

DISTRICT REPORTS.

The following are interesting extracts from reports on departmental operations in each district :—

Tokerau and Waikato-Maniapoto Districts.

The various departmental activities in these districts, which are controlled from the Auckland Office, have proceeded steadily and along the lines to which reference has been made in previous reports. The finances of the Waikato-Maniapoto District Maori Land Board continue to be buoyant, and the usual financial operations have taken place. With further money available for Native housing, further advances are being made, and repayments on the whole are very satisfactory.

Native Land Court.—The usual sittings of the Court have been held throughout the district. An event of importance has been the retirement during the year of Chief Judge MacCormick, who was also Judge of the Waikato-Maniapoto District and President of the Waikato-Maniapoto Board. The Court work in both districts has been, since the retirement of the Chief Judge, carried on by the Tokerau District Judge and by Commissioners recently appointed.

Chief Judge MacCormick has been associated for a long period with this office and at times with both districts, and his retirement, due to advancing years, has been greatly regretted by the Natives and by officers of the Department and the Court. At a large and representative gathering held in Auckland, leave was taken of the retiring Chief Judge when tribute was paid to his work and his personality.

Housing.—Progress during the year has been hampered to some extent by staffing difficulties consequent on the war, which has also impeded progress in housing and caused a shortage of certain materials and increased costs. In this sphere of activity progress is, however, steady. A commencement was made in improving the housing of agricultural workers at Pukekohe out of moneys made available by the Government from Consolidated Fund.

Maori Welfare.—The general welfare of the people so far as can be seen is moving steadily forward. No serious outbreaks of sickness have taken place. It is pleasing to record the ready response to the Empire's call by the young men from these districts and also the assistance given by the people to the various patriotic funds.

Consolidation.—In consolidation of lands a further move towards finality was made at Waimiha. This instalment of the Maniapoto Scheme now awaits approval by the Hon. the Minister, and final ordering will then follow. In the Tokerau district further instalments of the various schemes have also been sent forward for Ministerial consideration.

Waiariki District.

Native Land Court.—Twenty-four sittings of the Court were held in different centres in the district, and, in addition to the volume of business dealt with in open Court, various matters have been dealt with by the Judge in Chambers. Owing to the fact that few applications for rate-charging orders have been made there has been a marked decrease in the total number of cases notified for hearing. The number of orders made, however, compares with the figure for the previous year.

Alienations of Native land have declined. Applications for confirmation of transfers are few and sales are confirmed only under special circumstances. Dealings with timber tend to increase and have required special consideration. Several cases of illicit cutting of timber have resulted in prompt action being taken against the offenders.

Native Appellate Court.—One sitting of the Native Appellate Court was held at Rotorna, when one appeal was disposed of.

Consolidation.—Owing to the whole of the clerical section of the consolidation staff being absent on active service there has been no progress in consolidation of titles during the year.

Housing.—With the co-operation of the local office of the Public Works Department steady progress has been made during the year, Native labour, under the supervision of that Department, being utilized in all cases. The expenditure of Board beneficiaries' moneys for the improvement of their housing conditions is supervised by the Housing Branch, and a good deal of general welfare work in this respect has been carried out during the year. A full report with statistics on the housing work done in this district is contained in the report of the Board of Native Affairs.

Maori Land Board.—The financial activities of the Board continue to increase, and receipts, £51,403, and disbursements, £52,941, show increases of 4 per cent. and 19 per cent. respectively over the previous year. In all alienations that come before it for confirmation the Court directs that the proceeds, whether rent, royalty, or purchase-money, be paid to the Board for administration, and these funds are carefully controlled in the interests of the beneficiaries.

As at 31st March, 1941, the financial position of the Board was as follows :—

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Liability to Native beneficiaries	77,034
Cash balances	3,605
On deposit with Native Trustee	40,562
Invested in farming properties	72,107
Invested in mortgages	6,792
Invested in primary-production activities	4,728
Reserves	48,305

Tribal Meetings.—During the year two very important meetings were held in the Tunohopu Meeting-house, Ohinemutu. The first, held on the 1st July, 1940, was attended by delegates from the western end of the Waiariki district, and as a result of this meeting a committee was set up in each of the Maori centres for the purpose of increasing certain lines of primary production, regimenting the man and woman power, and commencing a programme for the repatriation of Maori soldiers. The second meeting was held on the 12th March, 1941, when progress was reported by representatives from every part of the Waiariki district. At the invitation of the delegates this latter meeting was