

1944
NEW ZEALAND

NATIVE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNDER-SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1944

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave

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

Native Department, Wellington, 31st July, 1944.

SIR,—

I have the honour to present herewith the annual report upon the activities of the 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, 1944.

I have, &c.,
G. P. SHEPHERD,
Under-Secretary and Native Trustee.

The Hon. the Minister of Native Affairs.

GENERAL

To appreciate the specialized nature of Native administration in New Zealand and the manifold responsibilities arising out of it which to-day devolve upon the State, it is necessary to look back to their origin in 1840 when the compact known as the Treaty of Waitangi was entered into by the representatives of the Sovereign of Great Britain and a large number of the Maori chiefs. By that treaty, which has been described as the "Magna Carta of the Maoris," rights and powers of sovereignty were ceded to the British Crown without reservation, while the chiefs were promised the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands, &c., so long as they desired to retain the same in their possession.

A survey to-day of the relations between pakeha and Maori would emphasize the latter's growing sense of responsibility and their desire to shoulder the burdens and share the privileges of the country's affairs. Indeed, the Maori has progressed to that point where he looks at the future with a full realization of the share which he must take in the growth of the Dominion's prosperity. The keynote of Native administration is the stimulation of the Maori mind so as to encourage him to do things for himself so that he may become a self-supporting member of the community, alike a credit to his race and to New Zealand. The early estimation of the Maori as a liability has gradually been modified until to-day he is regarded as an asset of value.

The continuation of the story of the growth and the sociological import of Native-land development and settlement and the provision of houses, as well as the new problem of rehabilitation of discharged Maori servicemen, is recorded in another parliamentary paper, G.-10, in a statement by the Native Minister. The report of the Maori Purposes Fund Board, having as its object the promotion of the health, education, and social and economic welfare of the Maoris and the preservation of Maori arts, crafts, literature, and language, is in parliamentary paper G.-11.

Generally, however, the Government's policy in relation to the Maori people embraces the promotion of the welfare, self-sufficiency, happiness, and prosperity of the whole race; its advancement ethically, socially, and educationally; the improvement in the health of its members both individually and as a race; its vocational and industrial training; its economic establishment; and its fullest absorption into the citizenship of New Zealand on an equality in all respects with the pakeha. The above-mentioned humanitarian activities, with the exception of the technical administration of health and education, which are undertaken by the relative State Departments, are given effect to through the machinery of the Native Department.

A phase of the Department's activities referred to in parliamentary paper G.—10 which is worthy of some further mention in this report, impinging as it does on the welfare of a large section of the Maori people, is that of the efforts being made to encourage and establish commercial fruit and flower growing, vegetable-production, and the intensive cultivation of land for the production of crops yielding returns of high value for the small area of land used. The constant aim of the Department is to find the means of absorbing the increasing Maori population into industry in congenial surroundings and in conditions suitable to their way of life. The utilization of their land in small holdings appears well calculated to absorb the greatest number of Maoris in industries promising an economic return which does not call for the movement of the Maori population from rural to urban areas.

The scope of the general administration of the many aspects of Native affairs during the year under review has been well maintained, and, indeed, the Department has extended its sphere of operations in meeting some of the social and moral problems which have been accentuated under war conditions. Useful liaison work has been effected with the particular Government Departments and organizations concerned in promoting the general welfare of the Maori people. It is hoped that this co-operation may be extended to the full in the participation by the Maori race in general and the Native administration in particular in the future development and expansion which will follow the restoration of peace. The Department should secure useful liaison with and be enabled to contribute to special aspects of post-war planning through its representation on the Personnel and the Agriculture Committees of the newly established Organization for National Development.

The Australian - New Zealand Agreement

It is significant and worthy of emphasis herein that four important clauses of the forty-one embodied in the Australian - New Zealand Agreement made on 21st January, 1944, relate to the welfare and social, economic, and political development of Native peoples of the Pacific, through application of the doctrine of "trusteeship." To facilitate collaboration and secure a common policy in regard to health services, communications, and matters of Native education, anthropological investigation, production, and material development generally, the promotion of a South Seas Regional Commission is envisaged, on which body New Zealand, with its experience under an enlightened policy of Native administration, could contribute much that would be invaluable to the investigations and deliberations of that body.

Population

The Maori population has again increased, from 95,800 in December, 1942, to 98,300 a year later; while the latest estimate at 31st March, 1944, was 98,860, representing a 148-per-cent. increase over the three or four decades since 1896, when the census was 39,854. Thus, including the Maoris serving overseas with the Armed Forces, the number of Maoris is just over 100,000, or 6 per cent. of New Zealand's population. To-day a problem facing statesmen and administrators, as far as the Maori is concerned, is the provision not for a declining race, but for a virile and rapidly increasing race.

Staff

At 31st March, 1944, the personnel of the Department, including 5 Judges of the Native Land Court, numbered 568 officers, comprising office staff (244 permanent and 212 temporary) and field staff (18 permanent and 89 temporary). Included in these figures are 167 men in the Armed Forces either overseas or in New Zealand, and their replacement by 82 wartime assistants (principally female clerks). Nine officers were seconded for duty with other Departments for the duration of the war. In addition, the Department has on its pay-roll some 130 men (chiefly Maoris) who are employed on a weekly-wage basis as stockmen, shepherds, truck-drivers, and general farm hands, but it should be mentioned that the bulk of the labour on the land-development and housing operations is secured by engaging Maoris on co-operative contracts. Approximately 25 per cent. of the departmental personnel (excluding farm employees)—i.e., 140—are members of the Maori race.

To the relatives and close friends of the twelve members of the staff who were reported as killed on military duties the Government and fellow-officers of the Department extend their heart-felt sympathy, as also do they sincerely hope that others of the staff reported missing are safe, and that the wounded will speedily recover.

Retirements.—There were two retirements on superannuation during the year: Mr. Owen N. Campbell, Under-Secretary and Native Trustee, retired on 29th February after forty-three years' service. Serving first in the Lands and Survey Department, he held successively the positions of Chief Land Drainage Engineer, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Chief Surveyor, Commissioner of Small Farms, and Deputy Under-Secretary; then in May, 1935, he was appointed Permanent Head of the Native Department. Pervading the eulogistic tributes paid to him at a large representative farewell gathering was the spirit of appreciation for his record of accomplishment and personal service. On 31st December, 1943, Judge F. O. V. Acheson retired after completing forty years' service, some twenty-four years of which was spent on the Native Land Court Bench. From the position of Native Land Purchase Officer, he was elevated to the Bench in 1919, being first stationed in the Aotea District with headquarters at Wanganui, and later transferring to the Tokerau District in 1924, where he was also President of the Tokerau District Maori Land Board until his retirement.

New Appointment.—Chief Judge George Patrick Shepherd, the new Under-Secretary and Native Trustee, first joined the Justice Department in 1906. In 1916 he undertook work on the Native affairs side of the combined Justice-Native Departments, and in 1919, when the Departments were again separated, he transferred to the latter Department. He was promoted to Chief Clerk in 1922, admitted as a solicitor in 1926, and also appointed Research Officer in 1938, later in which year he was elevated to the Native Land Court Bench as Judge of the Ikaroa and South Island Native Land Court Districts. He became Deputy Chief Judge in 1940 on the retirement of Chief Judge C. E. MacCormick, and in February, 1941, was appointed Chief Judge of the Native Land Court.

Legislation

The Native Purposes Act passed on the 26th August, 1943, contained nineteen clauses, eight of which touched the general laws dealing with the Maori people and Native land. Probably the most important of these were two clauses which gave power to the Native Land Court to declare trusts in regard to Maori-owned land and Crown land reserved for the Maori people. The large number of owners which is frequently met with in Native land makes the administration of the land difficult. The legislation enables the Court, with the consent of the majority in value of the owners, to declare trusts for the common use of the owners for any purpose and to appoint trustees, who may farm or reclaim the land or do anything else which the Court permits them to do. Another power which will become more and more useful is that enabling the Court to appoint successors to the interests of Europeans in Native land. This will do away with the necessity of having to bring a title on to the Land Transfer Register simply for the purpose of effecting transmission of the interest of a deceased owner who is less than a half-caste Maori. Other amendments extend the powers of the Maori Land Boards in acting for the Natives in the enforcement of the covenants of leases of Native land, make more certain the offences attaching to unauthorized cutting of timber on Native land, and permit land taken for public works and no longer required for those purposes to be re-vested in the former owners by the Native Land Court. In addition, there were the usual "washing-up" clauses.

Native Land Courts

A statistical return of the activities of the Native Land and Appellate Courts during the year is appended in Table B, while details of the individual Courts are given under the district reports.

Native Appellate Court

Sittings of the Native Appellate Court were held during the year at Auckland, Rotorua, Wanganui, Gisborne, and Wellington. The sitting upon which most interest centred was that which commenced in Wellington towards the end of March. At this the appeals by the Crown against decisions given by the Native Land Court in respect of the ownership of Lake Waikaremoana and the Wanganui River came on to be heard by the Chief Judge and the five Judges of the Native Land Court. In the case of the Waikaremoana Lake a final decision of the Native Land Court awarding the lake to certain specified Maoris was under appeal. In the case of the Wanganui River only a preliminary determination by the Court that the bed of the river was customary land at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi was called in question. The proceedings were still in progress at the end of the year under review.

Native Trustee

The Native Trust Office has continued to assist in respect of the estates of Maoris who have had their lives taken in the present war. The balances of pay, &c., are collected and the necessary papers are lodged with the respective Native Land Courts, thus facilitating the receipt of the moneys by the beneficiaries. No charge is made for these services. Accounts to the extent of 384 have been handled to 31st March, 1944, the balances in the great majority of cases having been paid to those entitled. Details of the Native Trustee's investments and financial operations are given in Table A appended.

Maori Land Boards

The administration of some 660,000 acres of vested lands and the collection and distribution of rents, royalties, and purchase-money from these lands and from freehold areas which have been alienated have been fully sustained. Supplementing these normal operations, which are summarized in Table A appended, is the sponsoring and financing of efforts to increase primary production.

Welfare

The Government has decided to form a special Welfare Branch of the Native Department with carefully selected Maori officers attached to each District Office. Not only should this step ensure that full advantage of the various benefits and services available to the Maoris from the State is obtained—but also provide the means of better liaison or direct contact with the other State Departments whose activities embrace matters of Maori welfare—namely, Health, Education, Social Security, Man-power, Internal Affairs, and Rehabilitation. It will be necessary for the Welfare staff to act as Placement Officers

in furthering the material well-being of the Maori people in their absorption into the industry of the country. It should also be a connecting link between the Native Department and those voluntary organizations which are concerned with the welfare of the Maori—particularly Churches of all creeds, local bodies, Maori associations, and so on. Welfare Officers will require to investigate cases of distress and to explore avenues for improving the lot of individuals or families; to co-operate with Vocational Guidance Officers in advising Maori parents and assisting boys and girls leaving school in choosing careers; to act as the Department's representative on the District Maori Councils; and, generally, to seek means of improving social conditions and the implementation of the policy of the Government in measures taken for the improvement of the conditions of the Maori people.

Hostels.—The drift into cities is a national problem affecting Maori and pakeha alike. It is primarily an economic one, is more or less world-wide, and requires a more equitable distribution of the avenues of employment as between country and town. From places far removed from the towns many Maoris have come, over the last few years, to the main centres as students or to take part in the nation's wartime industries and attracted by high wages and the bewildering excitement of city life. Some are well steeped in European culture, while others come with their simple Native philosophy. In Auckland in particular examinations disclosed that many girls were in urgent need of accommodation less inimical to their well-being.

The Government and the organizations interested in the welfare of the Maori are fully alive to this very real problem, which has been made the more urgent by the exigencies of war. As a tangible contribution towards its solution, the Native Department is undertaking as an experiment the encouragement of and financial assistance to voluntary organizations for the express purpose of providing better accommodation in the form of hostels under a general supervision. In the management of the hostels, emphasis is laid on the "community element" in the lives of the girls, whose traditional mode of life contains that feature, and they are enabled to find a real home divorced from the impersonal atmosphere of a boardinghouse.

The assisted organizations which are conducting the hostels are the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the United Maori Mission Society (sponsored by a group of Christian businessmen), and the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. Other institutions are interested in the matter.

Proposals are in train for the establishment of a hostel in Wellington for Maori girls.

In addition to these accommodation hostels for Maori girls, there are hostels and rest-rooms provided by or through the Department for visiting Maoris at Auckland, Pukekohe, Tuakau, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Nelson, Bluff, and Hamilton.

Flood Relief.—To provide relief in the form of immediate food or clothing supplies and the temporary housing accommodation for Maoris who suffered loss through the flood at Te Whaiti, in the Rotorua district, a grant was authorized from Civil List, Native Purposes.

Maori Trust Boards.—The Department also supervises in a general way the administration of the three Maori Trust Boards created by statute; these bodies continue to function in disbursing the annual Government grants in the amelioration of the conditions of life and in promoting the general welfare and benefit of the members of the associated tribes or of any section of those tribes, and in particular in encouraging the community spirit.

Voluntary Organizations.—An essential and valuable contribution to the physical, social, industrial, moral, and spiritual welfare work is being undertaken by Maori societies and clubs, also by women's health leagues in various centres. The Government gratefully acknowledges these voluntary efforts, which fill the gaps a larger organization cannot always do, by weaving into the pattern of the national effort for the social and economic well-being of the Maori that necessary creative spirit having as its only moral justification the needs of the people.

Voluntary organizations should prove invaluable if they would adopt as part of their activities the training of their members in many of the crafts of the ancient Maori, such as the weaving of mats (whariki), cloaks (kahu), baskets (kete), the making of flax kilts (piupiu), and carvings (whakairo). This should have the effect of developing what might be termed a home industry which would contribute to the reviving of the ancient arts. Pre-eminent amongst such organizations is the Ngati-Poneke Maori Association, whose activities in and around the City of Wellington embrace five important centres of service of a high order—namely, the Maori Welfare Committee, the Maori Mission, the Patriotic Committee, the Reception Committee for Returned Servicemen, and the Young Maori Club. If any one activity can be singled out for special mention, it is perhaps that undertaken on behalf of all tribes of New Zealand in providing suitable receptions to the Maori servicemen returning from the war zones. Having carried out this function under adverse conditions through lack of a meeting-house in which to provide the true traditional setting to enhance such occasions it is pleasing to record that the Ngati-Poneke Maori Association, through the combined efforts of the Government, the Wellington Builders' Association, and kindred bodies, has been provided with a hall of its own on a central site.

Ceremonial Meetings

On the 6th October, 1943, a huge investiture ceremony was held at the Whakarua Park, Ruatoria, the attendance numbering many thousands. His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir Cyril Newall, accompanied by the Prime Minister and members

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 Ngauwawahia, 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

was reached. The Armed Forces provided a steady demand for primary produce, while now the dehydrating factories are taking a proportion of all crops.

The collection of the valuable seaweed agar, originally started in the Bay of Plenty area, was continued. A recent official report shows that between June, 1942, and April, 1944, some 53 tons of the seaweed, valued at £5,771, were collected by the Maori people in the Bay of Plenty. Despite previous concern as to the effect of the impact of seaweeding activities on Maori farms, present indications are that nowadays the gathering of the weed in this district has caused no distraction from dairying activities, but has resulted in the utilization of the proceeds from farms in the improvement and betterment of homes.

Tairāwhiti District (Gisborne)

Native Land Court.—The diversity of work which is called for continues unbounded and it is by no means confined solely to those matters for which a Court order is ultimately made. The Maori people are prone to bring their troubles and hardships to the Department for whatever advice and assistance is available, and it is apparent that the Court holds their confidence and good will. During the year there were twenty-two sittings of the Court in centres from Wairoa to Te Araroa and the volume of business showed a slight increase upon that of the previous twelve months. For the most part the increase is accounted for by the regrettably large number of probate and personalty orders necessary to wind up the estates of so many deceased soldiers who have paid the supreme sacrifice during the present war.

Three sittings of the Native Appellate Court were held in the district during the year to hear a total of nine appeals; six were dismissed, two referred back to the lower Court, and one adjourned.

Every facility and full co-operation is given local bodies to assist them in collecting rates owing on Native lands. The policy is reflected in the continued decline from 1,491 for the previous year to 784 this year in the number of charging orders applied for by certain local bodies, which, incidentally, report record collections of Maori rates. Some 45 receivership orders, previously granted by the Court for the purpose of enforcing charges for rates, were discharged, the receivers having fulfilled the purposes for which they were appointed; 22 new orders were issued during the year.

The number of alienations is practically on a par with previous years, and it is to be remarked that, while the bulk of the confirmations have been of leases, many of the alienees have been Maoris, thus showing a keen desire on their part to acquire and resume occupation of their ancestral lands, a desire undoubtedly heightened by the facilities made available for development by the Department.

Consolidation.—Progress is still being made in the Northern Waiapu Consolidation Scheme, the major portion of which is still to be completed.

Maori Land Board.—The Tairāwhiti Board responded to the call for more production, and advances totalling nearly £3,000 for cultivation of kumara, potato, and maize crops were made to the Maoris; the results were very satisfactory. Donations amounting to £135 were made during the past twelve months to help the Maori social and patriotic efforts, including a grant to the Te Moana Ngarimu V.C. Fund. Investments in Government securities are now £73,528, this figure being 44 per cent. of the Board's total investments. The balance consists mainly of advances on mortgages for Maori farming and housing propositions.

Aotea District (Wanganui)

Native Land Court.—There were fifteen sittings of the Court, which visited Hawera, New Plymouth, Taumarunui, and Tokaanu. The volume of business transacted during the period under review was well maintained, notwithstanding the difficulties arising from the war. Some forty-three orders, subject to the approval of the Board of Native Affairs, were made vesting in the Maoris approximately 42,000 acres of land owned by the Crown in the Tokaanu District. In return the Crown has been vested in tracts of Maori-owned land situated principally on the slopes of Tongariro, Pihanga, and Kakaramea. The exchanges, while preserving to the Crown what remains of the timber lands on these mountain slopes, will have the effect of making available to the Maoris of the district an additional area for development when labour and materials are available.

One sitting of the Native Appellate Court was held in the district, when three cases were heard.

There was a marked increase in the number of applications for confirmation of alienations. In considering these applications the Court maintains the practice of investigating each case exhaustively and refusing confirmation unless it can be established that the alienation is in the interests of the Maori owners. Consideration is also given by the Court during the course of these inquiries to the possibilities of the owners themselves, with the assistance that can readily be made available by the Department, utilizing the land in question, thereby becoming primary producers and economic units.

Applications for confirmation of sales of lands are not encouraged by the Court, as unless it can be established that a sale of land will not render vendors landless, and that the proceeds of a sale can be utilized in bettering their living conditions, the Court in general refuses to confirm. Where a sale of land is confirmed and the proceeds are substantial, the Court usually directs that such proceeds be paid to the Board for

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 production	..	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

TABLE B.—RETURN OF NATIVE LAND COURT BUSINESS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1944

	Totals.		Tokerau.	Waikato-Maniapoto	Waia-riki.	Taira-whiti.	Aotea.	Ikaroa.	South Island.
	1942-43	1943-44							
<i>Native Land Court</i>									
Number of sittings ..	103	110	13	13	19	22	15	18	10
Number of cases notified ..	12,170	14,143	1,906	1,678	2,564	3,130	1,549	2,721	595
Number of orders made ..	8,990	5,268	282	617	1,814	1,300	474	497	284
Number of cases dismissed ..	1,534	880	298	182	148	27	73	85	67
Number of cases adjourned <i>sine die</i>	6,395	8,041	1,326	879	648	1,803	1,002	2,139	244
Number of partitions made ..	291	431	151	22	127	92	33	4	2
Area affected (acres) ..	13,842	21,779	5,356	7,218	1,262	3,982	3,273	306	382
Number of investigations of title (including confirmations)	1	16	1	..	13	..	2	..	..
Area affected (acres) ..	23	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	..
Number of succession orders made	4,270	5,154	825	499	1,083	1,489	691	347	220
Number of other orders made	4,228	4,231	515	96	282	2,818	312	146	62
<i>Native Appellate Court</i>									
Number of sittings ..	6	9	2	..	1	3	1	2	..
Number of cases notified ..	16	27	3	..	6	9	3	6	..
Native Land Court decisions varied	..	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	..
Native Land Court decisions affirmed	1	5	..	..	..	..	..	5	..
Native Land Court decisions referred back to Native Land Court	2	6	2	..	1	2	1	..	..
Native Land Court decisions annulled	6	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..
Appeals dismissed or withdrawn	12	6	..	..	..	6	..	..	..
Appeals adjourned <i>sine die</i> ..	3	2	..	..	..	1	1	..	..
Applications under section 257/31 ordered	..	3	..	..	3	..	..	..	..
Applications under section 257/31 dismissed	1	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
Orders made under section 363	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Court and Board fees collected	4,700	4,892	470	638	752	1,112	891	722	307

TABLE C.—RETURN OF ALIENATIONS CONFIRMED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1944

Court District.				Leases.		Sales.		Mortgages.	
				No.	Area.	No.	Area.	No.	Area.
					Acres.		Acres.		Acres.
Tokerau	..	..	..	3	144	6	280	..	..
Waikato-Maniapoto	..	..	..	17	858	16	742	..	..
Waiariki	..	..	..	9	458	5	51	..	..
Tairawhiti	..	..	..	78	4,497	8	118	1	5,559
Aotea	..	..	..	76	4,886	23	3,714	..	..
Ikaroa	..	..	..	43	5,813	5	63	..	..
South Island	..	..	..	12	3,571	9	740	..	..
Totals	..	..	..	238	20,227	72	5,708	1	5,559

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given ; printing (634 copies), £15.