

Maori Welfare

The following is a summary of the operations of the Maori Welfare Officer at Paeroa from his appointment in September, 1945, to the 31st March, 1946 :—

Economic Surveys—

Te Moananui Flat, Paeroa, comprising 18 families and 103 individuals.

Tawatawa, Whangamata, comprising 9 families and 47 individuals.

General Welfare Work—

Inspection of houses and assisting with housing applications	..	26
Tribal meetings and meetings of assembled owners attended	..	6
Assisting applicants in Native Land Court matters	..	46
Adjustment of wages		1
General (interviews and advice)		77

In March, 1946, a lady Welfare Officer commenced duty in Auckland City, and the importance of her work in dealing with accommodation, employment problems, and delinquency has already become apparent.

The Welfare Officer stationed at Te Kuiti has carried out housing surveys and inspections at Te Kuiti, Puketepapa, Pukaki, and Waahi. Arrangements were also made for the distribution of surplus Army blankets, which were made available for sale to Maori families suffering from an acute shortage of bedding. Assistance was given to numerous families applying for housing advances, to applicants for social security benefits, and to Maoris seeking employment or adjustment of wages.

WAIARIKI (ROTORUA) DISTRICT

Native Land Court

Applications to the Court have shown a decided increase both in number and variety. There were twenty-one gazetted sittings at the five main centres of Rotorua, Tauranga, Whakatane, Opotiki, and Taupo, with adjournments to Te Kaha and Ruatoki. These adjournments were necessitated mainly by the large number of applications by the Board of Native Affairs for recommendations regarding the occupation of scheme lands in those districts.

During the absence of Judge Harvey in Rarotonga, where he was engaged for two months on special work, sittings of the Court were held by Chief Judge Morison, Judges Carr and Prichard, and Mr. Commissioner Thompson.

Consolidation

During the war years this important branch of the Department's activities has been delayed for lack of trained staff, but with the return from overseas service of an officer with some experience in consolidation, operations have now commenced on the Koutu Consolidation Scheme.

The Koutu Blocks lie just outside the boundary of the Borough of Rotorua, mainly between the railway-line and the lake. There is little European land in this area, and it is very favourably situated for the establishment of a heavily built up Maori residential area. The existing titles, however, are a patchwork of small and oddly shaped sections, and lack of road access has precluded the full use of the land.

The intention of the scheme is to divide the area into individual building-sites, provided with full road access laid out on the most modern lines by Mr. J. W. Mawson, Town Planning Officer of the Internal Affairs Department, and with provision for reserves. Considerable progress has been made, and houses are already being built under the Native Housing Act on some portions of the area upon which agreement regarding locations has been reached. As yet, some portions cannot be dealt with as there is no registered surveyor available to carry out the necessary surveys.