

Increased industrial activity in and around Auckland has had the effect of attracting to the city a large Maori population, and, as the present accommodation is not sufficient to meet the increase, it has become one of the Department's major problems in this area to attend to the housing and other needs of the people. The Welfare Branch, a report upon which appears in another section of this statement, has been very active in endeavouring to rectify the position and to house and accommodate the Maoris under conditions best calculated to be of advantage to them. To this end five hostels have been secured and are now being operated by various organizations and institutions, and steps have been taken to answer the demand for a recreational and cultural centre which will form a rallying-ground for Maori community life in the city where the people may meet under the most congenial conditions. A number of State houses are also being made available for Maori residents of the city and its environs.

The delegation by the Maori Trustee of the administration of trust estates has been a move in the right direction. It has enabled a considerable number of old estates to be wound up, has accelerated administration, and has brought beneficiaries and those responsible for caring for their affairs very much closer together, with obvious advantages to the beneficiaries and the Maori Trust Office alike. It is certain that decentralization will enable the Maori Trustee to improve his service to the Maori people.

The volume of work of the Maori Land Court shows no signs of diminishing, but, on the contrary, the desire of the Maori people to utilize their lands for farming and other purposes has created a need to bring the title position of their lands up to date. This has naturally affected the work of the Court, which has also continued to maintain a close watch upon the interests of Maori owners when considering all transactions affecting their lands, especially alienations by sale or lease.

Seventeen sittings of the Waikato-Maniapoto Court were held during the year, while sixteen sittings of the Tokerau District Court were held. The number of cases notified for hearing was the highest recorded since 1938.

The Maori Land Boards continued to receive and disburse substantial revenues on behalf of Maori beneficiaries, being, in the main, rents and the proceeds of other alienations of land. Where funds are held by the Boards under the provisions of section 281 of the Maori Land Act, 1931, every effort is made to disburse the moneys as quickly as possible.

There has been some tendency for illegal dealings in respect of timber on Maori land to increase. This may be due to the national shortage, and statutory powers to check it have been invoked on several occasions.

WAIARIKI (Rotorua District)

The Department's activities in this district have not diminished to any extent. There is a consistent endeavour to break new ground for the purpose of adding something that will be of assistance to the Department in its services to the Maori race.

The establishment of a general works and training centre at Rotorua, comprising facilities for the manufacture of joinery, roofing-tiles, concrete products, and fibrous plaster is being continued. The centre also comprises a timber-yard for the handling, machining, and distribution of timber for operations over the major part of the district.

At the work centre every attention is to be given to the training of Maoris in such trades as joinery, furniture-making, glazing, timber handling and working, plumbing, painting, and the manufacture of roofing-tiles and concrete products.

The advantages of such a project are twofold—firstly, a field will be opened for the training of Maori youths in the various trades mentioned, and, secondly, provision will be made for an enterprise by which the progress of Maori housing can be accelerated.