

The policy of decentralizing the administration of trust estates which was effected in September, 1947, is working satisfactorily. Estates under administration as at 31st March, 1948, were: deceased persons, 45; minors, 88; mental patients, 23; convicts, 2. In addition, interim administration is being carried out in the case of a large number of estates for which executors or administrators have not yet been appointed.

Twenty-one sittings of the Court were held during the year, with adjournments to several centres. These adjournments were necessary, mainly owing to the large number of applications by the Board of Maori Affairs for recommendations regarding the occupation of scheme lands and housing matters.

In all, 2,715 cases were notified for hearing, this number representing a slight decrease on last year's figures; the number of orders made, however, indicates that the business of the Court is being maintained.

The collection of Maori rates continues to be satisfactory, a total of £5,475 being received during the year.

A shortage of trained staff has created some delay in consolidation work. Recent efforts have been concentrated on the Koutu scheme, and a portion of this scheme has been completed and details are now being prepared for confirmation. On completion of the Koutu scheme it is proposed to proceed with the Taheke, Ngati-Manawa, Parekarangi, and Matapiipi schemes.

The farming property known as Levin's, at Rotoiti, was acquired by the Maori Land Board in terms of section 105 of the Maori Land Act, 1931. This property, which has an area of 1,172 acres, of which 390 acres are freehold and the remainder leasehold, is eighteen miles from Rotorua and produced 532 lambs and 51 bales of wool in the 1947-48 season.

Activity on the farming and camping project on the shores of Lake Rotoiti has been continued, and at the end of the year a total of 10 acres had been drained by means of the automatic pump installed during the previous year. Milk and fruit sales to campers, &c., reached £695 for the year.

Wide use has been made of the Board's tractors and farm implements, and these have played a big part in the production drive. As much as 600 acres of maize, 350 acres of kumara, and 80 acres of potatoes were planted in the Tauranga district with the aid of this machinery. A considerable amount of cultivating, harvesting, and road-work was also undertaken on the development schemes in the district. The range of implements available has resulted in practically all the cultivation, planting, harvesting, and transport of crops being undertaken by the Board in some localities. Several areas of previously waste land in heavy gorse and manuka have been crushed with an angle dozer and later burnt. This land will be cultivated and planted in maize next year.

There was no let-up in the primary production drive, and this was continued with increasing vigour. Approximately 18,000 bushels of maize were marketed by the Board, despite the fact that a smaller area had been planted than in the previous year. The district, and particularly the Tauranga area, has been a distributing centre for its own produce, which has been sent to all parts of the North Island. Potatoes, onions, pumpkins, and 10,000 water-melons, amounting to over £10,000 in value, have been distributed.

The Board debt owing on Tihiotonga Station has been further reduced by £10,509.

TAIRAWHITI (GISBORNE DISTRICT)

Activity in this district has continued at a high level. While the lands in this district lend themselves more to sheep-farming, a large number of Maoris are seeking a livelihood in such undertakings as horticulture, and, with a view to assisting as much as possible, supervision, general instruction, and practical demonstrations are arranged by the Department's horticulturist.