

attended by the Director of Primary Production and the Under-Secretary of the Native Department. The meeting was an outstanding success in that a truly representative Maori gathering left fortified with departmental assurances that their efforts were thoroughly appreciated and that their aims and objects had and would have full support. The larger question of repatriation of the young Maori people, soldier and civilian, was also discussed.

Rates.—During the year a good deal of progress has been made in the matter of dealing with the rates problems.

After a certain amount of preliminary groundwork on the part of the Court and its officers, the Whakatane County Council and the Rangitaiki Drainage Board combined their activities in the appointment of a prominent Maori leader to report upon each individual rate assessment of the district, and to endeavour to arrange for the liquidation of past rates by payment of present and future levies. His operations have had very pleasing results, and out of a total of 1,542 applications for rate-charging orders the Court has been able to fully dispose of 758 applications without making a single order. In the great majority of these cases it is anticipated that no further rate trouble will ensue, and the balance of the applications still to be dealt with are in a district not covered, while a good many will be withdrawn by the County Council on account of the indigency of the owners and the impracticability of making any productive use of the land.

In the Opotiki County a commencement has been made for dealing with the rates problem along the lines adopted in the Whakatane County. Some 304 cases are before the Court, and of these about one-third have already been liquidated by arrangements for payment of part of the rates and the writing-off of the balance.

In conclusion, the Court appreciates the reasonable manner in which the County officers and the Natives themselves have approached the rating question. There will, no doubt, remain some cases where recalcitrant factors oppose any settlement by peaceful means, leaving the only course open to the Court that of issuing charging-orders and appointing receivers to effect a settlement of the encumbrance.

National War Effort.—In June last the Board, in conjunction with local Maori Elders, formed a Convening Committee for the purpose of organizing and co-operating with the rest of the district in the various phases of the national war effort. District committees were set up from Cape Runaway to Matakana Island and back as far as Te Whaiti, Ruatahuna, and Taupo. Their functions were—

- (1) To assist in increasing those primary products which the Director of Primary Production has called for as part of the national effort :
- (2) To organize and regiment the Maori man-power in order that the race would be able to pull its weight in the national effort :
- (3) To prepare a programme and commence the work necessary for the rehabilitation of the Maori members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

Increased Primary Production.—The call of the Director of Primary Production that affected the Waiariki district was for increased maize, barley, and bacon production, and in this direction the Board and the Committees have attained substantial results.

The Natives at Te Teko planted and harvested a little over 100 acres of barley on land that was not suitable for maize-production. The effort, though small, was not intended to be other than a token of the will of these people to do whatever might be asked of them.

So far as bacon-production was concerned, the Horohoro District Committee changed over entirely from light-weight porkers to heavy baconers. This Committee was able to report that it had carried out its programme and had produced some 40 tons of bacon where no bacon had been produced before.

The main call, however, was for maize-production, and it was suggested that an extra 4,000 acres should be planted in order that the Dominion could become independent of imported maize. It is noteworthy that the District Committees here contributed 2,800 acres of crops towards this effort. With old areas replanted and the extra areas brought in the Committees are handling for this season approximately 3,600 acres of maize.

The crops have turned out exceptionally well. The maize is now being harvested, and there is every indication that it will be a particularly heavy crop.

Rehabilitation.—Under this heading the Committees are busily engaged in listing up those areas of land suitable and available for rehabilitating their soldier representatives. This is a very important phase of the Committees' activities, and they feel sure that the Government will assist them in every way possible in the development of these lands.

Tairāwhiti District.

Native Land Court.—During the year some twenty sittings of the Court were held. As each succeeding year legislation tends to extend the assistance given to Natives in the development of their lands, the provision of better housing conditions, and in education and general welfare work both individually and communally, so also has the work of the Court been increased and greater responsibilities placed on its officers. This promotion of the general welfare of the people is reflected in the increasing interest taken by them in the work of the Court and Board, especially by the younger generation who were in the past so prone to leave everything affecting their lands to their elders.

Although there has been a slight decrease in the volume of business transacted, the number of orders made reaches the high figure of 5,135. The revenue from fees is higher than that of the preceding year.

During the period under review 1,817 succession orders were made, involving, in the majority of cases, the distribution of rents, farm profits, and other moneys held to the credit of deceased persons. The total succession duty collected from various sources and paid to the Stamp Office amounted to £1,526, representing assessments on individual interests in excess of £200 valued at £76,300. The Court investigated the titles to what may be regarded as the last of the Papatipu lands in the Poverty Bay area, and as befitting the occasion, great interest was evidenced in the proceedings by both Maori and pakeha alike.