

been partially completed. Much data has been collected and preliminary work undertaken, but, mainly owing to the inauguration of Native-land development by the legislation of 1929, the trained staff available were diverted to the new activity, and it has not yet been possible for officers to devote their whole time again to the important work of consolidation nor for others to be trained in the specialized knowledge required.

Although the prosecution of the Native-land-development policy is considered to be of greater importance, progress on consolidation work will be maintained as circumstances permit.

The schemes undertaken up to the present are referred to briefly in the reports from districts.

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION AND STAFF.

Prior to the initiation of the policy of Native-land development, late in 1929, the work of the Department arose out of the operations of the Native Land Courts, the Maori Land Boards, and the Native Land Purchase Board, combined with the general administration of the Native Land Act, 1909, including the then newly commenced activity of consolidation of Native land titles. The staff of the Department in 1929 numbered 97 and was adequate to cope with the work. At the same date the Native Trust Office functioned as a separate Department and engaged a staff of 33.

As a direct result of the policy of Native-land development a long-overdue reorganization was effected in 1933, which paved the way to a more complete decentralization of work, when the acute shortage of staff in the districts was remedied.

With the steady expansion of business in respect of both Native-land development and Maori unemployment it has been necessary to provide a relative increase in staff, particularly in the field. Seven sub-offices have been established at Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Whangarei, Te Kuiti, Whakatane, Wairoa, and Tikitiki under the control of the Registrars of the respective districts.

The staff of the Department at 31st March, 1937, totalled 266 permanent and temporary officers.

Closely allied to the large increase in staff is the question of office accommodation. The office at Rotorua has undergone extensive alterations, and negotiations are in train for the alteration and extension of the Auckland and Wanganui offices. The Head Office of the Department moved during the year from its cramped quarters in the Government Buildings annexe to more commodious premises in "Invicta House," Johnston Street. The Wellington district office has remained in the Government Buildings annexe, but better accommodation has become an urgent necessity, and endeavours are being made to remedy the position.

Except in the case of the Wellington district office, accommodation for Court, Board, and departmental activities in the districts has been provided out of the funds of the respective Maori Land Boards at no cost to the State.

The following money figures indicate the volume of business transacted during the past year :—

	Total Payments.	Total Receipts.
Consolidated Fund—	£	£
Civil List Native Purposes	5,669	..
Vote : Native	310,332	23,275
Court fees	..	6,236
Public Works Fund—		
Vote : Native Land Settlement	521,961	409,642*
Native Trustee's Account	308,917	312,117
Maori Land Boards	313,171†	295,437†
Total	£1,460,050	£1,046,707

* Does not include loan-moneys, but includes grants of £200,000 from vote "Native," and £40,000 from the Employment Promotion Fund.

† Does not include deposits and withdrawals in respect of Deposit Accounts with Native Trustee.

NATIVE HOUSING.

In last year's report reference was made to the position of the regulations under the Native Housing Act, 1935. These were approved by the Governor-General in Council during the year and were gazetted in January, 1937. Suitable instructions and forms were set up to cope with the anticipated rush of applications, but their issue was delayed until early in March, with the result that it was not possible for applications to be dealt with by the Board of Native Affairs before the end of the financial year.

Owing to the type of security offered, each application necessitates much investigation work in the district offices, and it has been found necessary to detail officers in each district for this special duty.

The sum of £100,000 will be provided from the Public Works Fund, vote "Native land settlement" for 1937–38 for advances under the Native Housing Act to Natives for the erection of houses, and an additional sum of £50,000 will also be provided from the Consolidated Fund vote "Native" as a grant to the Native Trustee to form a revolving fund for the purpose of housing for indigent Natives.

This activity of the Department must necessarily become one of major importance.