

Orders were made in 1,035 cases, comprising 53 partitions, 692 succession, and 290 miscellaneous applications. Alienations confirmed totalled 86, principally comprised of further leases of partly- or wholly-developed areas. In those instances where sales were permitted, the Court in the majority of cases made adequate provision for the control of the proceeds with a view to their being invested or utilized for the acquisition of tangible assets. The demand for forest products was reflected in the confirmation of resolutions of assembled owners involving substantial areas of virgin bush. In these matters the Court was guided by and received the close co-operation of the State Forest Service. The disposition of the substantial amount of royalties accruing is being controlled as far as possible on similar lines to purchase-money, and as part of this policy the beneficiaries have concurred with the Board in the investment of approximately £8,000 in war bonds.

Two sittings of the Native Appellate Court were held during the year.

Maori Land Board.—The Board's activities have been maintained, and every endeavour has been made to utilize available funds to the best advantage. Surplus Board funds were invested in war loans, bringing the total to date to £28,500. Specific investments in this direction on behalf of individual beneficiaries were increased to a total of £3,470.

During the year the Board initiated or responded to specific requisitions, totalling £100, under section 95 of the Native Land Act, 1931, for the purpose of facilitating donations to Maori patriotic and centennial celebration funds, and also indicated its willingness to support further projects under consideration. To enable certain communities to implement their desire to support the Maori war effort organization's drive for increased production, the Board provided advances for the purchase of seed potatoes to the extent of £1,095.

A summary of the Board's finance at 31st March, 1943, is as follows:—

	£
Total receipts	146,057
Total payments	145,264
Investments—	
Government securities	35,025
Deposit with Native Trustee	69,207
Mortgages	34,594
Cash balances	2,905
Liability to Native beneficiaries	116,307
Reserves	68,363

Maori Welfare.—Every assistance is accorded by departmental officers, and the closest co-operation is maintained with other Departments concerned in the general welfare of the people.

IKAROA AND SOUTH ISLAND DISTRICTS.

Native Land Court.—Judge A. A. Whitehead, who was appointed to the Bench on the 1st January, 1943, has relieved the Chief Judge of the control of the Ikaroa and South Island Native Land Court circuits.

During the past year twenty-five sittings of the Court were held at centres extending from Hastings to Invercargill. The usual wide variety of cases came before the Court, including a considerable number of applications for the assessment of compensation for Native land taken by the Crown for housing and other State purposes. The lands concerned in the most important cases were situated in or near city areas at Ngalaauranga, Palmerston North, Lower Hutt, and Johnsonville, the awards in the two first-mentioned cases being the subject of appeals. In neither case, however, was a variation made by the Native Appellate Court in the lower Court's award of compensation.

Another feature of the Court's activities deserving of comment is the number of cases heard involving applications under section 540 of the Native Land Act, 1931, to have the Native Trustee appointed agent of the owners of blocks of Native land in the South Island. In Canterbury, especially, large areas of Native land appear to be occupied otherwise than by virtue of leases confirmed by the Court. It is often found that an inadequate rental is being paid in such cases and that neighbouring owners are receiving rents from the occupiers to the exclusion of absentees. The position calls for a comprehensive survey of tenures when conditions are normal again.

In spite of war conditions the number of alienations of Native land presented for confirmation by the Court in both districts has been maintained.

Maori Land Boards.—The following is the financial position of the Boards at 31st March, 1943:—

	Ikaroa. £	South Island. £
Total receipts	68,359	9,776
Total payments	77,395	11,990
Mortgage and other investments	38,405	6,593
Government securities—		
Ordinary	1,150	..
War loan	5,100	3,050
Deposits with Native Trustee	41,952	18,844
Cash balances	703	680
Liability to Native beneficiaries	110,270	26,462
Reserves	8,509	2,806

As a war measure and in order to increase production the Ikaroa Board has over the past year purchased considerable quantities of seed potatoes and kumara for planting by Maori growers in the Hawke's Bay District.