

This will relieve the Ohinemutu Village and take the overflow of population from that already congested area. With additional staff every endeavour will be made to complete this scheme before the New Year.

This scheme is a good example of the regional planning functions of the Court being directed towards rearranging centuries-old Maori titles, which were the result of old-time economies, in keeping with modern requirements.

Other schemes to be next considered are Ngati-Manawa and Matapihi Peninsula.

TAIRAWHITI DISTRICT (GISBORNE)

Native Land Court

Although there were only twenty sittings of the Native Land Court during the year ended 31st March, 1947, compared with twenty-eight during the previous year, there was an increase in the number of cases notified for hearing. In particular, there was an increase in the number of partition orders made, a great proportion of which were for the purpose of providing sites for the erection of houses for applicants under the Maori housing and rehabilitation schemes. Other orders made also showed an increase on the previous year, and there was a corresponding increase in fees collected.

A case of outstanding importance was dealt with by a special sitting of the Native Appellate Court at Wairoa. That Court heard a number of appeals from the decision of the Native Land Court which in 1918 had investigated the title to, and determined the relative interests of, the persons found to be entitled to the bed of Lake Waikaremoana. The reason for the long lapse of time was the delay in the hearing of the Crown appeal. This appeal was heard by the Full Court, comprising the Chief Judge and five Judges of the Native Land Court, which held the bed of the lake to be Maori customary land.

Some 164 applications for war-service gratuities have been investigated by the Court and reported for the information of the Hon. Minister of Defence. Many of the gratuities granted have already been used to good purpose by way of deposit on housing loans, for repairs and renovations to existing dwellings, the purchase of furniture, and education of minor beneficiaries and their maintenance.

Alienations

The increased activities of the Maori Land Board experienced in 1945 have been continued during the current year. The amount of fees collected in respect of confirmations of alienations shows a considerable increase over any return for very many years. The fact that land is eagerly sought by both Maori and pakeka is revealed by the record number of 88 applications under Part XVIII of the Native Land Act, 1931, for meetings of assembled owners.

During the year, leases in the Waipiro Maori Township expired. A meeting held at the township to ascertain the wishes of those owners affected by those leases having no right of renewal revealed that they were opposed to fresh terms being granted. They desired the Court to revert the sections in the owner or owners found to be entitled.

During the year 10 applications for Board loans were received, and 6, totalling £15,900, have been approved.

The purchase by the Department of the land and buildings used as the store and office at Te Ararua has been completed.

Maori Welfare

The activities of the Maori Welfare Branch in this district have proved of great value to the Department and to Maori and pakeha alike. Many problems and difficulties affecting the welfare of the Maori race have been met, particularly those relating to housing conditions, health, sanitation, education, and the placement of boys and girls in suitable employment and their accommodation in suitable homes. More can be done in this direction when a hostel is provided. This is a matter which is now being investigated by the various Maori communities in and around Gisborne.