

of the Government, presented Mr. Hamuera Ngarimu with the Victoria Cross awarded to his son, 2nd Lieutenant Moana Nui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu, of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force. This is the first time that a Victoria Cross has been awarded to a member of the Maori race. Decorations awarded to other members of the Maori Battalion were also presented at this investiture.

His Excellency the Governor-General also attended the picturesque annual Maori Canoe Regatta held on the 25th March, 1944, at Ngauawahia, on the historic Waikato River—an occasion which was an example of the blending of the ancient traditional ceremony with the very different modern attractions of side-shows provided along the river-bank.

War Service

Opportunity is taken to record that the voluntary enlistments of our Maori men are being maintained in sufficient numbers to keep the Maori Battalion at full strength, notwithstanding the heavy wastage which must necessarily occur in a fighting Force of such vigour and outstanding courage. The page written in the history of war by these young Maori men leads to the hope that on their return to New Zealand they will seek their full share and very useful place in the economic structure of the country. They will be helped on demobilization to attain economic independence—they must therefore be afforded opportunity for advancement in comfort and social security along with their pakeha brothers of the war.

DISTRICT REPORTS

Tokerau and Waikato-Maniapoto Districts (Auckland)

The Auckland office controls the activities of both of these districts, the Waikato-Maniapoto one extending as far south as Taumarunui, and Tokerau embracing the whole of the North Auckland Peninsula.

The manifold operations of the Courts and Boards have been well maintained.

Native Land Courts.—The twenty-six gazetted sittings of the Courts held in the various centres were well attended. The volume of business has shown an increase as compared with previous years; many *ex-parte* matters have also been dealt with that are not reflected in the statistical table appended. During the year Judge E. M. Beechey took over both districts as Judge of the Courts and President of both the Boards consequent upon the retirement of Judge F. O. V. Acheson from those positions in the Tokerau District.

Consolidation.—Satisfactory progress is being made in the Tokerau District in the straightening-out of the boundaries of many holdings for use as farms, house-sites, and cultivation areas. Access and roading problems are also receiving attention, and with the co-operation of the staff surveyor and local bodies much good work is being accomplished.

Maori Land Boards.—The demand for timber has resulted in alienation of timber-trees in localities which hitherto were considered uneconomical owing to difficulties of access and the suchlike. The demand for Native township sections has been good and lessees have always elected to renew where original leases have expired. The Tokerau Board having obtained a decision from the Court of Appeal, the long-outstanding question of the leases of the Otakinini and Te Karae Blocks is now receiving attention.

Waiariki District (Rotorua)

Native Land Court.—During the year there were nineteen gazetted sittings of the Court. The volume of work has been maintained and the usual wide variety of cases came before the Bench. In addition to that, much of the time of the Court is devoted to matters pertaining to the welfare of the Maori people. At the one sitting of the Appellate Court one appeal was referred back to the lower Court for rehearing and three small holdings were declared to be European land.

The judicious appointment of Receivers in respect of Native lands in the Whakatane County has had beneficial results in that it has not only enabled the collection of current rates and arrears, but has brought home to many Natives the necessity for shouldering their responsibilities as regards payments of rates. The Court gives every consideration and assistance to the County Councils, who in turn endeavour to work in with the Court and the many Maori landholders.

Consolidation.—A large number of succession orders made by Consolidation Officers at past dates has been confirmed in open Court. The routine work of bringing data lists up to date has been carried out during the year.

Maori Land Board.—The Board's normal activities have been maintained, including sponsoring and assisting of primary production amongst the Maori people wherever possible. Maize has been grown to a lesser degree than heretofore, on account of lack of fertilizer. Potatoes, pumpkins, onions, and kumara have been grown, the latter on a large scale.

The Internal Marketing Department was guaranteed 1,000 tons of kumara, and despite heavy floods with consequent loss to the growers in the Whakatane area the target