

The relief of unemployed Maoris still enters largely into the scheme of operations undertaken by the Board, and grants totalling £227,600 from the Consolidated Fund and the Employment Promotion Fund were expended during the year in providing suitable occupation for Natives requiring assistance. Only Maoris who have registered with the Labour Department as unemployed persons are eligible for relief, and the funds placed at the disposal of the Board are utilized in subsidizing the labour-costs on the State schemes, rendering assistance during the winter months to settlers whose returns are insufficient for their maintenance, and developing other properties farmed under the Board's direction. All work is carried out on the contract system, under supervision, and, on the whole, good value is obtained for the expenditure incurred. On scheme lands the number of Natives assisted throughout the year was 2,884, and approximately 1,000 more were engaged on other Native properties.

The success which hitherto has attended the land settlement and development efforts of the Board is encouraging, and it is reasonable to assume that a continuation of the present policy of assisting the Maori to follow his natural calling—the cultivation of the soil—will be the means of revivifying a race of people who were the first settlers in this country and whose future has become increasingly difficult and more complicated. The welfare of the Native is inextricably bound up in his lands, and the development of the people can best be achieved through their effective settlement on these lands. But the process will be gradual, and its beneficial result will be more apparent in the next generation of Maoridom.

The housing conditions of Maoris is now a matter that is receiving the attention of the Board, which is empowered under the Native Housing Act, 1935, to make advances upon reasonable security for the erection and repair of Native dwellings out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for this purpose. A survey of the existing situation is in progress and the Government has intimated that a substantial sum will be available during the coming year for housing requirements. Applications, which are coming in freely, are now being considered by the Board, and the present indications are that this activity will become one of great importance.

The Board, in conclusion, desires to express its appreciation of the loyal support and co-operation of officers of the Native Department, who, in spite of heavy demands, have willingly devoted their best energies to furthering the work of the Board.

Accompanying this statement are individual reports on the schemes, farms, stations, and other activities controlled by the Board, together with detailed returns and statistical tables concerning the Board's operations.

M. J. SAVAGE,
Chairman.
