

TAIRAWHITI DISTRICT: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

During the past year, although only fair progress has been achieved in regard to the actual construction work, an efficient organization has been built up. There are now six "keymen" carpenters in control of eight Maori gangs, and, in addition, a "keyman" painter and a plumber are employed. Authority has been given for the employment of a further two carpenters, and as soon as suitable men are obtained new gangs will be created. Of the sixteen adult Maoris and five youths employed, the majority are doing quite good work and are displaying a keenness that is typical of their race.

To date a total of 524 applications have been received, and of these, 283 have been submitted for the consideration of the Board. Preparatory work has been carried out on 110 applications, and 55 are not being proceeded with for various reasons.

The following is the position of the housing activities up to the 31st March, 1939: Authorizations under the Native Housing Act for erections and repairs, totalled £28,767, involving eighty-five cases, while the actual houses completed during the past year numbered four, with seven in the course of construction; from the Special Fund an amount of £12,293 has been approved to cover forty-seven applicants, the dwellings completed last year numbering eleven, with two additional ones in progress.

AOTEA DISTRICT: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

The living conditions of many individual Natives in this district have been improved out of recognition through the operations under the Native Housing Act. Loans have been granted under the Act to the extent of £24,868 for seventy-two cases, and, in addition, advances authorized from the Special Fund to eleven applicants aggregated £3,050. The securities offered are carefully scrutinized, and are generally adequate. The question as to how far indigent Natives should be assisted and as to how far any recommendation to the Board of Native Affairs should go is one requiring very careful investigation and discrimination.

To date, twenty houses have been erected, twelve repaired, six bought, and three dwellings are in course of erection. As their maintenance is a matter that has to be carefully watched, and as there is also a tendency for the houses to be overcrowded, to the detriment of the health of the inmates, the supervisor in each area has been instructed to inspect the houses at regular intervals and to report any cases of overcrowding, neglect in proper maintenance, or the non-payment of rates.

IKAROA DISTRICT: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

Despite difficulties in establishing applicants' titles to building-sites and also in obtaining qualified tradesmen, or key-men, to take charge of and train gangs of Maori labourers, steady progress has been maintained with the housing programme for the past twelve months, and all building activities in the district, both on development schemes and under the provisions of the Native Housing Act, are being carried out by Maori teams under the control of qualified builders.

The class of work being performed by these gangs has been the subject of much favourable comment, and the results achieved undoubtedly reflect the greatest credit upon the men concerned and those responsible for their training.

A solution has yet to be found to the problem of providing homes for people who have no land and little income, but in the meantime this class of applicant is being encouraged to save a deposit.

A total of 341 applications for new houses or repairs to existing dwellings has been received to date.

SOUTH ISLAND: REPORT ON NATIVE HOUSING.

The housing programme in this Island has been restricted and confined owing to the small and scattered Maori population, combined with the fact that most of the Natives are in the indigent class and their needs can only be met by labour subsidies. Furthermore, no qualified builders capable of handling gangs of untrained men are available, and with no field staff located in the South Island it has been impossible to establish an organization. However, these matters are receiving consideration, and it is hoped, with the co-operation of the Public Works Department, to gradually overcome the existing obstacles.

In the Marlborough District a Maori gang under the supervision of a Native builder has been doing excellent work.