

*Welfare Work.*—During the year the Board supervised the installation of several water-supply and drainage schemes for various communities and also arranged for the construction of numerous septic tanks, &c., for individuals, thus safeguarding the health of the people concerned. The Board's supervisors were also called upon to investigate living-conditions in cases of distress.

Investigations were also made into the circumstances of applicants for indigent relief and, to a lesser extent, for pensions and family allowances.

*Board's Finances.*—Compared with the year 1935-36 there was a heavy increase in the volume of business passing through the Board. The receipts and payments on behalf of beneficiaries totalled £75,486 and £66,911 respectively, the corresponding figures for the previous year being £61,804 and £49,455 respectively.

The assets of the Board total £151,459 comprising :—		£
Cash balances	.. .. .	705
Deposits with Native Trustee	.. .. .	66,782
Mortgages and other investments	.. .. .	61,760
Office premises, furniture, &c.	.. .. .	14,001
Sundry debtors	.. .. .	8,211
		<u>£151,459</u>

Reserves (and Appropriation Account) total £55,858, and the total liability to Native beneficiaries is £84,497. Although commissions charged to beneficiaries are very moderate the Board's operations continue to show a substantial surplus of income over expenditure, the net surplus for the year 1936-37 being £1,758, an increase of £316 over the previous year.

During the year three advances only were made to Native mortgagors. With the exception of one advance to a European, all mortgages and advances are in a healthy condition, and substantial sinking funds are accumulating. The general position regarding rents payable to the Board is satisfactory, and this position will improve when the numerous applications under the Rehabilitation Act are disposed of. Several large timber deals were completed during the year, all affecting lands in the West Taupo area, and the beneficial owners of the lands concerned will receive very substantial royalties spread over the next ten to twenty years.

Numerous lessees are now taking advantage of the provisions of section 531 of the Native Land Act, 1931, and it is expected that, as the advantages become better realized, still more lessors will have their rents collected by the Board.

During the year eight houses were erected for beneficiaries, for whom funds were in hand.

#### IKAROA AND SOUTH ISLAND DISTRICTS.

*Native Land Court.*—The districts of the Court extend from the Mohaka River in the north to Stewart Island in the south. Twenty-eight sittings of the Court were held during the year, this number including a sitting at the Chatham Islands. The business of the Court for the year was of the usual nature and extent. There appears to be an increase in the number of dealings brought up for confirmation, and there appears also to be a tendency for more Native land to pass than hitherto by way of testamentary disposition to European trustees in trust for the beneficiaries. Both processes divorce the Maori from physical contact with his land and may not be in his best interests, material or spiritual. The Chatham Islands sitting dealt exhaustively with the rating problem found to exist there. The Court's recommendations were given effect to by the Chatham Islands County Empowering Act, 1936. Only one application for a scheme of consolidation is before the Court, and no progress has been made thereon as no staff is available for the preparation of necessary data.

*Maori Land Boards.*—The Boards are having the usual difficulty in collecting rents due on Native land and interest due on trust-moneys invested on behalf of their beneficiaries. This short collection of rents and interest has worked much hardship upon the Maori people during the past few years. As in past years the Boards have accomplished from their own funds something in the way of improving Maori houses and living-conditions generally, but the rate of progress, governed as it is by the need for observing a proper use of trust funds, is necessarily slow.

The President of these Boards further reports: "The powers and functions of the Boards are such as to influence all branches of Maori welfare, but we are not at all satisfied with the result of our efforts. In many of our attempts to produce a practical manifestation of our functions we seem restricted by circumstances outside our control and consequently unable to translate the true force of a beneficent policy and benign measures to the material welfare of the race we contact and represent."