

Stations.—The Consolidated Act of 1930 empowers the Native Trustee to engage in farming on behalf of the beneficial owners of Native land vested in him for the purpose. Seven stations are at present being farmed under this provision, comprising a total area of 38,162 acres. Further particulars in connection with these stations are contained in parliamentary paper G.—10.

In addition to these stations, other properties are being farmed by the Native Trustee, either in the course of the administration of an estate or by reason of the fact that they have been acquired through the default of a mortgagor.

Investments and Funds.—The finance of the Native Trust Office is derived mainly from the funds held to the credit of beneficiaries, but where these are insufficient for the purposes of the Office the Treasury may be called upon to advance moneys out of the Consolidated Fund or from the Public Works Fund.

The following were the amounts invested or held at 31st March, 1937 :—

Local bodies' securities	..	..	..	..	..	..	£	5,100
Mortgages—							£	
To Natives	..	..	..	..	..	..	437,049	
To others	..	..	..	..	..	..	9,778	
							—	446,827
Station and other overdrafts	..	..	..	..	..	..		146,553
Properties acquired under mortgages								12,644
Cash balance	..	..	..	..	..	..		11,544
								—
								£622,668

The Native Trustee's liability to beneficiaries at the 31st March, 1937, was £461,635, and his accumulated reserves amounted to £114,673.

EAST COAST TRUST LANDS.

These are now administered and controlled by the East Coast Commissioner (whose office is at Gisborne) under Part IV of the Native Purposes Act, 1931, and comprise an area of 223,061 acres. Some of these lands are actively farmed by the Commissioner and some are leased by him. Most of the leases will expire in 1942 and 1943, by which date the Commissioner will be required to formulate a policy for dealing with these areas. Although the Native Department has no jurisdiction over the Commissioner, he is an appointed member of the Board of Native Affairs, which exercises control over his investments and farming operations.

Further information relating to the operations of the East Coast Commissioner is shown in parliamentary paper G.—10.

NATIVE LAND COURTS.

These Courts, together with the Native Appellate Court, serve an indispensable purpose in the settlement and adjustment of all claims as between Natives, particularly with regard to their ownership of land. Their need to-day is just as necessary as in the earlier days of European colonization, and the protection they afford to the Native in his land dealings is an essential safeguard against malpractice.

The business transacted by the Courts during the year is set out in Table A.

NATIVE LAND LAWS.

The Native Land Amendment Act, 1936, and the Native Purposes Act, 1936, came into operation on the 31st October, 1936.

Part I of the former Act consolidated and amplified the provisions of section 522 of the Native Land Act, 1931 (relating to the development of Native land). This enactment remedied defects in the law which became apparent as development proceeded and not only clarified the law, but extended it to cover cases which it was intended to cover. Part II, in addition to re-enacting and clarifying subsection (7) of section 522 aforesaid relating to advances to Maoris for the farming of lands not declared subject to Part I, contains an important amendment to the Native land laws empowering the Native Land Court to appoint a trustee for a Native whose disability does not come within the provisions of Part X of the Native Land Act, 1931, thus bringing its powers more into line with those of the Supreme Court relating to the making of protection orders under the Aged and Infirm Persons Protection Act, 1912.

The Native Purposes Act, 1936, contains the usual empowering clauses for the adjustment of claims and disputes, &c., relating to specified areas of Native land. Also by this Act the powers of the Maori Councils to make by-laws for the construction, maintenance, and control of water-supplies to Maori kaingas, villages, and pas were extended to enable them to impose charges in relation to those supplies.

NATIVE LAND CONSOLIDATION.

Although provision was contained in the 1909 Act for schemes of consolidation, very little progress was made in the consolidation of Native land titles until the legislation was somewhat extended in 1927. In that and the following year several schemes were commenced and a number of these have