

During the year advances on mortgage to an amount of £3,150 were made to four Maoris for farming and other miscellaneous purposes. Grants for Maori purposes totalled £200.

Maori Welfare

The appointment of a Maori Welfare Officer during the year gives practical effect to a policy which has for long been advocated. His duties include, among others, the surveying of localities of the domestic and economic state of the Maori communities, collaboration with other Departments engaged in social work amongst the Maori people, general welfare work, supervision in certain cases of the application of social security benefits, and assisting in the rehabilitation of Maori servicemen and servicewomen.

The following matters have been dealt with since the appointment was made: housing surveys of the area contiguous to Wanganui have been made, and these disclose that a number of the Maori dwellings are in a condition ranging from merely fair to faulty. The surveys were carried out at Putiki, Turakina, Whangaeahu, Parewanui, and Matahiwi. Maori clubs and other voluntary Maori welfare organizations have been assisted and encouraged in the work they are doing. There has been close co-operation with District Nurses and Child Welfare Officers, and, where necessary, emphasis has been placed on the responsibilities of parents to their children. In several instances arrangements have been made for the welfare officer to handle social security benefits in conjunction with the District Nurse or other official advisers. The isolated cases of irregular school attendance have been investigated and advice given. It is considered that the keen demand and good pay for relatively unskilled labour has some bearing on the small number of Maori ex-servicemen seeking assistance under the various rehabilitation schemes, but two men have been established on farms of their own and several others placed in various jobs. Several men are training as carpenters.

IKAROA (WELLINGTON) AND SOUTH ISLAND DISTRICTS

Native Land Court

During the year there were twenty-one sittings of the Court in the Ikaroa District and twelve in the South Island. The number of applications dealt with was 3,456, and fees collected amounted to £1,053 17s., as compared with £852 for the previous year. A total of 106 alienations of various types were confirmed by the Court.

Consolidation

Towards the end of the year application was made to the Court to prepare a scheme of consolidation affecting valuable areas of farm land in the Horowhenua district. The projected scheme comprises nineteen blocks of a total area of 1,925 acres, and it is proposed to allocate compact areas to each family group to enable the owners to undertake farming activities themselves instead of leasing to European farmers as heretofore.

Maori Land Boards

During the year the two Boards invested a further sum of £10,000 in war-loan stock. The sum of £5,000 held on behalf of the owners of the Whakapuaka Block was paid out to the Committee of Management thereof to enable farming operations to be undertaken. The Boards have continued to administer on behalf of the Native Trustee the various Native reserves in Westland, Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, &c.

Maori Welfare

Welfare work in the Wellington area is being carried on by the Welfare staff at present attached to Head Office. Towards the end of the year a Maori Welfare Officer was established in Christchurch, thus giving the Department its first resident officer in the South Island.