

MAORI WELFARE

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

At the close of the 1946-47 financial year, the first year of the operation of the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act, 1945, four (4) tribal districts and ninety-five (95) Tribal Committee areas had been proclaimed and gazetted. The Controller was appointed during that year, and the field staff comprised 7 Welfare Officers.

Progress was necessarily slow during the period because the Act is not a compulsory measure, and it was policy that the Maori tribes be given plenty of time to discuss its provisions and to decide of their own free will either to accept or reject it. It was necessary also that the Controller should explain the Act personally to the people and indicate to them the type of organization required. This entailed a tour of Maori communities in both Islands with the additional objective of capturing that spirit of enthusiasm and loyalty which was the mauri, or actuating force, in the Maori war effort. It was realized that this spirit guided along proper channels would result in the betterment and further social progress of the race.

The year now under review commenced with the preliminary work well advanced and the stage set for the creation of the organization to implement the provisions of the Act. Most tribes had indicated their willingness to come under the Act, and Welfare Officers were appointed to organize them into the same type of grouping as in the Maori war effort organization and to encourage each group to regard itself as a part of a greater organization having for its objective the welfare of the Maori race.

During the year the Welfare Division of the Department has been enlarged to meet the expanded activity brought about by the requirements of the Act, and consists to-day of the Controller, an assistant to the Controller, two clerks for administration, and thirty-three Welfare Officers for field-work. However, the field organization is not yet complete, it being necessary to appoint at least three further officers.

The Act provides for Tribal Districts and Tribal Committee areas; the former to be proclaimed by the Governor-General and the latter to be defined under the hand of the Minister of Maori Affairs. As the boundaries of the districts had to be correctly delineated and described for Proclamation, approval of the Tribal Executives and Committees had to await the completion of that action. The Lands and Survey Department has been very helpful in preparing plans and descriptions to enable the Proclamation and gazette notices to issue.

The organization of districts and the selection and appointment of Committees have been a priority duty of Welfare Officers, as it was realized that no great progress would be made without the co-operation and support of the people.

The progress during this year has been most encouraging. Tribal districts and Tribal Committee areas have now been organized to cover 85 per cent. of the Maori population. The Waikato and Ngati-Porou tribes have stood aloof for various reasons, but the latter tribe has now indicated that it is prepared to organize under the Act. The summary is as follows:—

	Tribal.	
	Districts.	Committee Areas.
(1) Total number of tribal districts and Tribal Committee areas organized	60	370
Total proclaimed and gazetted	41	274
Total awaiting description and gazetting	19	96
	60	370