

1911.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND COURTS AND MAORI LAND BOARDS

(REPORT FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY, NATIVE AFFAIRS, ON THE WORKING OF THE)
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH, 1911.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

Native Department, 25th May, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to append hereunder a report upon the work of the various branches affecting Native lands and Natives generally.

NATIVE LAND COURT.

The work of the Native Land Court shows a marked increase in comparison with that of the last financial period. A total of 22,343 cases, as against 9,055, were scheduled for hearing, the number of *Gazette* notices totalling 94. To deal with this enormous amount of work the Court held sittings in 46 different localities, only very few cases being what are termed "old claims." The large increase in business is no doubt due to the advantages of the present law; and the system of circuits inaugurated on the coming into operation of the Native Land Act, 1909, has no doubt been the means of enabling the Courts to deal with such an unprecedented and large volume of work. During the period under review the Courts investigated the ownership of a total area of 186,679½ acres, hitherto unclothed with a title, and has also dealt with 833 partitions affecting an aggregate area of 503,829 acres.

The Native Appellate Court has also been kept very busy, having had to deal with a total number of 471 cases.

Table A attached hereto sets out in detail the operations of the Courts.

During the year the judicial strength of the Native Land Court Bench was increased by the appointment of another Judge (Mr. T. H. Wilson).

The revenue derived per medium of Court fees, &c., payable to, received, and outstanding for the financial year ended 31st March, 1911, amounted to the record sum of £6,834 18s. 11d.

A very large amount of work is done for other Government Departments, for which no credit has been allowed in the sum mentioned.

During March a conference of Judges of the Native Land Court was held in Wellington, when matters affecting the working of the Native Land Act, 1909, were discussed, and a schedule of sittings of the Courts arranged for the ensuing year. The conference will no doubt be of value not only to the Judges, but also to the Department.

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

The Boards have also been very busy, and are doing a large volume of business in respect to the revision and confirmation of private alienations, and the administration of a considerable area of trust lands.

During the period some 435 leases were approved by the Boards, of a total area of 116,498 acres; 660 transfers, comprising 78,346 acres, were consented to. The aggregate area of lands administered by the Boards totals 975,010 acres; of this area the Boards have issued 422 leases, of a total area of 282,402 acres, and 24 transfers, comprising 6,008 acres. Schemes for cutting up, roading, surveying, &c., of the remaining areas are now under consideration, and in several cases complete and only waiting final approval.

Settlement of the greater area is hung up for want of surveys, and, although all the surveyors available are engaged, they are unable to cope with the demands made. Until surveys have been made it is impossible to comply with the provisions of the statutes and place the lands on the market.