

The need for improved housing conditions in the district is very great, particularly in areas not affected by the Native land development policy. Where the need is the greatest, it is usually found that there is either insufficient security to provide for an advance or the income is not large enough to meet the minimum repayment necessary to provide a sinking fund. Every effort, however, is being made to assist applicants who evince a desire to improve their housing conditions. Individuals are encouraged to deposit with the Maori Land Board, at interest, contributions from their wages or other sources to provide the nucleus of a fund to substantiate an application for housing assistance.

At the 31st March, 1938, 179 applications had been received, exclusive of some 44 applications from the locality surveys mentioned previously. Of these applications, 36 were recommended to the Board of Native Affairs, which in turn had approved at that date of 14 advances. Seven houses have been completed, and two are in the course of erection.

Difficulty is experienced in obtaining the necessary skilled labour for the work ahead, and, furthermore, there are relatively few skilled Native carpenters in this district available for employment. The Public Works Department is co-operating by employing and training several Maori youths at its workshop in Rotorua with a view to their being ultimately used on building operations conducted by or for this Department.

The following table summarizes the position of the approved advances as at 31st March, 1938 :—

Class.						Numbers.	Cost.
Indigent scheme—							
New—							
Erected	..	..	..	..	..	4	
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	1	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	1	
						—	6
Repairs—							
Effectuated	..	..	..	..	..	1	
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	3	
						—	4
Total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	10	£ 3,193
Under Act—							
New—							
Erected	..	..	..	..	..	2	
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	1	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	1	
						—	4
Repairs—							
Effectuated	..	..	..	..	..	..	
In progress	..	..	..	..	..	..	
Not started	..	..	..	..	..	..	
						—	..
Total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	4	895
Grand total authorizations	..	..	..	..	..	14	4,088

TAIRAWHITI DISTRICT: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

In this district, as elsewhere, the assistance to many of the Maori people in improving their housing conditions has fulfilled an urgent and long-needed action. The control of this new branch of the Department's activities is being handled by the Maori Land Board. It was considered necessary to obtain a survey of Maori housing conditions throughout the district before launching out into a comprehensive building scheme. Surveys of the Manutuke, Waituhi, Waikaremoana, and Tokomaru settlements have been completed, and, as a result of these, 172 proposals were recommended to the Board of Native Affairs in respect of these localities. Of these, 92 have been approved, 51 declined, and 29 are still under consideration.

The actual constructional work on the houses is being supervised by the Public Works Department, but the difficulty in establishing the necessary staff for the preliminary work has somewhat impeded progress.