

PART I.—STATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

THE most important of the schemes now in operation for the development of the lands of the Maori people, and for assisting them in farming, are those which are financed out of moneys provided by the State and which are administered by the Board of Native Affairs, under the authority of section 522 of the Native Land Act, 1931, and its amendments.

For purposes of administration these schemes are grouped in Maori Land Board districts, and it is proposed in this part of the report to review their operation during the past year. It may be mentioned by way of introduction that there are three classes or kinds of schemes which come under the above heading, viz. :—

- (1) Land development schemes : which have for their object the development and settlement of blocks or compact areas of Native land—*e.g.*, Horohoro and Waimiha.
- (2) Unit development schemes : for further developing small holdings of lands already settled on or being farmed by Native individuals or families—*e.g.*, Bay of Islands and Ruatoki.
- (3) Base farms : which have been established for the purpose of assembling, holding, and distributing live-stock to surrounding schemes.

TOKERAU MAORI LAND DISTRICT.

The Tokerau Maori Land District embraces the whole of the North Auckland Peninsula, representing the ancient domains of the Ngati-Whatua, Ngapuhi, Te Rarawa, Ngati-Kahu, and Te Aupouri peoples. These tribes comprise a considerable Maori population, indeed, in some of the northern counties numbering equally with the European inhabitants.

For many years farming has been carried on to a limited degree by sections of the Native population, but for the most part supplies of food derived from the sea and from simple cultivation have provided the peoples with sufficient means of sustenance. The gum industry employed large numbers of the Maoris living in this district, the timber industry was flourishing, and the Natives took no mean part in the work associated with the pioneering period of North Auckland development. In recent years, however, these means of providing work for the northern tribesmen tended to diminish, when it was evident that the future of the Natives lay in the direction of the development and occupation of their own lands as farmers. In the initial stages of this policy the funds of the Maori Land Board provided finance to a certain extent. At Te Kao, in particular, developmental activity on a large scale was undertaken, but owing to the scattered nature of the holdings, such efforts tended to become confined to individual areas.

At the same time consolidation schemes were undertaken with the object of marshalling the scattered interests of family groups into adjoining areas, in order that development might be facilitated. Much has been accomplished in that direction and consolidation officers are still fully engaged in formulating schemes for consideration by the Native Land Court. For this purpose the district has been divided into four areas—Mangonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara—under which appellations development schemes have been grouped for convenience of reference.

As previous reports have shown, a great number of the Maori Land Board loans have been taken over and refinanced out of Government funds. The whole of the Native lands in the northern peninsula has been gazetted as being subject to the development sections of the Native Land Act, 1931. The farming policy is making considerable progress and, as shown in the detailed returns, 67,351 acres are under actual development (exclusive of the Te Kao scheme which is still under the control of the Maori Land Board), and 677 unit farmers are receiving assistance. In addition, a certain amount of farming is being carried on by Maoris, principally in a small way, without assistance from the Government.

During the year considerable progress has been made with improvements on the Native holdings and areas which are being developed by the Department. Unemployment fund subsidies have been freely drawn upon, and an effort has been made to direct the efforts of unemployed Maoris towards the improvement of their lands.

Generally in this area individual advances are small, departmental participation in the proceeds of the farms being safeguarded by orders on cream cheques paid by dairy companies. Dairy-farming is the principal industry, and the financial situation, including repayment of the advances made, is reasonably good.

At Te Kao the Maori Land Board conducts a store which is supplying merchandise to the Native community at reasonable prices, and also a service for the carriage of cream to the dairy factory at Awanui.