

Fitzroy in 1844 under which the Crown's exclusive right to purchase land from the Maoris was waived. These purchases were subject to investigations at the hands of Land Claim Commissioners, and where the purchases were found to be valid the Commissioners recommended that grants should be issued from the Crown to the purchasers. Because of statutory limitations, and for other reasons, not all the land that was bought from the Maoris was granted back to the purchasers. It is the residue from the purchases which remained in the Crown that is referred to as surplus. At the 31st March last the Commission had held two sittings, but had not, by reason of the large amount of preparatory work to be done by counsel, been able to complete the inquiry.

It is hoped that a thorough investigation of Maori claims and a settlement of those which are well founded will do much to promote even closer relations between Maori and pakeha.

Staff

The staff of the Department as at 31st March, 1947, including the 7 Judges of the Native Land Court, numbered 564, as compared with 586 at this time in 1946. The decline is accounted for by reason of numerous resignations during the year of permanent and temporary employees—principally ex-servicemen who have either taken up private employment or who have transferred to other Departments of State. Details are as follows, the corresponding figure for 1946 being shown in parentheses :—

Office staff :—

Permanent	247 (288)	} 420 (455)
Temporary	173 (167)	

Field staff :—

Permanent	30 (18)	} 144 (131)
Temporary	114 (113)	

564

The number of officers serving in the Armed Forces had declined from 51 to 8. At the end of the year there were 52 permanent and 82 temporary Maori officers in the Department, making a total of 134, or approximately 23·9 per cent., of the staff.

MAORI WELFARE

Organization

During the past year Maori welfare, as provided for under the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act, 1945, has progressed steadily. Every effort is being made to put into effect, as early as possible, the Government's policy to place in the hands of the Maori people a greater share in the administration of matters affecting their race.

Each of the seven Native Land Court districts has been subdivided into zones based on boundaries of counties, boroughs, and Town Districts, as, under such subdivision, statistics are more readily available, boundaries more easily fixed, and liaison with local bodies facilitated. Cognizance was also taken of the old Maori Council boundaries, but adjustments to all existing boundaries have been necessary to ensure a more even distribution of Maori population among the Welfare Officers. In all there are twenty-two zones, twenty-one being in the North Island, the South Island forming the one zone. These zones have been further subdivided into tribal districts, which in turn have been subdivided into Tribal Committee areas. Tribal Executives represent the tribal districts, and Tribal Committees are formed for the Tribal Committee areas. The number of Welfare Officers considered sufficient to carry into effect the provisions of the Act is 23 male and 13 female—in all, 36—so it will be seen that every zone is covered by a male Welfare Officer, whilst the 13 lady Welfare Officers are so distributed that a complete coverage of New Zealand is assured.