

The Department deeply regrets the loss of three valued officers whose names have been added to the Roll of Honour during the past year, one of whom was Lieutenant-Colonel E. te W. Love, Commander of the Maori Battalion serving overseas, and tenders its sincere sympathy to their sorrowing relatives.

DISTRICT REPORTS.

The following reports on departmental activities relate to the different districts.

WAIKATO-MANiapOTO AND TOKERAU DISTRICTS.

The Court and Board activities have been well maintained despite difficulties consequent upon war conditions.

Native Land Court.—The sittings gazetted for the year have been held and the Court adjourned from time to time to various smaller centres for special business which could be more conveniently dealt with locally. During the year, consequent upon the issue of the Tiroa Emergency Regulations, sittings took place of the Tiroa Emergency Commission, which consisted of the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court and the Judge of the Waikato-Maniapoto District. The finding of the Court will have the effect of obviating further causes of friction between the Native owners of the Tiroa and Maraeroa C Blocks and the company which is working the extensive areas of timber on these lands. A lengthy sitting of the Native Appellate Court also took place in the district during the year to deal with a number of appeals which had arisen. As usual, the Court dealt with numerous *ex parte* matters which are not shown in the figures set out in Table A, and special attention has been given to questions arising out of the estates of Maori soldiers who have unfortunately been killed overseas.

Consolidation.—During the year further progress was made with the Te Kao consolidation scheme and a number of final orders were made by the Court. Good progress has been made by the committee working in the Southern Hokianga area, and further series have been submitted and approved by the Hon. the Native Minister.

Maori Land Boards.—The usual routine business has been transacted. Lessees are on the whole keeping their rental payments up to date. There is a keen demand for timber, and several sales have been negotiated.

At the 31st March, 1943, the financial position of the Boards was as follows,—

					Tokerau. £	Waikato-Maniapoto. £
Total receipts	..	..	..	..	30,790	31,066
Total payments	..	..	..	..	30,150	32,257
Liability to beneficiaries	..	..	..	..	43,562	76,998
Land and buildings	..	..	..	..	..	11,083
Investments—						
Mortgages and charges	..	..	..	..	16,900	32,483
Government securities	..	..	..	..	16,865	10,000*
Cash balances	..	..	..	..	1,517	2,992
Reserves	..	..	..	..	268	18,335
On deposit with Native Trustee	..	..	..	..	184	37,548

* War loan.

WAIARIKI DISTRICT.

Native Land Court.—During the year there were twenty gazetted sittings of the Court. The volume of the work has been maintained and many cases not shown in the returns have been dealt with. Applications for rate-charging orders are now disposed of in co-operation with the local bodies, and very satisfactory arrangements are being made to meet practically all rating charges in this district. Of the 1,500-odd applications for such orders advertised for Whakatane, about 1,100 have now been either settled or withdrawn. Many of the remainder affect small uneconomic areas and may also be withdrawn. Much of the improvement in the rating position is due to waste lands having been brought into a revenue-producing state by capital expenditure under the development or primary-production schemes.

Consolidation.—With a further strengthening of the consolidation staff, certain progress has been made, and it is hoped, by confining the work to one or two schemes already commenced, that some finality may be reached at an early date. Final orders have been made by the Court in the Horohoro series, while considerable checking of data is being effected to enable further instalments to be submitted for approval in the Rotomahana-Parekarangi and Taheke series.

Maori Land Board.—The financial activities of the Board have increased, receipts for the year being £69,200 and payments totalling £79,349. As at 31st March, 1943, the financial position of the Board was as follows :—

						£
Liability to Native beneficiaries	..	..	..	..	..	95,015
Cash balances	..	..	..	..	..	4,890
On deposit with Native Trustee	..	..	..	..	..	41,890
Invested in farming properties	..	..	..	..	..	72,606
Invested on mortgage	..	..	..	..	..	4,781
Invested in primary-production activities	..	..	..	..	..	5,538
Invested in National Savings Bonds	..	..	..	..	..	10,000
Invested in Second Liberty Loan	..	..	..	..	..	10,000
Reserves	..	..	..	..	..	56,668