

the reason also that it is necessary that sittings should be held in many places where there is an accumulation of business, the Government recently decided upon the appointment of another Judge. The volume of business shows no sign of slackening during the coming year, and it is hoped that this addition to the staff will have the effect of enabling the Court to sit at other places where there is an accumulation of work. The expenditure under the Native Land Court vote for the year was £15,438, while the Court and registration fees payable to the Department in the form of stamps totalled £4,380 15s.

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

The work of the Maori Land Boards has increased to a large extent during the year; and, as the trend of the recommendations of the Native Land Commission will in many cases be in the direction of vesting in the Boards the administration of lands set apart for settlement, it is expected that the current year will see a large increase in the volume of business transacted. In anticipation of this the Government recently decided upon the appointment of two additional presidents. During the year the Boards have not put upon the market any considerable area of trust lands, a fact which is largely attributable to the number of subdivisional surveys which require to be carried out before the land can be so dealt with. No considerable area of land has been vested in the Boards for administration of late, for the reason that it has been considered advisable to await the reports of the Commission before deciding as to future action. I find that a total of 1,545 applications for formal approval of private dealings have been notified for consideration by the Boards during the year, and the greater number of these, being considered equitable and to the advantage of the Native alienors, have been approved. From their inception to the present date the Boards have leased on behalf of the Native owners an area of 165,585 acres, and have sanctioned private alienation of 1,089,020 acres, making a total area of 1,254,605 acres rendered available for settlement. This area is expected to be largely augmented on the completion of the work of the Commission, when the Department will be in possession of better information as to the way in which it is advisable that the respective blocks should be dealt with. The expenditure on account of the Boards for the year, after deducting fees collected and credited to revenue, was £1,810.

MINING.

The prosperous condition of the mining industry still continues. The export of gold, although slightly less than that of the previous year, is yet very considerable.

The outlook for the future continues to improve; arrangements for working the deep quartz levels at the Thames and the deep alluvial leads at Ross, in Westland, have been completed, and operations on a large scale are now being carried on by strong companies, assisted by subsidies from the Mines Department. It is confidently hoped that large yields of gold will be produced from these two places.

The export of silver for the past year is a record one, being £25,912 greater than that of the previous year, and considerably in excess of any annual export so far recorded.

The production of coal for the year was the largest ever raised, and the extent of the new coal-areas now being opened up both by the State and private companies is an indication that the industrial activity of the community is flourishing.

Operations in the State coal-mines have been very satisfactory, and both of the mines have worked practically full time throughout the year. Depots for the sale of this superior household fuel are now established in the large centres readily served by shipping ports, and the trade done has steadily increased. There is no trouble in dealing with the output—in fact, at the present time, it is difficult to supply demands. It has therefore been decided to extend the scope of operations at the mines, and the construction of the extension of the railway-line at the Point Elizabeth Mine to open up the well-known coal-bearing areas