

On 23rd April, 1945, Mr. Ivor Prichard, LL.B., was appointed to the Native Land Court Bench as Judge of the Tokerau District. Judge Prichard, who practised as a solicitor in Waitara for twenty-two years, took a prominent part in the growth of that town, occupying positions on the Borough Council, County Council, Chamber of Commerce, Harbour Board, and Returned Services' Association. He took an especial interest in Maori affairs in the district.

### *Maori Population*

The estimated Maori population as at the 31st March, 1945, was 101,538, excluding members of the Armed Forces serving overseas. Including servicemen, the figure would be approximately 103,000. This shows an increase of approximately 25 per cent. since the last census in 1936, when the total was 82,326, and almost 100 per cent. over the last thirty years. There is thus a very definite indication that the race has survived the danger of extinction which appeared certain less than fifty years ago.

## MAORI WELFARE BRANCH

The Chief Welfare Officer commenced his duties in September, 1944, and by the end of the year under review Welfare Officers were operating in Ruatoria and Gisborne and a lady Welfare Officer at Head Office. Further appointments are to be made in other districts. The work already accomplished has indicated clearly the value of the new Branch in enabling the Department to give more adequate attention to the social problems of the Maori people. The field of operations of the branch is a very wide one, but some of the more important aspects will be dealt with seriatim.

### *Economic and Domestic Surveys*

In order to gain first-hand information of conditions in Maori communities, the Chief Welfare Officer has carried out detailed surveys of some of the settlements where an improved standard of housing and living conditions generally is an urgent necessity. The localities reported upon to date are as follows:

Motuiti Pa, Foxton, comprising .. .. .	10 families and	96 individuals.
Pannure, Market Gardens, comprising .. .. .	53	259
Humatao Pa, Onehunga, comprising .. .. .	15	93
Waihi Borough, comprising .. .. .	18	134
Pukekohe Market Gardens, comprising .. .. .	132	779
	228	1,361

Following upon these surveys, action is now being taken to endeavour to improve living conditions in the settlements.

### *Maori Hostels*

Inspections have been made of various Maori hostels now operating in the North Island, and projects for the erection and establishment of new hostels have been reported upon.

The hostels already established with departmental assistance in Auckland and Frankton Junction have fully justified the hopes of the various organizations responsible for their establishment and have considerably eased the accommodation problem in both centres.

### *Placement and General Social Welfare*

Valuable service is being performed by Welfare Officers in securing suitable employment for Maoris and in assisting the authorities with problem cases and indigent Maoris. The following table indicates the number of cases dealt with in Wellington during a period of four months:—

	Females.	Males.	Total.
(1) Placed in employment .. .. .	29	1	30
(2) Transfers arranged to more suitable employment .. .. .	13	..	13
(3) Termination of employment arranged owing to ill health, maternity cases, &c. .. .. .	12	..	12
(4) Delinquents (Borstal cases, &c.), placed in employment or returned to homes .. .. .	12	..	12
(5) Indigent cases assisted .. .. .	2	1	3
(6) General welfare—interviews and advice .. .. .	49	1	50
	117	3	120

Close liaison has been maintained with the Justice Department, the Child Welfare authorities, and the National Service Department in connection with the cases cited above. The cases referred to under the heading of General Welfare covered a wide range of subjects, including assistance in applications for social security benefits and housing, the provision of temporary accommodation for visiting Maoris, avenues of approach to other Government Departments, and many other matters of that nature. The lady Welfare Officer has been able to carry out much valuable work amongst Maori girls employed in Wellington.

This type of work will be carried out in other centres when the district Welfare Officers are fully established.

### *Maori Conferences*

The chief Welfare Officer attended conferences at Wellington, Ruatoria, and Rotorua for the purpose of reporting to the Department on problems which were raised at those meetings.