

After the contribution of £3,600 out of the sum of £7,000 provided annually from the Civil list for Native purposes the balance is utilized in the main towards small food and clothing allowances to extremely indigent Natives. The calls on this fund were so great that the average allowance was particularly small, but the introduction of the invalidity pension legislation benefited most of these cases, and comparatively few now remain a charge on the fund.

Another source from which much good towards the general welfare of the Maori has resulted is the Maori Purposes Fund (see Maori Purposes Fund Act, 1934–35), which was established in 1924 by contributions totalling £90,000 from the profits of the Maori Land Boards. The total expenditure of £96,274 to 31st March, 1937, includes educational, £30,178; pas, buildings, and sickness, £21,030; arts and crafts and ethnological research, £18,977; Te Aute College buildings, £10,970. The accounts are kept by the Native Trustee, who makes disbursements on the order of the Maori Purposes Fund Board.

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

These Boards, which number seven, operating separately, succeeded the Maori Land Councils in 1905, and their main functions as originally constituted were (1) to administer on behalf of the beneficial owners areas of Native land vested in them, (2) to act as the agent of the Native owners in respect of alienations under Part XVIII of the Native Land Act, (3) to administer trust funds arising out of alienations, and (4) to confirm or dismiss all alienations affecting Native land. By section 2 of the Native Land Amendment Act, 1932, this latter function was transferred to the Native Land Courts.

In the course of administration the Boards collect and distribute large sums of money annually, being the proceeds of alienations—rents, royalties, purchase-moneys, &c. The total collections for the year under review amounted to £295,437 (the payments were £313,171), and the number of beneficiaries personal accounts at the 31st March, 1937, was 73,200.

It is inevitable that accumulations of personal credits become unclaimed from time to time and for varying periods, pending applications for succession, and these accumulations, together with trust funds held for administration, provide the source from which investments are made by the Boards. These surplus funds were for many years invested on deposit with the Native Trustee, who allowed interest at the Common Fund rate. The Amendment Act of 1922 authorized the Boards to advance moneys upon mortgage, and the Amendment Act of 1926 empowered the Boards to also advance funds for farming and other purposes in respect of Native freehold land. The bulk of the Boards' advances are to Maori settlers, who are required to give proper and valid securities over their farming lands; or on lands vested in the Boards and farmed for the benefit of the owners. These trust-moneys, however, in view of their limitation, have proved inadequate to meet the demands for financial assistance, but, nevertheless, have been the means of establishing a considerable number of Native farmers.

The funds held or invested by the seven Maori Land Boards at the 31st March, 1937, were as follows:—

Government securities	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	57,828
Mortgages and charges	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	464,243
On deposit with Native Trustee	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	163,602
Cash balances	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16,108
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<u>£701,781</u>

The Native land remaining vested in the Maori Land Boards at 31st March, 1937, was 653,268 acres.

NATIVE TRUSTEE.

The Native Trust Office, which was established in 1921, has since 1934 been amalgamated with the Native Department. The work of this division of the Department is very similar to that undertaken by the Public Trust Office, except that it is confined to Natives and Native land, and brief particulars of the varied activities are as follows:—

Reserves.—A number of Native reserves are vested in the Native Trustee by statute for administration, and leases are arranged and the rentals collected and disbursed on lines similar to those adopted by the Maori Land Boards.

The annual rent-roll from leases is £41,000, which sum is distributed periodically to approximately ten thousand beneficial owners.

These reserves are as follows:—

	Acres.
West Coast Settlement Reserves (Taranaki)	72,000
Town of Greymouth	500
North Island tenths (Wellington City)	38
Palmerston North City	71
Other North Island reserves	4,000
South Island tenths (Nelson City and district)	4,200
Other South Island reserves	13,500

Estates.—The Native Trustee is statutory trustee for Maori mental patients and convicts. He is frequently appointed by the Court the executor and administrator of the estates of deceased Natives, the trustee of minors and other Natives under disability, the receiver in respect of Native lands for which the owners cannot be traced, &c. He may also accept for administration funds belonging to Natives. The Native Trustee and the Maori Land Boards alone can give a good discharge for the proceeds of the sale of Native land in excess of £10 due to Native minors.

The estates at present under administration number 2,196, and the amount of funds held to their credit is £117,962.