

Consolidated Fund). Prior to 1939-40 the moneys required for the promotion of employment amongst Maoris were provided out of the Employment Promotion Fund. The sum of £8,000 represents the final payment to the Lands and Survey Department in liquidation of the amount of approximately £45,000 authorized in 1930 to be written off survey liens charged against various blocks of Native land. The object of the writing-off was to clear the titles of excessive charges and pave the way for consolidation and development. The item £6,534 for Maori participation in the Centennial Exhibition represents cost of erection and furnishing meeting-house, £5,951, incidental expenses (transport of and catering for concert parties, and general), £1,286, less recoveries by way of proceeds of entertainments, £703. A further substantial amount should be recovered from the disposal of the meeting-house. The expenditure on destruction of rabbits and noxious weeds on Native land is actually made by the Agriculture Department, and, in accordance with a standing arrangement, that Department is recouped from vote "Native." The payment of £5,000 in respect of the Taranaki land is made to the Taranaki Trust Board for the benefit of the four leading Taranaki tribes in accordance with section 49 of the Native Purposes Act, 1931, which authorizes the settlement of Native grievances regarding confiscated land. Each annual payment is subject to parliamentary appropriation.

An annual amount of £7,000 is provided for Native purposes from the Consolidated Fund under Part V of the Civil List Act, 1920. Of this sum, £3,600 is administered by the Department of Health and applied towards the cost of medical and nursing services for Maoris. The balance is disbursed at the discretion of the Native Minister for purposes having for their object the promotion of the welfare of the race or individuals. The amount expended during the year was £4,625, which is considerably lower than previous years, due in no small measure to the operation of the social-security legislation, which has practically eliminated allowances in necessaries from the Civil List funds to meet cases of indigence.

A further sum of £6,000 was paid to the Arawa Trust Board, representing the sixteenth annual payment authorized by statute. These funds are used for the general benefit of the Arawa tribes.

DISTRICT REPORTS.

The following are interesting extracts from reports on departmental operations in each district:—

Tokerau District.

Native Land Court.—During the year there were nine gazetted sittings of the Court, together with adjournments and special sittings, and in accordance with an established practice, which has been proved of definite advantage, the Court thus held sessions at numerous settlements throughout the district. A large amount of general business was dealt with by the Court in its ordinary jurisdiction, and, in addition, a considerable part of the Court work has been in connection with matters relative to land development, housing, and consolidation of landed interests. While assisting the Department in its various activities, the Court has continued to act as a guide to the Maori people and a protector of valid rights. Numerous certificates were issued showing the landed interests owned by Natives, to assist them with their applications for benefits under the social-security legislation. 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 discouraging alienations is of material assistance in the pursuance of the constructive activity of the Department—namely, 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. 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 steadily continuing during the year, and a certain amount of progress has been made in parts of the four main scheme areas—viz., Mangonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara. However, by reason of other activities and the shortage of survey staff to assist, the progress with final schemes has necessarily been slow.

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.

Although 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 retained its interest in the Te Kao Settlement, maintaining a store and other activities for the benefit of the people.

Housing.—Housing activity in this district has steadily progressed, but there is still urgent need for numbers of new houses, as the living-conditions of a large number of Natives are far from what is desired or necessary.