

1913.
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, 1913.

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

The Hon. the Native Minister.

Native Department, 18th May, 1913.

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

NATIVE LAND COURT.

As is shown by the attached schedule, the Native Land Court has been doing good work and is kept busy. A total of 19,278 cases were scheduled for hearing, and the number of gazetted sittings totalled seventy.

As remarked in previous reports, the system of circuits is working satisfactorily. During the period the Courts investigated the ownership of 52,253½ acres hitherto unclothed with titles, and dealt with 783 applications for partition, affecting an aggregate area of 383,642 acres. The Native Appellate Court has been sitting regularly, 345 cases being scheduled for hearing. The revenue derived per medium of Court fees, &c., payable to, received, and outstanding for the year ended 31st March, 1913, amounts to £6,281 5s. 9d.

In connection herewith I may point out that the £943 19s. 4d. outstanding amounts collected by the Registrar spells activity in settling old Native titles for purposes of alienation.

The Registrar at Auckland, for the current year, collected the amount of £516 5s. 8d., one-half of which comprises outstanding fees on Native Land Court orders of probably seven years' duration, whilst the other half is for orders beyond that date; and when the names of the Judges are given—viz., Judges Williams, Munro, Wilson, Heale, Fenton, Clarke, MacDonald, O'Brien, Rogan, Puckey, Symond, Barton, Scannell, and Gudgeon—who made the orders on which these fees were collected, it is sufficient indication of the steps now being taken to bring these long-outstanding Native-land titles up to date. The majority of these titles or orders are without doubt uplifted for one purpose—alienation either by way of sale or lease.

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

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

In the administration of vested lands, and confirmation of private alienation, all the Boards have been fully occupied. The area of land administered by the Boards totals 974,189 acres; of this area, 1,389 leases have been issued, of a total area of 377,478 acres, and eighty-two transfers, comprising 63,959 acres. The remaining areas are being prepared for the market, and the preparatory work of cutting up is now receiving the consideration of the several Boards. 14,822 acres are now before the public for sale and lease, to be offered on the 21st instant, and another sale plan for 4,432 acres is notified for the 6th proximo. The placing of vested lands on the market for public competition by Maori Land Boards is somewhat retarded by the fact that there appears to be a dearth of surveyors, the Lands and Survey Department being unable to cope with the surveys as quickly as the Department would like. However, I will deal with the question of surveys later on.