

1936.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT ON—BY BOARD OF NATIVE AFFAIRS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

THIS statement provides a summary of the principal activities of the Board of Native Affairs during the financial year ended 31st March, 1936, in connection with the schemes now in operation under the Native Land Act, 1931, and other authorities for the development and settlement of the lands of the Maori people.

Previous reports presented to Parliament from 1931 onwards dealt with the gradual awakening of the Legislature at the beginning of the present century to the need for preserving the remnants of the ancestral territory of a race to which the State has peculiar obligations and responsibilities, the earlier attempts and devices to overcome the problem of effective Native settlement, the events leading up to the evolution of the present policy of Native land development with the aid of public funds, the inception and progress of the schemes for the rehabilitation of the Maori, and full descriptions of the lands involved and summaries of expenditure incurred year by year. Throughout these reports it was shown that the fundamental object of the development schemes now established, is to encourage and train the Maori people to become energetic, thrifty, and industrious farmers; to revive that passionate attachment to the soil, so inherent in the race; and to create a form of life which, while retaining the best elements of Native culture, will profitably settle the Maori on his own lands. This report continues the story of the progress made to the 31st March, 1936, in attaining this end.

The outstanding feature of the year's activities was the marked increase in the volume of production, both from the dairying and pastoral operations on the State development schemes controlled by the Board, which, combined with the upward trend in prices, resulted in revenue receipts from butterfat, wool, live-stock, and other produce reaching the satisfactory total of £129,787, in comparison with £79,215 for the previous season—an increase of 63·8 per centum. The Department's share of the cream returns—usually one-third of the total output—amounted to £51,334, an increase of £20,447 over the previous year; wool sales realized £11,656 as compared with £6,346 for 1934–35; and the proceeds from live-stock were £55,753, whereas in the corresponding previous year the returns from sheep and cattle sold amounted to £30,041.

Throughout the year satisfactory progress has been made in the work of development and settlement; fresh areas have been cleared of bush and scrub, and have been prepared for sowing down in permanent pastures; established grass lands have been maintained by periodical top-dressing with fertilizers, and