

The accommodation problem for Maori girls employed in Auckland has been considerably relieved by the new Maori hostels now established in Auckland. New hostels were opened during the year at Hepburn Street, Ponsonby, and Pentland Avenue, Mount Eden, the former hostel being operated by the United Maori Mission and the latter by the Presbyterian Church. Large numbers of visiting Maoris have made use of the temporary accommodation provided at Frankton Junction by the hostel erected by the Waikato Maori Hostel Society with financial assistance from the Department. Prior to the erection of this building it was almost impossible for Maoris to obtain satisfactory accommodation when visiting Hamilton.

Waiariki District

Native Land Court

The Court's time was fully taken up with the nineteen gazetted sittings and the wide range of other matters requiring the Court's attention. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of applications by the Board of Native Affairs for recommendations as to the occupancy of development-scheme lands and also in the number of applications for partition and vesting orders for housing purposes.

Consolidation

Progress in the consolidation of Native land titles has been considerably hampered by the shortage of trained staff, but it is hoped that the return of experienced consolidation officers from service with the Armed Forces will enable this important work to proceed more rapidly.

Native Housing

With the establishment of the new housing organization, it is anticipated that there will be a considerable increase in housing operations. Domestic and economic surveys have been made in various parts of the district with the object of providing continuity of work for the building gangs which are now operating or will be operating in the near future. A minimum of sixty houses per annum is aimed at when the organization is in full operation and when materials become available. Building is at present in progress in Rotorua, Taupo, Taneatua, and Te Puke, and since the reorganization two houses have been completed and five are in course of erection. The six teams now operating include eleven Maori ex-servicemen training under the rehabilitation scheme under the supervision of competent tradesmen.

Maori Land Board

The Board has continued to foster increased production from Maori lands in the district. During the year proceeds of maize, kumara, and potatoes received on behalf of growers amounted to £15,984, an increase of £6,733 over the preceding year. Twelve and a half acres of onions were harvested, also, but returns are not yet to hand of the prices obtained for the crop. A number of advances were made by the Board during the year to assist Maoris with farming and building projects.

General Welfare

The departmental Welfare Officer appointed for the Waiariki District has not yet taken up his duties, but it is anticipated that he will do so in the near future.

It is pleasing to record the achievements of a voluntary organization established in Rotorua by the late Mr. Tai Mitchell shortly before his death. This band of young Maoris, under the name of the "Taiporutu Social and Welfare Club," is highly organized and has undertaken a number of important welfare activities in the district. The primary objects are the instruction of the younger Maoris in their own language, customs, and arts, regular visits to hospitals and the provisions of comforts to patients, assistance to other welfare organizations in the district, and general welfare activities. In the course of the hospital visits during the past year it was ascertained that the authorities were experiencing difficulty in obtaining clothing for infant patients. The club organized working bees, and by a most commendable effort succeeded in making sufficient underclothes, jackets, &c., for every child in the hospital, pakeha or Maori, under the age of four years. Voluntary societies of this nature can play an important part in Maori welfare work, and it is hoped that the example set in Rotorua will be emulated in other parts of the district.

Tairāwhiti District (Gisborne)

Native Land Court

Twenty-two sittings of the Court were held during the year in centres ranging from Mohaka in the south to Te Araroa in the north. The number of cases notified were 3,587, as compared with 3,130 in the previous year.

A pleasing aspect of the year's operations was the withdrawal of a number of applications for rate-charging orders owing to the making of satisfactory arrangements between the Maori ratepayers and the local bodies. The problem of rates on Native lands is gradually being overcome in this district, and all possible assistance is being given to local bodies to bring about further improvements. In both the Uawa and Waiapu Counties a record collection of Maori rates was achieved last year. The Uawa County Council collected 90·2 per cent. of the rates struck and the Waiapu County Council 89·98 per cent. the latter representing a sum of £10,732. In the Wairoa County the position has not been quite so satisfactory. During the year 93 applications were made by the County Council for the appointment of a receiver to enforce rate-charging orders, together with 683 applications for fresh charging orders. This had the result of bringing home to a large number of ratepayers their obligation to pay rates. Committees were formed in many settlements to go into the question and to effect compromises for