

expenditure, as far as possible, in the acquisition of substituted assets in some form or another, such as the purchase of other property, improving housing-conditions, or purchase of furniture or live-stock and farm chattels.

Maori Land Board.—The functions of the Board with regard to the administration of vested lands were fully maintained during the year, more especially in relation to renewals of leases and the collection and disbursement of rents accruing from leases of vested lands. In addition, the Board is also the agent of the Native Trustee for the purpose of collecting and distributing rents accruing from lands vested in the Native Trustee under the provisions of the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act. A long-felt want has been supplied by a recent enactment which gives the Board the right to investigate breaches of the covenants of any lease and, if necessary, to sue for and recover damages. One or two cases of this nature came up for review during the year. These cases, and a general policy of inspecting lands subject to lease in which the Board is interested as lessor, agent, or mortgagee, are resulting in a more general compliance with the terms of leases to which the lands are subject.

The Board's financial activities have shown an upward trend, as is disclosed by the increase in amounts received and payments effected. Our endeavours to provide a prompt and complete disbursement of all available amounts has been continued, and amounts held under protective sections of the Native Land Act, such as section 281, have been freely released in all cases where such release has provided substitutive assets of an income-providing nature or for the general permanent advantage of the Maori concerned.

Funds held in dormant accounts and other amounts accumulating for specific and varied purposes have been utilized in support of the war effort to the extent that during the year an amount of over £17,000 was invested, bringing the total investment in war loans up to nearly £49,000, which amount includes £15,500 invested on account of specific beneficiaries. The accumulative effect of small savings has not been overlooked, and our efforts have resulted in many national savings accounts being opened by Natives entitled to small annual payments.

Ikaroa (Wellington) and South Island Districts

Native Land Courts. Thirty-two sittings of the Court were held at centres extending from Hastings to Invercargill, thereby imposing a strain on Judge A. A. Whitehead and his staff in keeping to the itinerary arranged for the Court. There was a slight decrease in the routine business handled in the two districts compared with the previous year, but generally the volume of work was at the usual level.

As well as the usual variety of cases, the hearing of compensation claims for land taken for housing purposes has occupied much of the time of the Court. One of these claims was in respect of the land known as Hutt Section 19, situated at Waiwhetu, for which the Maoris were awarded over £50,000.

Maori Land Boards. The number of alienations submitted to the Court for confirmation has been maintained.

During the year fifteen applications for extension of term of timber-cutting grants under section 18 of the Native Purposes Act, 1943, were received. The legislation has afforded a means of granting relief to a number of timber firms who, as a result of war conditions, have been unable to cut timber within the period allowed under their contracts.

TABLE A. — SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL POSITION OF NATIVE TRUSTEE AND DISTRICT MAORI LAND BOARDS AS AT 31st MARCH, 1944

	Tokerau.	Waikato- Mauapoto.	Wairariki.	Tairā- whiti.	Aotea.	Ikaroa.	South Island.	Sub-total.	Native Trustee.	Grand Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£ ..	£	£	£
Total receipts ..	27,385	42,877	62,541	94,363	150,259	135,256	20,929	533,610	395,959	929,569
Total payments ..	28,165	42,069	66,046	80,848	151,197	133,869	18,906	521,100	376,093	897,193
Cash balances (including Special Housing Fund)	4,105	3,800	12,187	1,785	2,016	381	2,769	27,043	20,744	47,787
Investments— On deposit with Native Trustee	189	35,846	45,348	23,618	57,181	73,919	13,395	249,496	..	249,496
Government securities	23,865	16,701	30,025	73,528	52,054	11,625	5,600	213,398	6,830	220,228
Mortgages ..	19,455	39,078	6,944	56,920	28,827	37,099	5,749	194,072	386,905	580,977
Farming properties and primary pro- duction	..	11,083	73,974	9,922	7,117	..	..	102,096	141,901	243,997
Liability to Native beneficiaries	46,632	79,687	98,394	104,981	131,383	117,231	25,059	603,367	203,385	806,752
Reserves— Assurance and Reserve Fund	277	19,079	2,329	4,648	47,652	5,337	1,755	81,077	117,845	198,922
Special ..	..	..	56,934	57,648	23,175	8,810	1,028	147,595	2,476	150,071