

During the year the Board has continued its support to the Maori war effort by financing and marketing primary produce. In addition, it has encouraged in every way the tendency of our Maori people to direct by tribal committees the various phases of the effort. In one district the Board may have to withdraw its financial assistance in respect of a considerable maize programme unless Maori co-operation becomes more conscientious and sincere. Otherwise, the Board acknowledges with gratitude the considerable support given by tribal organizations.

Primary Production.—The Maori people continue to show interest and energy in meeting calls for increased primary production. The area sown in maize this year has improved, while ventures in early-potato growing have proved helpful both to the demand for further production and to the finances of the growers. A substantial area of kumara has been planted this season, and the initial marketing of the crop has commenced. During the year about fifteen tons of Agar seaweed have been gathered by the Whanau-Apanui tribe: This was a really worthwhile effort, as the promptness of the response to a call made in April, 1942, enabled a processing factory to commence operations and make available supplies of this much-needed commodity. Up to date practically all the weed supplied has come from this district.

TAIRA WHITI DISTRICT.

Native Land Court.—A considerable volume of business was dealt with by the Court in its nineteen sittings held at the various centres of Maori population. An increase in the amount of fees collected is recorded, the total being £1,202, as against £1,005 for the corresponding previous period.

Applications numbering 3,299 were advertised for hearing, of which 2,339 were disposed and 4,092 orders made. In addition to the usual sittings of the Court, the Appellate Court sat and heard, amongst other matters, appeals affecting decisions on investigation of title to lands which were practically the last in this district held under the ancient customs and usages of the Maori people.

Consolidation.—Sittings of the special tribunal set up to deal with the titles to Marangairoa and Wharekahika, two of the largest blocks of Native land in the district, were held. The decisions are eagerly awaited by the numerous owners of the lands affected. This final determination of the ownership of these blocks will enable the continuance of work in connection with the remainder and major portion of the northern Waiapu consolidation scheme. This will ultimately facilitate the better settlement and more economic utilization of the lands included therein. During the year all titles in the southern portion of the Waiapu scheme were completed.

Receivership and Rates.—The judicious appointment of Receivers in respect of Native lands in the various counties has had beneficial results in that it has not only enabled the collection of current rates and arrears, but, in addition, has brought home to many Natives the necessity for shouldering their responsibilities and meeting their obligations regarding the payment of rates. This, combined with the continued co-operation between the office and local bodies and the effect of compromises and settlements of large amounts of rates secured by charging orders, is reflected in the record collection of rates achieved by more than one of the local bodies in the district. Rate-charging orders numbering 1,491 have been granted, securing to local bodies throughout the district rates uncollected during the previous two years.

Alienations.—Applications for confirmation of alienations remained practically on a par with the previous year. Where leases have expired, encouragement is given and assistance afforded the owners to enable them to resume the occupation of their land and farm it themselves. The effect of the Native land development policy is evidenced in this district by the marked desire of the Natives to secure tenancies of lands for farming purposes and also to avail themselves of the provisions of the Native Land Act, which enables the incorporation of owners of Native lands and the management and farming of same for their collective benefit.

Maori Welfare.—Aided by the office organization, assistance is freely given by the staff to the calls for the promotion of the general welfare of the Maori people, to the old, the sick, and the needy, and, with the co-operation of the Health, Education, Social Security, and other Departments, much is being accomplished in this direction, but greater effort is required to combat the evils which war brings in its wake.

Maori Land Board.—Particulars of the Board's financial transactions and its investments to the 31st March, 1943, are shown hereunder:—

	£
Total receipts (including Native Trust stations)	124,298
Total expenditure (including Native Trust)	126,875
Government securities—	
Ordinary	27,923
War loan	40,000
Advances on mortgages, loans, and overdrafts	78,136
On deposit with Native Trustee	4,468
Cash balances	7,660
Reserves	57,246
Liability to Native beneficiaries	101,457

A further £6,000 has been invested by the Board in the Liberty Loan during the year. Donations have been made out of Board funds to help children's camps and provide comforts for Maori soldiers. New activities include the control of additional Native Trust stations.

AOTEA DISTRICT.

Native Land Court.—The Court held sittings during the year, substantially adhering to the venue of former years. Notwithstanding war conditions, the volume of work was well maintained. The Court continues to enjoy the confidence and respect of the Natives, and, apart from dealing with applications advertised in the *panuis*, much of its time is devoted to discussions with the Natives on matters pertaining to their welfare.