

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND COURTS

AND OTHER MATTERS UNDER CONTROL OF NATIVE DEPARTMENT.

REPORT FROM UNDER-SECRETARY, NATIVE DEPARTMENT, FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31st MARCH, 1922.

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

The Hon. Native Minister.

Native Department, Wellington, 30th June, 1922.

HEREWITH is submitted a report upon the activities of the Department for the year ending 31st March, 1922.

R. N. JONES, Under-Secretary.

ANNUAL REPORT.

On the 1st January last this Department was separated from the Justice Department and placed under the control of the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court. This is the first time that there has been a combination of the judicial and administrative sections of the Department under one head. So far, no insuperable difficulties have arisen; the friction which sometimes arises under dual control is avoided, and it is hoped there will be some gain in efficiency, constructive cohesion, and united effort. Mr. C. B. Jordan, the former Under-Secretary, retired on the 31st December, 1921, and I wish to place on record the Department's appreciation of his many years of useful and valuable service.

NATIVE LAND AND APPELLATE COURTS.

The attached tables will show the number of applications lodged and dealt with. The fees, which increased in the previous year, have again increased, from £6,279 17s. 11d. to £6,809 4s. 5d. The fees collected in 1920 amounted to £5,994 9s.

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

During the year the Boards confirmed dealings as follows: Sold, 55,038 acres; leased 50,944 acres. Of the lands vested in them the Boards sold 5,933 acres, and disposed of 2,804 by way of lease, while 119 acres were leased to Natives under Part XVI. The accumulated funds held by the Boards on behalf of Native owners and invested with the Native Trustee amount to £502,731 19s. 6d. This money is being utilized by the Native Trustee for advancement to Natives to assist them in improving their own lands. It is hoped that this will encourage the Natives to bring their lands into useful settlement.

The following figures show the position of vested lands:—

	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
Area vested as at 31st March, 1921	..	..	..	719,278	1	13
Area revested in Native owners	19,013	1	6	..	..	..
Area sold by Boards	5,933	0	30	..	..	..
				24,946	1	36
Total area remaining under Board's control ..	..			694,331	3	17

It will be observed that the financial stringency has affected the Native race equally with the Europeans. Many dealings for Native lands by private persons had to be abandoned or postponed, since the proposed alienees were unable to arrange satisfactory finance; while, from a similar cause, the rents due to Natives are very much in arrear. The revenue earned by the Boards naturally fell, the fees only realizing £2,602 2s. 6d., as against £4,547 12s. 6d. for the previous year, and commission £3,590 16s. 7d., as against £5,450 10s. 5d., a total decrease of £3,805 3s. 10d.