

NATIVE LAND PURCHASE.

During the year eighty-nine blocks, comprising 65,148 acres, were proclaimed Crown land. The actual purchases, including purchases in blocks partly acquired, total an area of 143,528 acres, as compared with an area of 154,006 acres acquired during the previous year.

Negotiations are in progress at present for the acquisition of some 721,166 acres of Native land. In the Urewera Reserves an area of 56,741 acres was purchased, making the Crown purchases in the Urewera total 182,236 acres as at the 31st March last. At that date approximately 264,204 acres of Native land were subject to prohibition against private alienation, while 38,740 acres were acquired in prohibited blocks during the twelve months preceding.

During the seven years which have elapsed since the coming into operation of the Native Land Act, 1909, the total sum expended in the purchase of Native land through the Native Land Purchase Board has amounted to £1,384,315 7s. 11d. The total area of Native land alienated by way of sale during the seven years is approximately 1,872,599 acres, and of this total an area of some 663,920 acres, or more than one-third of the whole, has been acquired on behalf of the Crown, indicating the extensive part which the Crown has played in securing Native land for *bona fide* settlement.

Details of the operations for the year will be found in Table C.

DEPARTMENTAL.

Expenditure.—The total expenditure for the year was £26,281, including the sum of £2,090 on account of the Native Land Settlement vote, as against £26,849 for last year.

Revenue.—The total revenue received from all sources amounted to £13,013 16s. 11d.

Native Interpreters.—During the year twenty-five applicants for licenses sat for examination, and of these eleven passed for a first-grade license and four passed for a second-grade license.

Retirements.—Mr. T. W. Fisher, who had been Under-Secretary for Native Affairs for ten years, retired on the 31st October on superannuation, having reached the age-limit.

Staff.—Owing to the number of experienced officers on active service, the work of the various offices has been carried on under great difficulties. The remaining members of the staff deserve every credit for the manner in which they have endeavoured to cope with the extra work thrown upon them.

It is with great regret that the Department has to record the deaths on active service of the following members of the staff: E. G. Ancell, T. Kokiri, D. L. Collis, A. Anaru, and J. Stewart.

C. B. JORDAN, Under-Secretary.