

PART II.—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 Part I of the Native Land Amendment Act, 1936.

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 operations 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 or settlers' farms : 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—*e.g.*, Manukau Farm.

The plan in which this section of the report is presented is as follows :—

A general report on the schemes in a district, narratives on each scheme, full statistical data concerning all schemes, and summarized receipts and payments accounts.

TOKERAU MAORI LAND DISTRICT.

It is not necessary in this report to touch on the historical significance of this district of Maoridom : previous reports have adequately covered this. The district stretches from the shores of Spirits Bay in the north to the Waitemata Harbour in the south, and is peopled by the tribes of Ngapuhi, Ngati-Whatua, Te Rarawa, Te Aupouri, and Ngati-Kahu. That the people are vigorous and progressive is shown by the fact that the Tai-Tokerau peoples number, by the census of 1936, one-fourth of the Native population of New Zealand. Their numbers are increasing, but they are not plentifully endowed with lands, and the future of these people affords a peculiarly difficult problem for solution by the Government. Development of the Native areas, and its accompanying development of the people, affords a starting-point along the road of progress. The ultimate goal is to establish the whole of the Maori population into its rightful and important place in the economic and social structure.

In the past twenty-five years the Maori population has been greatly affected in this district by economic changes. The scheme of consolidation for the adjustment of title has lagged behind development, and the stage has been reached where future advances must in many cases be strictly limited until progress is made in the adjustment of titles. In fully 75 per centum of the development scheme advances the title position is obscure, but owing to the shortage of experienced officers and for other reasons, this important aspect of our security has had to be left for future attention. The stage has now been reached when it is necessary to review many of the early decisions to extend the provisions of the Act to various Native areas, so that further advances will only be made in such cases as offer adequate security.

During the year under review steps were taken to put the district administration on a sounder basis, with the object of more closely supervising the operations of settlers and the expenditure of development and employment-promotion funds. The organization for the payment of wages to workmen has been improved, and more frequent payments are now regularly made. Complaints are still to be heard, but it is practically impossible to meet all requests that are made in this direction.

In the actual work of supervision, field officers have been able to more frequently visit settlers and give that tuition so essential to success. Dairy companies have co-operated in the provision of essential butterfat-production figures, and these, together with statements of account rendered at frequent intervals, materially assist the field men in their supervision duties. With employment-promotion work, supervisors now endeavour to group men into gangs of not less than eight. This system is working efficiently and enables a greater number of men to be effectively supervised.

Herd-testing has been introduced in the Mangonui and Hokianga Counties. This labour-cost is paid for from the Employment Promotion Fund, and the settlers stand the cost of the Association's charge of 2s. per cow. Reference to the salient points of each association report is made in the general report on the schemes affected. The tendency for overstocking and neglect of herds still persists, and it will take time and the unremitting attention of supervisors to eliminate these two uneconomic factors.

The ideals of the Government in the matter of Native housing is being given effect to, and the Department during the winter handed over to the Public Works Department at Whangarei a programme for the construction of forty-one houses. Since that date other plans have been submitted,