

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1942.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

The UNDER-SECRETARY, NATIVE DEPARTMENT, to the Hon. the MINISTER OF NATIVE AFFAIRS.

SIR,—

Native Department, Wellington, 15th June, 1942.

I have the honour to present herewith the annual report upon the activities of this Department, excluding Native land development and Native housing, which are dealt with in a separate report submitted by the Board of Native Affairs. The report covers the financial year ended 31st March, 1942.

I have, &c.,

O. N. CAMPBELL,

Under-Secretary and Native Trustee.

The Hon. H. G. R. Mason, Acting Minister of Native Affairs.

GENERAL REPORT.

Notwithstanding war conditions, the varied activities of Native administration have been well maintained during the year, and there has been full co-operation with other Government Departments concerned in promoting the general welfare of the Maori people.

The Board of Native Affairs, which exercises control over Native land development and assistance to Maori farmers, Native housing, promotion of employment amongst Maoris, farming activities, and investments of the Native Trustee and the Maori Land Boards, has held regular sittings throughout the year, and its report is published in parliamentary paper G.—10.

At the last main session of Parliament the usual "washing-up" Bill was introduced, and, as passed into law, contained eighteen clauses. Five of the clauses effected amendments or extensions of the general law relating to Natives and their land, the most important being that which permits of an adoption order for a Maori child being made in favour of a European wife or husband of the Native adopting parent. For the rest, the Act deals with matters and questions of only local import.

During the year five candidates sat for the Native Interpreters' Examination, but only one person succeeded in passing the papers, and his application for a license will be considered at the next meeting of the Interpreters' Board. As an inducement to officers of the Native Department to qualify as interpreters, the Board has agreed to waive the license fees of successful candidates.

NATIVE LAND COURTS.

A statistical return of the activities of the Native Land and Native Appellate Courts during the year is appended in Table A. The volume of business shows a slight decrease as compared with that of the previous year. During the period 107 sittings were gazetted and 10,723 cases were set down for hearing. The Court dealt with a wide range of applications affecting the title to Native lands, successions, adoptions, exchanges, administration of deceased estates, and made 240 partition orders affecting 23,330 acres of land.

Local authorities continue to use the machinery of the Courts for the purposes of obtaining charging orders to secure unpaid rates, but there has been a considerable reduction in the number of applications lodged during the year, which may be regarded as evidence of the growing realization of the Native owners and occupiers of their obligations in regard to local taxation. The Native Appellate Court held six sittings at Auckland, Wanganui, Gisborne, Hastings, and Wellington and dealt with twenty-eight cases. Since 1932 the granting of confirmation of alienations of Native land has been the function of the Court, which during the year under review confirmed 387 sales and leases affecting an area of 31,186 acres. Particulars of these alienations are as follows :—

	1940-41.		1941-42.	
	Number.	Acres.	Number.	Acres.
Sales.. .. .	109	6,734	129	6,049
Leases	332	31,855	258	25,137
Totals	441	38,589	387	31,186

NOTE.—A proportion of these alienations was in favour of Native alienees.

The estimated area of Native land remaining to Maoris is slightly in excess of 4,000,000 acres.

The consolidation of Native land titles with the object of grouping scattered interests in Native lands into compact economic holdings has been gradually undertaken in some districts for a number of years, and in the Gisborne and East Coast areas very satisfactory progress has been made, there