

MAORI TRUSTEE

76. The functions and powers of the Maori Trustee are briefly as follows :—

- (a) To accept appointment as trustee, executor, administrator, agent, or attorney.
- (b) To act as trustee for minors.
- (c) To act as trustee for mental patients, convicts, and other persons under disability.
- (d) To accept and administer special trusts.
- (e) To control and manage lands vested in Maori Trustee for farming or otherwise.
- (f) To act as Receiver in respect of charges imposed on Maori lands.
- (g) To act as agent for absentee owners for the purpose of selling or leasing lands.
- (h) To invest moneys on mortgage with the prior approval of the Board of Maori Affairs.
- (i) To administer various Maori reserves vested in the Maori Trustee totalling some 94,309 acres.

77. The policy of decentralized administration of Maori trust work which permits of closer personal contact between the administrator and the beneficiaries is proving successful. During the year decentralization was completed by the transfer of estates in the Ikaroa and South Island districts to the Wellington district office for administration.

78. The number of private estates administered has increased by 162 over the past year, and the following table sets out the position of the estates at present being administered :—

District.	Minors.	Deceased Persons.	Convicts.	Mental Patients.	Miscellaneous.	Totals.
Tokerau and Waikato-Manipoto	209	82	38	140	267	736
Waiairiki	215	37	6	31	1	290
Tairāwhiti	103	36	8	45	21	213
Aotea	283	55	11	33	37	419
Ikaroa and South Island	317	70	11	39	135	572
Totals ..	1,127	280	74	288	461	2,230

79. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of Maoris entering into business ventures and activities, and it is found that many of them are turning to the Maori Trustee for finance and advice in conducting their businesses.

80. Under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Amendment Act, 1948, many leases of the reserves were cancelled to the intent that the lessees should have the right to elect to take fresh leases with rentals based upon 5 per cent. of the unimproved values according to special Government valuations. Certain properties within the reserves which extend from Waitotara to White Cliffs were, by agreement between the Lessees' Association and the Maori Trustee, selected for test valuation purposes, the idea being that the values ascribed to the selected properties would fix a standard, tested, if necessary, by way of objection to the Valuation Appeal Committee constituted under the 1948 Act, for the particular localities. Topographical surveys of these properties were made and valuations completed by the District Valuer. Because of the necessity for fixing the standards of value with precision, the valuations are being subjected to the closest investigation.

81. The total area of the seventeen stations which are being farmed under section 25 of the Maori Trustee Act, 1930, is 52,301 acres, comprising very mixed country and requiring various types of farming operations. At the 31st March there were 57,039 sheep on these areas and 7,222 cattle. During the year 1,485 bales of wool were produced and the sales of live-stock totalled £65,799.