

Partition and exchange orders have decreased in number this year, but still represent a large proportion of the work of the Court, and because of the many interests involved require more than ordinary diligence and investigation to ensure that the interests of all parties are adequately protected. In all cases the effect of partition and exchange is to provide suitable areas for development, sites for erection of houses, and the setting-apart of land for Maraes and other public and communal purposes.

*Native Rates.*—Orders securing rates for the local authorities amounted to 1,929, the greater proportion of which affected lands in the Wairoa County. In the Waiaapu County, which includes rateable Native land to the value of £94,072, a record collection of rates has been made—£7,950 being received from the annual levy of £10,315, representing a 77-per-cent. collection.

During the year there were only four cases where the Maori Land Board was appointed a Receiver to enforce rate charges due. In twenty cases the Board was discharged from its office as Receiver, sufficient revenue or other moneys having been collected to enable the charging-orders to be satisfied. Leases were arranged in eleven other cases for varying terms in respect of some 342 acres.

Other orders, affecting both the material and personal welfare of the Maori people, included adoptions, probates, letters of administration, vesting-orders, &c.

*Consolidation.*—As previously reported, five instalments of the Northern Waiaapu consolidation scheme have either been completed or are in the course of completion. These comprise farm lands and Native Township sections at Tikitiki, a large area south of the Maraehara River, and areas awarded to the Crown in satisfaction of rates and survey compromises. The balance and major portion of the scheme will have to remain in abeyance until the ownership of the Marangairoa 1b, Herupara No. 1, and Wharekahika Blocks are finally determined pursuant to sections 12, 13, and 14 of the Native Purposes Act, 1938.

Further progress has been made with the Mohaka scheme. All data have been finally checked, necessary amendments made, and provisional orders have been drawn up for the consideration of the Court.

*Alienations.*—There has been during the year an appreciable increase in the number of applications for confirmation of alienations of Native land. The greater number were in respect of alienations by way of lease, and it is a matter for satisfaction that many of the alienees have been Natives who in this district show a keen desire to acquire and resume the occupation of their ancestral lands.

*Maori Welfare.*—Considerable attention is given to the general welfare of the Maori people, especially to those who through age or disability are unable to provide for themselves. Assistance has been given towards obtaining social-security benefits, arranging for the treatment of the sick at home or in hospital, ensuring the proper use of rents or other moneys for the improvement of living and housing conditions and, in the case of minors, in providing for their maintenance, advancement, and education. Progress in this respect is facilitated by the co-operation of the officers of the Health, Child Welfare, Education, Social Security, and other Departments of State who contact the Maori people in any way.

*Native Housing.*—The policy of providing better housing conditions for the Maori people has been vigorously pursued. The repayments, both under the Act and the Special Housing Fund, are cause for general satisfaction. Statistical returns and matters dealing with the progress of housing will be more fully dealt with in the report of the Board of Native Affairs.

*Maori Land Board.*—Receipts and payments for the year are practically on a par with those of the preceding year.

At 31st March, 1941, the financial position of the Board was as follows:—

	£
Total receipts (including Native Trust stations) .. .. .	127,405
Total expenditure (including Native Trust) .. .. .	126,843
Government securities .. .. .	51,923
Advances on mortgage, loans, and overdrafts .. .. .	81,416
On deposit with Native Trustee .. .. .	15,560
Cash balances .. .. .	3,035
Reserves .. .. .	52,544
Liability to Native beneficiaries .. .. .	101,997

### *Aotea District.*

*Native Land Court.*—In all, fifteen sittings were held, the Court sitting at Wanganui, Hawera, New Plymouth, Taumarunui, and Tokaanu. Orders were made in 1,087 cases, comprising 24 partitions, 603 succession, and 460 miscellaneous orders, including an investigation of title. In addition, the Court undertook the now customary miscellaneous investigations and inquiries arising from departmental administration. As in the past, the Court's time has been largely taken up with the vexed question of rates and the consequential and recurring applications for charging-orders. Fees collected totalled £923.

Applications for confirmation of alienations dealt with during the year totalled 128, an advance of 22 over the figure for 1939-40.

Alienations affecting timber continue to occupy the time and attention of the Court, which, in conjunction with the State Forest Service, is particularly attentive to the interests of the Natives alienating.

*Maori Land Board.*—Steps have been taken to lease all suitable areas of vested lands and Native township sections which have been previously unoccupied or have reverted to the Board. In this district is situated the largest area of native forest in the Dominion, and litigation, culminating in an appeal to the Privy Council, has now helped to clarify the position of the Crown, the Board, and the Natives in relation thereto.