

In the northern King-country a similar position arises. The Waitomo County Council, for instance, states that since 1932 unpaid Native rates amounted to £65,000. Taumaranui Borough stated that the amount of Native rates unpaid since 1930 within the borough amounted to £4,400. In Kaikohe Town District the amount accruing on Native property since 1921 to date aggregated £7,167, of which only approximately £286 has been paid. In the Hokianga County an arrangement was made with certain Maori farmers for a deduction of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per pound of butterfat. Over five hundred orders were obtained with the assistance of the Native Department. The annual levy on Native lands in this county has been approximately £5,930. Collections from the butterfat deductions are very small, and the greatest collection in 1941-42 of £1,059 represented only 18 per cent. of the total rates outstanding. In the Kawhia County from 1929-44 rates on Native property have amounted to £2,560, of which only £693 has been paid. The position in the Rotorua area is not quite so serious. It was pointed out that of the hospital rates of £444 levied on Native lands in 1944 only £195 was collected. In the Waipapu County since 1930 31, £143,000 in rates had been levied on Native land. Of this amount, £14,900 had been written off, and £15,600 was outstanding on the 31st March, 1944. The above statistics are given merely to illustrate the difficult position in which those local authorities which have large Native populations and large areas of Native-owned land find themselves. The position is obviously acute.

The only remedy which is available for non-payment of rates by Native landowners is for the rating authority to apply to the Native Land Court and get a charging-order. If the charging-order is not met the next step is to bring the case before the same Court with a view to the appointment of a receiver. The land cannot be sold without the sanction of the Minister, which is rarely given. In 1933 a Committee was set up to investigate the whole situation, and they reported, among other things, that "The charging-order system against land has hopelessly broken down." That situation remains the same to-day as it was then. In 1928 boroughs and counties having Native land within their boundaries received from the Government a sum in satisfaction of the rates to be levied for the ensuing two years. The grant was but a small proportion of the actual amount owing, but it was accepted on the understanding that the Government would bring down amending legislation within two years. Since that compromise in 1928 Maoris have taken it for granted that they should not pay rates and that the Government would again come forward and arrange settlement. This is the present position.

The Maori properties are frequently in areas very well served by roads and bridges, and it seems inequitable that the remaining county residents should be required to carry the rating burden of the Native population. In addition, a considerable proportion of the rates which have not been collected are referable to hospital levies. The Maori population is, as the white population, eligible for hospital benefits, and, without entering into the merits or demerits of the hospital levy at this stage, it is obvious that the non-payment by the Maori ratepayers merely means an extra burden on the white population. We entirely agree with the representations which have been made to us as to the inequity of the present situation. Some idea of the incidence of this problem in particular areas can be gained from the following figures. Over all counties during the period from 1939 to 1943, approximately 92 per cent. of the rates were collected. In the Mangonui County, 75 per cent.; in the Whangaroa County, 76 per cent.; in Hokianga County, 68 per cent.; in the Bay of Islands County, 68 per cent.; in the Whangarei County, 92 per cent.; in the Hobson County, 91 per cent.; in the Otorohanga County, 75 per cent.; in the Kawhia County, 74 per cent.; in the Waitomo County, 75 per cent.; in the Matakaoa County, 75 per cent.; in the Waipapu County, 90 per cent.; in the Waikohu County, 96 per cent.; in the Cook County, 95 per cent.; in the Grey County, 82 per cent. These figures only illustrate the general problem. The counties specifically mentioned are counties with large Native populations, and while not all of the non-payment referred to above is due to default by Maoris, by far the largest proportion is.

The North Auckland counties are in the worst situation. We did make some investigations as to the reason for the position not being so serious in the East Coast counties, and, although perhaps better administrative methods for collection of outstanding rates have been adopted in the East Coast counties, the real reason for the very bad situation in the North Auckland counties is probably largely due to the poverty of the Native population. This is obviously a national and not a local-body question. It seems unfair to penalize the white settlers in these areas for the non-payment of rates by the Maori. Subsequently, in this report specific recommendations are made as to some alleviation of this difficulty, but at this point it is important to stress the need for some drastic action to remedy these inequities. It is obvious that the present legal remedies are quite insufficient. The Native Department, for instance, has no legal powers in this direction, and it would seem that although the officers of that Department are conscious of the problem, they are quite unable to make any workable suggestion as to its solution. They are making an endeavour to pay rates on Native developmental lands over which the Department has control, but, as far as the communal lands of the Maori are concerned, the Native Department is at the present moment powerless.

CHAPTER VIII.—GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Besides giving to local authorities power to raise revenue from rates or other sources, the State has generally made certain sums available from the National Treasury for expenditure by the local bodies. Such monetary grants are not in general given to such local bodies as Electric-power Boards, Transport Boards, and Harbour Boards, which are engaged in operating trading undertakings. All territorial local authorities and those *ad hoc* bodies, such as Hospital Boards, Rabbit Boards, and Fire Boards, which are concerned with service to the community rather than trading, receive monetary assistance.* Grants may be (a) for general revenues, in which case they are usually annually recurring payments; or (b) for specific capital expenditure.

* Subsidies and grants to Hospital Boards are not discussed herein, but under Hospital Board Finance.