

CONSOLIDATION OF TITLES

101. It is well known that the plural ownership of Maori lands has been one of the principal factors hindering their proper use. A person who has only undivided shares in a block is naturally unwilling to spend money and work on development when there is every possibility that other owners will reap the benefit of his efforts.

102. Some years ago large-scale consolidation schemes were commenced with the intention of grouping together all of the interests of each individual or family within a specified district. Owing to changes of staff and a shortage of officers with the experience necessary for the work, little progress has been made in the past few years.

103. In an effort to speed up consolidation a conference of Judges and senior officers was held last year to discuss the difficulties encountered, and ways of overcoming them. Since then it has been possible to make provision for increased consolidation staffs. Commissioners of the Court have been appointed in the Tokerau and Waiariki Districts with the duty of co-ordinating the work of the field staff and assisting the Court with the judicial part of consolidation proceedings.

104. An examination has been made of all uncompleted schemes, and decisions have been reached as to the priority in which the various areas should be completed. Efforts will be directed towards the completion of schemes where existing land development and settlement under development or housing is affected. The most pressing need is to consolidate in those areas where there is a possibility of arranging titles in such a way as to enable development occupiers to secure a better tenure, either freehold or leasehold.

105. Apart from the larger consolidation schemes, the Maori Land Court has been making very good progress in encouraging planned successions and exchanges so that small areas of land do not pass into the ownership of a number of successors. The Department takes any suitable opportunity of helping consolidation through purchases by Maoris. Loans are made by the Board of Maori Affairs to enable such purchases to be made.

MAORI INTERPRETERS' BOARD OF EXAMINERS

106. Thirteen candidates, all members of the Maori race, sat for the Maori Interpreters' Examination during the year. The six who qualified were officers of the Department.

107. Of the seven who did not qualify, one has qualified in all the written papers, but because of illness has not taken the oral test; three of the remainder have been granted passes in four of the five papers.

108. The Public Service Commission has recognized the Maori Interpreters' Examination, First Grade, as being the equivalent of the two optional subjects for the Public Service Senior Examination, and this is encouraging Maoris in the Service to study for the examination.

109. Since the death of Mr. Kingi R. Tahiwī, O.B.E., Mr. Waipaina M. Te Awarau, M.A., LL.B., has been sole examiner, and in that capacity he has maintained the high standard that is required to qualify as a Licensed Interpreter of the First Grade.