

IKAROA AND SOUTH ISLAND NATIVE LAND COURT DISTRICTS

Considerable progress has been made in the housing of the Maori people during the last year, but some difficulty is still experienced in contacting applicants throughout the wide area covered by the two districts, although the appointment of additional field staff has helped greatly in this direction. The number of applications received is steadily increasing as the Maoris realize that the position is returning to a normal basis, and a heavier burden is thus placed on practically every section of the office staff as well as the field staff. Every effort is made to deal with applications promptly, but cases are often held up until the Native Land Court puts the land title in order or because of shortage of labour and materials.

Maori labour is utilized where possible, but as the men available are yet for the most only partially skilled the ultimate cost of the jobs is often increased because of the consequent higher labour cost. At the same time, it is realized that this policy benefits the Maoris as a whole by teaching them a worth-while trade. In this matter close contact is maintained with the Rehabilitation Department, and some ex-servicemen are being trained by the Department under the rehabilitation scheme.

An attempt is being made to carry out regular inspections of houses built by the Department so that the buildings do not fall into disrepair, and generally the position in this respect is well under control. There appears to be a growing sense of responsibility amongst those for whom houses are built and a realization that their homes must be looked after and well cared for.

In the South Island a Building Supervisor is now operating with one gang in the Nelson and Marlborough districts, and arrangements are in hand for establishing another gang in the Canterbury area, where there are several jobs ready to be commenced. There is a great deal of work to be done in this very scattered district, but matters are now on a sounder footing than previously. A number of applicants reside on the west coast, but it has been found necessary to arrange for private contractors to do the work in these cases.

PART V.—MAORI REHABILITATION FINANCE COMMITTEE

Two avenues are open to Maori ex-servicemen who wish to obtain rehabilitation assistance. They have the choice of proceeding through ordinary channels, as do pakehas, or they may use the especially created channels which are designed to meet more particularly the needs of the Maori ex-serviceman—although the extent of the assistance which may ultimately be granted is not affected by the means through which it has been obtained, as stress is laid upon the necessity for uniformity.

The particular facilities created for Maori applicants for rehabilitation aid co-opt the assistance of regional tribal executive committees who make suitable recommendations upon all applications, which are subsequently lodged with the Registrar of the Native Land Court in the applicant's home district.

The departmental Farm or Building Supervisor in the area is then called upon for a report on the application, which is forwarded to the Maori Rehabilitation Finance Committee, a body created with approval of Government on 26th November, 1943, to attend to the particular needs of Maori ex-servicemen. The decisions of the Committee are final, but expenditure of any public moneys involved is authorized only by the Board of Native Affairs, in which has been invested the control of all moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of advances to Maoris. The decisions of the Committee are implemented by the administrative machinery of the Native Department, which, in addition, carries out rehabilitation work under the provisions of the Native Land Amendment Act, 1936, and the Native Housing Act, 1935.