

Table B herewith sets out in detail the operations of the Boards, together with their statements of receipts and disbursements. The table is in continuation of that contained in previous report.

The revenue derived through the Maori Land Boards from fees payable under section 81 for the period ended 31st March, 1914, amounts to £3,868 8s. 6d., which is £1,095 less than for the corresponding period, 1912-13; but revenues for commission and interest balances, &c., of £3,500 make a total revenue of £7,368 8s. 6d., as against an expenditure of £6,053.

#### NATIVE LAND PURCHASE.

The Native Land Purchase Board held sixteen meetings during the year. Numerous offers were received and considered by the Board. The actual purchases for the period totalled an area of 83,619 acres (including 490½ acres of the Orakei Block, acquired to 31st March, 1914), and negotiations are in progress in respect of 150,000 acres.

#### SURVEYS.

Nothing has happened during the period just passed to alter my views in regard to this all-important matter. As previously stated, it is the crux of the position. Without surveys no title can issue, and it cannot be expected that any intending settler will step in and take up land without he obtains a good valid title. Not only is the survey of the land required, but the survey of the road access is also necessary.

The position as at the time of my last annual report was as follows: Since April, 1910, there were 183 requisitions sent forward for the survey of 185,689 acres, and up to then only 70 blocks, totalling 53,303 acres, were surveyed, leaving 113 blocks, aggregating 132,386 acres, of which it is understood 61,514 acres are under survey.

#### MAORI COUNCILS.

I have nothing to add to my former reports except that during the smallpox epidemic the usefulness of the Maori Councils was apparent, and the action taken by the various Councils was, I understand, of assistance in helping the Health Department to cope with the outbreak.

#### NATIVE INTERPRETERS.

During the period thirty-two persons sat for examination, with the following result: Seventeen passed first-grade and four passed second-grade examinations. The total amount of fees earned under this head is £98 14s. I regret to report that it was found necessary to revoke and cancel a first-grade license owing to malpractice by the holder.

#### GENERAL SUMMARY.

There is not the least doubt that the epidemic of smallpox interfered greatly with the workings of the Native Land Courts and the settlement of Native lands by procedure through the Maori Land Boards. The figures are not so good as compared with former periods; but when it is considered that the Court and Boards were practically at a standstill for a period of three months the returns cannot be considered unsatisfactory; and, further, as set out in my report of 1913, owing to stringency of financial operations, and also want of road access to Native blocks, the position was to some extent anticipated.

Since the coming into operation of the Maori Lands Administration Act, 1900, and its amendments, the Maori Land Boards have approved and confirmed the following transactions: 7,190 leases, aggregating 2,706,398 acres; 5,310 transfers, aggregating 1,010,091 acres. Of those areas, the operations since the passing of the Native Land Act, 1909, are as follows: 5,997 leases, totalling 1,531,221 acres; and 5,201 transfers, totalling 1,000,176 acres.

#### STAFF.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of one of our most popular officers, Mr. George Nelson Grimstone, which occurred as the result of the recent Main Trunk railway disaster. It is also with sorrow that I have to record the death of Mr. George H. Davies, who for years was connected with the Department. Although retired on superannuation, he was still connected with the Department as a member of the Native Interpreters Board.

#### DEPARTMENTAL.

The Department's expenditure for the past year was £23,985 14s. 1d., while the total amount of revenue received per medium of Native Land Court, Maori Land Board, and Native Interpreters Board amounts to the sum of £13,051 2s. 6d., made up by way of fees, stamps, commission, interest, &c.

THOS. W. FISHER, Under-Secretary.