

1925.

NEW ZEALAND.

ARAWA DISTRICT TRUST BOARD

(STATEMENT OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE) FOR PERIOD ENDED 31st MARCH, 1925.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

ARAWA DISTRICT TRUST BOARD.

THE first annual report has been received from the Arawa District Trust Board. From this the Board appears to be proceeding methodically with its work. A policy has been framed to meet the varied interests of the tribe. Farming and Housing, Maraes and Pensions, Health and Education, Maori Arts and Miscellaneous were decided upon to be matters embracing the best interests of the tribe, and therefore should be promoted and assisted by the Board.

In order to carry out this policy intelligently departments were set up, and committees were put in charge to deal with applications and make recommendations, as follows: Departments of Lands and Workers' Dwellings, to be under a Minister and four members; Departments of Maraes and Pensions, to be under a Minister and three members; Departments of Education and Health, to be under a Minister and two members; Departments of Maori Arts and Miscellaneous, to be under a Minister and two members.

A perusal of the report of the Minister of Lands discloses the existence of a strong, healthy desire to farm lands. Certainly there is in every Maori settlement in the district a fair proportion of men of the type to make capital farmers if given the opportunity and the needful financial backing. The Board, though deeply conscious of the great importance of diverting Maori thoughts and strength to the cultivation of the soil as a means of livelihood, is impotent to help as it should do, because it possesses a limited purse. The assistance of the Government must be invoked if a scheme of land-settlement is to succeed, and it is in this connection that the following observations are made.

"Love of home—that is, of the settlement or kainga—is a powerful sentiment with the Maori. The Board believes in fostering this sentiment, because it is based on a deep-seated tribal pride, which under proper guidance will become the propelling agency to attain success despite difficulties." The report points out that about 1,500 acres of what is now waste country near Mourea and Okere Falls could support quite a number of families if financial assistance were forthcoming. This is beyond the power of the Arawa Trust Board, but if the necessary money could be advanced by the Native Trustee the Board is willing to undertake supervision of the expenditure and the task of making the titles so that the securities may be acceptable. The Board has already undertaken the task of repatriating the Maketu Peninsula, which was the landing-place of the "Arawa" Canoe and is intimately associated with the growth and prosperity of the Arawa Tribe.

The report on workers' dwellings shows that that Department recognizes the importance of improving home conditions, and the influence of comfortable home surroundings as a factor and example in moulding the character of the family growing up. Twenty applications were received for assistance, but the limited funds at disposal only allowed for assistance in five cases. Some, however, were put in the way of getting assistance from other sources. A sum of £3,362 was voted towards the improvement of the public buildings, water-supply, and sanitary conveniences of various villages. The Board works on a limited-subsidy basis, thus encouraging self-help and thrift among the Maoris receiving the benefit of the grants.

The Pensions Department granted relief for the blind, the aged, the disabled, and the indigent to the extent of £365, besides assisting others to obtain the pensions they were entitled to by law.

The report of the Education Department reveals that seven Maori youths who had qualified for the University by gaining scholarships or Matriculation have been assisted by grants ranging from £15 to £55. One of such scholars has already shown his proficiency by obtaining a pass in sections of the Bachelor of Science degree, as well as gaining sections of the examination qualifying him as an Associate in Electrical Engineering. In addition the Board has made several grants as assistance to

schools where Maori pupils are being educated. The Educational Committee is of opinion that the education of the child until it receives Matriculation should be the concern of the parents or guardian of the scholar. After the youth has proved his intellectual superiority, then the Board's assistance should be available to those parents who are unable themselves to undertake the cost of fitting the youth for what he is best qualified.

The Hospital Department report pays a tribute to the remarkable work of the Medical Superintendent of King George V Hospital (Dr. Wallis) and his staff in the way of breaking down the superstitious dread and aversion of most Maoris to science of medicine and healing. This, it is said, will do much to lessen and eradicate the belief in the Maori tohunga. The Board has been able not only to render its own people service by special arrangements for treatment in the hospitals and by medical men, and by securing adequate treatment in necessitous cases, but has also assisted the local hospital authorities in recovering hospital fees from those Maoris who were in a position to pay. Payments amounting to £374 6s. 8d. were authorized for the year.

The Maori Arts Department recommends the establishment of a school of Maori arts in the Rotorua district. A contract has been entered into to erect a suitable war memorial. It also recommends the erection of a Maori hostel at Rotorua. The report further shows that of a sum of £875 advanced by way of assistance to Natives to tide them over difficulties, a sum of £338 was repaid within the year. This included a case of helping a Native into a business for which he was suitable. The Arawas at important meetings had agreed that a certain sum should be set aside for assistance for Maori soldiers. The Maori soldier members on the Board decided the amount be not claimed, but should be earmarked for assistance for farming operations, in which preference as far as possible might be given to soldier settlers. One matter that the Board asks is that facilities might be given it that their interests should as soon as possible be consolidated. This desire had been anticipated by the necessary application having been filed, and a Judge allotted to the task of seeing it carried through.

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