

Administration

The administration and control is from the Minister of Maori Affairs through the Under-Secretary as Permanent Head of the Department to the Controller, Maori Social and Economic Advancement, and from the Controller to the Welfare Officers in the field, and so on through the Tribal Executives and Tribal Committees to the Maori individual. By the reverse procedure are matters brought to the notice of the Minister of Maori Affairs. The Controller was appointed in September, 1946, and shortly afterwards applications for Welfare Officers were called. The majority of these officers have now been appointed. The Maori people themselves have shown their interest in the Act by the ready formation of Tribal Committees and Tribal Executives and also by the numerous inquiries and requests addressed to the Controller. However, one or two districts viewed the Act with a certain amount of disinterest, but these have now signified their desire to function under the Act. So far 4 tribal districts and 95 Tribal Committee areas have been gazetted. It was hoped that more progress would have been made in this respect, but the speed of gazetting is, of necessity, governed by the speed with which the descriptions of tribal district and Tribal Committee area boundaries can be prepared.

Welfare Officers

Although only 7 Welfare Officers have been functioning during the year under review, they have dealt with over 7,500 cases, covering many aspects of welfare work. The main types of work are listed as follows:—

General welfare work and advice	..	..	..	3,702
Housing conditions investigated	..	..	..	1,234
Rehabilitation matters	..	..	..	491
Social security matters	..	..	..	429
Placements in employment	..	..	..	287

From the reports submitted it can be seen that the welfare work, as affecting city and country areas, varies greatly. In the cities the Welfare Officers are concerned more, at this stage, with delinquents, placement in employment, accommodation, arranging transport, and meeting train or other services. The lady Welfare Officers also visit hospitals, hostels, and industrial concerns, thus ensuring close contact with the people and ascertaining their requirements as well as attending to their well-being and comfort. In the country districts the Welfare Officers are occupied more at present with matters relating to rehabilitation, employment, and social security as well as organizing tribal districts and Tribal Committee areas. At all times close liaison is kept with other Government Departments, particularly the National Employment, Social Security, and Justice Departments, and the Child Welfare Branch of the Education Department.

Maori Hostels

The serious difficulties experienced by young Maoris in obtaining suitable accommodation while working or studying in Auckland have been considerably reduced by the five Maori hostels which have been established with Government assistance during the last six years. Towards the close of the financial year negotiations were in train for the purchase of a large guest-house to be used as a residential club for Maori girls employed in the City of Wellington. The purchase is being undertaken by the Native Trustee under the powers conferred upon him by section 7 of the Native Purposes Act, 1946.

NATIVE TRUSTEE

The statutory functions of the Native Trustee were extended by section 7 of the Native Purposes Act, 1946, which provides that the sum of £20,000 be transferred from the Assurance and Reserve Fund for the purpose of establishing and administering Maori hostels.