; number of chains, 289.

It is the practice of the Department to make a charge of 1s. per chain for testing. This charge was found to be necessary as there was a tendency for surveyors to obtain a departmental test for working chains that should by regulation be tested with standard bands in their possession.

Special Feature Maps.—For the year ending 31st March the following special feature maps have been completed or are in course of preparation by the Head Office Draughting Staff:—

Tararua Trampers' Map (completed)—

This map comprises an area in the Tararua Mountains and was drawn to supply the need for a compilation showing tracks in the area for the guidance of trampers.

North Auckland Publicity Map (completed)—

A special map drawn for the Publicity Department comprising the North Auckland district in a scale of 10 miles to an inch.

Aerial Strips (Sheets 1, 3, 4, and 5), (completed)—

It was hoped that the complete set of these maps, drawn specially for the guidance of aviators, would be completed this year, but were held up on account of further necessary amendments to the drawings. Sheets 2 and 6 are well in hand and will be completed early in the coming year.

International Map Series (SK. 59), (Completed)—

A third series map (SK. 59), printed by the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain, is now on sale. This map is on a scale of 1/1,000,000, is drawn in Head Office, but printed in Great Britain, as it forms part of a special series map of the world on the scale mentioned.

Wellington City Street Map, South Island Road Map, and Wellington District (special one-day tour map)—

These three maps are in the course of preparation and will be completed before the end of the year.

New Plymouth Street Map (completed)—

This map was prepared by the New Plymouth office and is now available for sale.

Invercargill Street Map—

The drawing of this map was completed during the year and will be available for sale early in the next financial year.

Ngaruawahia Military Map (completed)—

This map was drawn for the Defence Department by the Auckland Office, and comprises an area around the Ngaruawahia and Taupiri districts, specially grided for military purposes.

Aerial maps—

During the past year a large area in the Hawke's Bay district was covered by an aerial survey. The mapping of this survey is in charge of Mr. R. J. Crawford, Head Office, who is at present training junior officers in the use of the precise stereoscope. A further increase in staff will be necessary if this work is extended throughout the Dominion.

Stores.—Due to the depression and the resulting economy measures departmental technical stores were considerably depleted. Theodolites and survey equipment issued ten years ago require reconditioning and replacement. Orders for new equipment have been forwarded to instrument firms in Great Britain, but supplies are slow in coming to hand, no doubt due to the concentration of these firms on other manufactures.