

6. *Lake Taupo Reserves Compensation*

In 1926, when any rights which the Maoris may have had to Lake Taupo were ceded to the Crown, provision was made for the reservation of a 1-chain access strip round the edge of the lake, and any persons adversely affected by this reservation were given the right to have their claim investigated by a Commissioner to decide what compensation, if any, should be awarded.

A number of such claims have been made from time to time, and a Commissioner has recently been appointed to decide upon the merits of these claims. The preliminary work is now being undertaken in preparation for the hearing of the claims.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Mr. T. T. Ropiha was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary on 14th May, 1947, and brings to the Department a wide experience of practical association with land settlement which will be of considerable value to the Department. This is the first occasion on which this position has been filled by a member of the Maori race.

As at 31st March, 1948, the personnel of the Department, including the Chief Judge and six Judges of the Maori Land Court, numbered 607, as compared with 564 at this time in 1947. Details are as follows, the corresponding figure for 1947 being shown in parentheses :—

Clerical Staff—						
Permanent	..	..	..	369 (247)	} 419 (420)	
Temporary	..	..	..	50 (173)		
Field Staff—						
Permanent	..	..	..	129 (18)	} 188 (144)	607 (564)
Temporary	..	..	..	59 (113)		

The figures show a sharp increase in the field staff. This is accounted for by the setting-up of the Welfare Organization involving the appointment of further Maori Welfare Officers, and also some additional building staff to cover the programme of building operations. The demand for experienced clerical staff is so great that there has been difficulty in securing sufficient trained clerical staff to keep pace with expansion of operations in the field.

As at 31st March, 1948, there were 147 permanent and 33 temporary Maori officers on the staff of the Department, making a total of 170, or 28 per cent. of the staff.

During the year a large number of Maori and European officers, both clerical and field, were appointed by the Public Service Commission from the temporary staff to the permanent staff. Further appointments from the temporary staff to the permanent staff are still to be made.

MAORI INTERPRETERS BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Fourteen candidates sat for the Maori Interpreters Examination during the year, eight of these being officers on the staff of the Department. Seven of the fourteen candidates qualified for a First Grade Interpreters Licence, of whom four are members of the staff. Of the fourteen who sat the examination, thirteen were Maoris and one a European.

It is pleasing to see the interest both Maoris and Europeans are taking in the Maori language, and there are encouraging signs that interest in this branch of Maori culture is reviving. The Maori Interpreters Examination is set at a high standard, and the response from Maori officers of the Department to qualify as Licensed Interpreters and the percentage of passes gained, it is hoped, will encourage still more to enter for the examination.