

In addition to the above, an amount of £7,000 is provided out of the Civil List (Consolidated Fund) for Native purposes, and after contributing £3,600 of this sum to the Health Department for medical and nursing services the balance is utilized in the main towards small food and clothing allowances to extremely indigent Maoris. The amount spent during the year was £6,742.

A further sum of £6,000 was paid under the permanent appropriations to the Arawa District Trust Board, representing the fifteenth annual payment authorized by section 51 of the Native Purposes Act, 1931, for the benefit of the Arawa tribes.

DISTRICT REPORTS.

Extracts from reports on departmental operations in each district are of interest. Each district has its peculiar problems of administration relative to the general welfare of the Maori people.

Tokerau District.

Native Land Court.—This Court district comprises the whole of the North Auckland Peninsula and its Maori population represents approximately one-quarter of the total for the Dominion. There were eight gazetted sittings of the Court, and, with adjournments and special sittings, the Court held session at numerous settlements throughout the district in accordance with the established policy of visiting localities where the people reside and the lands affected are situated, a practice which has been found to have definite advantages.

In addition to the general business of the Court in its ordinary jurisdiction, a considerable part of the Court work has been in connection with matters relative to land development, housing, and consolidation of landed interests, the latter of which is the subject of more detailed reference under its specific heading. The Court, while assisting the Department in its various activities, has continued to act as a guide to the Maori people and a protector of valid rights.

Alienations of Native land confirmed during the year were again relatively few in number. This reflects the Court's policy of ensuring the retention of the land for the occupation and livelihood of the large and steadily increasing Maori population of the northern peninsula. A considerable area of the land is already under close occupation by the people, and the policy of retention of the land is of material assistance in the pursuance of the constructive activity of the Department—viz., Native land development, which is the subject of a separate report.

Consolidation.—The schemes of consolidation of landed interests in the Tokerau district provide a task of great magnitude. The greater part of the work of the Court may be said to come within this heading, and the extensive farm or unit development schemes in the district are based upon this function of the Court. In the stabilizing of occupation brought about by consolidation proceedings lies the origin and basis of practically all the land development operations in this district.

Consolidation of land titles has been continued during the year, where possible, and some progress has been made. However, by reason of the demands of other activities and absences due to illness, the small specialized staff available has been at a minimum and inadequate to cope with the work in the four different scheme areas—viz., Mangonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara. With the additional trained staff now being made available, consolidation activity will be accelerated, but the progress must necessarily be gradual for the reason that the grouping of scattered interests in land requires the full-time services of officers experienced in the intricate procedure and their numerical replacement by untrained men. With the acceleration of this work a further impetus will be given to land development and housing operations.

Maori Land Board.—There has been no great activity during the year in regard to the lands vested by statute in the Board as trustee for the beneficial owners. Most of these areas are under lease, and the leases in many cases were renewed some years ago. The Board has continued its function as distributor to the owners of the revenue from vested lands, and is also the main rent-distributing agent for other Native lands under lease. The Board in this district adopts the policy of requiring all proceeds of alienations of land to be paid through it, as this practice is considered to be in the interests of all parties.

The Te Kao dairy scheme, previously administered by the Board, was handed over to the Native Department as from the 1st April, 1938, and is now incorporated in the Mangonui development scheme.

The Board has continued to contribute £1,000 per annum towards general administration expenses of the Department, and, with sundry additional expenses, meets an annual charge of £1,450 for administration.

Housing.—Housing activity in this district is progressing, but there is urgent need for numbers of new houses as the living-conditions of a large number of Natives are far from what is desired and constitute a definite menace from a health point of view. This activity is the subject of more detailed reference in the report of the Board of Native Affairs.

General Maori Welfare.—The health of Natives in the Tokerau district has suffered in the past through lack of suitable housing-accommodation, but with the improvement now being achieved and the valuable co-operation of the officers of the Department of Health it is confidently anticipated that a material improvement will be manifested, particularly in the incidence of tuberculosis.

It is pleasing to record that the local Maoris in Whangarei are now taking steps to provide a Native hostelry by means of voluntary contributions. There has been a long-felt need for the establishment of this amenity at Whangarei.