

Maori Land Board

The farming activities of the Board are limited to the station property at Waikawa, and the question of the future policy to be adopted on this property is under consideration by the Board of Native Affairs.

In an endeavour to promote the interest of the Maori people in fruit-production, an unimproved area adjoining Lake Rotoiti and the scenic reserve at Hongi's Track has been burnt off, drained, and ploughed. Some 150 fruit-trees have been established, and further planting of fruit-trees and small fruits is contemplated this coming year. If materials are available, a tea-room to cater for the visiting public is to be established.

Maize-production activities and the growing of kumaras by the Maoris of Tauranga, Motiti, and Matakana Island have been continued. The dry spell, which so disastrously affected the northern half of the North Island in one of the worst droughts experienced in the Bay of Plenty for many years, had an adverse effect on the maize crops at Matakana, with the result that production was reduced considerably. An active campaign for the cultivation of 2,000 acres of maize is being launched during the coming year.

The Board of Native Affairs has approved of the Board's proposals for the establishment of an agricultural contracting account, limited to a capital outlay of £4,000, for the express purpose of entering into contracts with Maori land-owners for bringing into cultivation areas of land now lying idle which are not within the sphere of Native land development activities. Opportunity will be taken by the Native Land Development Branch to avail themselves of the Board's contracting machinery for the purpose of cultivation of scheme areas where labour is in short supply.

During the year the Board of Native Affairs has paid the following sums to the Maori Land Board on account of advances made prior to the inclusion of the lands in development schemes: Tihiotonga, £4,445 6s. 4d.; Okere and Taheke, £6,695 0s. 2d.

Maori Welfare

In September, 1945, a Welfare Officer was established at Opotiki. The following is a summary of his operations to the 31st March, 1946:—

Trade apprenticeships, employment arranged, &c.	..	..	38
Rehabilitation cases investigated	..	..	184
Cases of indigence investigated	..	..	5
Delinquent cases	..	..	4
New housing applications arranged	..	..	13
General interviews and advice	..	..	400
			644

A housing survey was also carried out at Ruatoki.

The Taiporutu Club of Rotorua is to be congratulated on its voluntary welfare work for hospital patients. During the year 100 garments were made for children in the hospital and all Maori patients were regularly visited each week.

TAIRAWHITI DISTRICT (GISBORNE)

There were twenty-eight sittings of the Court during 1945-46, as compared with twenty-two in the previous year, and over 3,000 cases were notified for hearing. The Native Appellate Court held two sittings in this district and a total of 11 appeals were considered. Six of these appeals were disposed of, and the judgment of the Court is awaited in the remaining five cases.

Pursuant to section 14 of the Native Purposes Act, 1938, a Native Land Court Commission of three Judges sat at Te Araroa to hear claims concerning the ownership of the Wharekahika Block, and the decision of the Commission was delivered in respect