

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND COURTS, MAORI LAND BOARDS, AND NATIVE LAND PURCHASE BOARD

(REPORT FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY, NATIVE DEPARTMENT, ON THE WORKING OF)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1917.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Native Department, Wellington, 31st May, 1917.

The Hon. the Native Minister.

I HAVE the honour to submit the annual report on the work of the Native Land Courts and Maori Land Boards, and the Native Land Purchase Board, for the year ended 31st March, 1917.

NATIVE LAND COURT AND NATIVE APPELLATE COURT.

Native Land Court.—131 sittings of the Native Land Court were held during the year, the total number of cases notified for hearing being 20,414.

The Courts have investigated the titles to some 123,011 acres of customary land during the year, including 106,004 acres in the Aotea District, 10,603 acres in the Tairāwhiti District, and 6,220 acres in the Wairariki District, and the balance of 184 acres comprising small areas in other districts.

Native Freehold Land.—1,617 partition orders, affecting 326,210 acres, have been made, while 8,458 other orders affecting Native lands have been dealt with.

Native Appellate Court.—The Native Appellate Court held eleven sittings during the year, the total number of cases scheduled being 103.

Revenue.—The revenue received by way of Court fees during the year amounted to £6,320 9s. 4d., including £692 9s. 2d. collected on old Native Land Court orders. The amount of fees outstanding for the period was £496 4s. 2d.

Table A attached hereto shows the operations for the year.

MAORI LAND BOARDS.

The area of land vested in and administered by the various Maori Land Boards totals 958,424 acres, excluding 5,448 acres which have been re-vested in the Native owners during the year. Alienations of vested lands during the year consist of twenty-four leases, affecting 11,261 acres, and seventy-eight transfers, affecting 20,179 acres.

Native Freehold Land.—During the year the Boards have approved 534 leases, comprising 92,303 acres, and have confirmed 1,195 transfers (apart from sales to the Crown) affecting 137,382 acres. The figures show a decrease of sixty-three leases and 7,538 acres over last year's transactions in respect of land leased, and an increase of seventy-six transfers and 19,550 acres in respect of land sold. During the year forty-seven mortgages, affecting an area of 21,767 acres, were confirmed.

The total receipts of the Boards for the year amounted to £409,631 9s. 7d., and the disbursements to £394,713 19s. 5d. The total funds held at credit by the various Boards on the 31st March was £413,845 15s. 9d. Of this sum £294,840 14s. 3d. was placed on deposit with the Public Trustee in separate accounts in the names of the respective Boards, the interest accruing thereon at the usual office rate being payable to the Natives entitled in terms of subsection (5) of section 35 of the Native Land Amendment Act, 1913. Of the balance, £41,872 19s. 11d. was held in special accounts, leaving a sum of £77,132 1s. 7d. representing the amounts at credit for current account of the respective Boards.

Revenue.—The revenue received through the Boards by way of fees amounted to £3,626 15s. 6d., and the sum of £3,014 1s. 1d. was received for commission, making a total of £6,640 16s. 7d.

Table B sets out in detail the operations of the various Boards.