

Until these centres are in operation the trade-training proposals for Maori youths cannot be fully implemented.

Plan types for Maori houses have been extended and existing plans subjected to revision in order to improve the standard of accommodation and appointments and to meet varying personal and local requirements.

The provision of adequate housing for applicants from the large-family group still remains a difficult problem owing to the limited financial circumstances of such applicants and their inability to meet the costs of large-family homes.

Construction standards have been dictated by the availability of materials, but here again the use of alternatives is restricted by the cost factor in relation to available finances and by the lack of specialist tradesmen for undertaking other than standard forms of construction. In the Rotorua, Hawke's Bay, and Taranaki districts a number of houses have been constructed with plaster exteriors, while in Hawke's Bay some houses have been provided with bituminous fabric roofs.

Maintenance, repair, and improvement of existing securities has not yet been undertaken on a large-scale basis owing to the urgency of new construction work. Plans for the regular review of all properties for maintenance have been prepared, but limitations of staff and transport facilities has not permitted the scheme to be carried out on the scale desired.

Consideration of applications for housing loans has been expedited by the Board of Native Affairs delegating to the Under-Secretary the power to give provisional approval of advances within the Board's financial authority.

The provision of rental houses for Maoris employed in industrial and town areas is a matter receiving serious consideration by the Government, and the possibility of joint action by the Housing Construction and Native Departments is being investigated.

A group housing scheme to be established on a Native reserve at Hiruharama, under the control of trustees, is being arranged in collaboration with the Town-planning Division of the Ministry of Works. This provides a new departure from previous forms of housing assistance, and its development will be watched with interest as a guide for future schemes of a similar nature that might arise.

Although special items were taken on last year's estimates for tools-of-trade advances and experiments in building construction and materials, it has not been possible to take advantage of either item owing to the pressure of duties in other directions which have absorbed the full time and attention of the present staff and works facilities. With the establishment of the works centres at Rotorua and Gisborne, it will be possible to give more attention to matters of research. The financial provisions made for assisting Maori youths to purchase tools of trade has not been taken advantage of, as in the majority of cases the parents have themselves equipped these boys with their requirements.

While the year's operations still fall short of the rate of progress necessary to overtake the heavy programme of Maori housing, there has been a steady development of the field organization which will permit an expansion of activities as conditions relating to materials, man-power, and transport improve.

Additional activities to be undertaken by the building organization in the coming year will include the erection of Native schools, which require urgent attention on the east coast.

TOKERAU NATIVE LAND COURT DISTRICT

Now that the Building and Construction Branch of the Department has become established, Maoris are showing increased interest in the Maori housing scheme, and during the past year there has been satisfactory expansion in the activities.