

NATIVE LAND PURCHASE BOARD.

The area of Native land purchased during the period was 22,108 acres, and of that proclaimed 21,559 acres.

Since the Purchase Board commenced to function in 1910, 1,414,215 acres of Native land has been purchased under its operation, at an aggregate cost of £3,387,573.

OTHER BOARDS.

Other Boards under the administration of this Department, such as the Maori Ethnological Research Board, the Maori Purposes Fund Control Board, and the Arawa District Trust Board, are all doing good and useful work in their respective spheres. A new Board—The Tuwharetoa Trust Board—was set up to control the funds arising from agreements with the Crown in regard to the Taupo Lake and the surrounding waters, and the members of the Board are taking up the duties of ministering to the welfare of the Tuwharetoa Maori tribe in a very sympathetic spirit.

ESTIMATE OF LAND STILL HELD BY MAORIS.

The estimated area of Native land held by Maoris at the 31st March, 1926 (exclusive of that in the South Island) was	Acres.	4,198,913
	Acres.	
Sales to Crown	22,188	
Sales to individuals	22,929	
		45,117
Leaving the balance still held by Maoris estimated at		4,153,796

GENERAL.

It is with regret that I have to record the passing of a former Native Minister, the Hon. Sir James Carroll. He was an example of what members of the Maori race can attain if given reasonable opportunities of education and advancement. Being of the Maori, he thoroughly understood the doubts and misgivings which the changing order engendered in the minds of the older generation, while he was also well versed in the aims and aspirations of the younger members who foresaw greater opportunities for their race. He acquired an influence over the Maori mind unique in Native history, and, gaining the confidence of the European section of the community, he was able to lay the foundation of greater trust and friendship between the two races.

During the period under review a visit was paid to the Dominion by Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York. A special part in the preparation for the reception of Their Royal Highnesses was allotted to the Maori tribes, and this was carried out at Rotorua in a loyal and enthusiastic manner. The committee having control of the Maori ceremony comprised the following persons—namely, the members of Parliament representing the Maori race and Dr. P. H. Buck (Te Rangihiroa), and Messrs. H. R. H. Balneavis and H. Tai Mitchell.

During the year a Royal Commission consisting of the Honourable Sir William Sim, senior puisne Judge of the Supreme Court, the Honourable Vernon Reed, M.L.C., and Mr. William Cooper was authorized to inquire into various Native grievances which have formed the subject of petitions to Parliament by Maoris. The findings of this Commission, it is hoped, will do something towards clearing the atmosphere and assist in removing some of the causes of complaint.

The Maoris, in common with others, are affected by the fall in the price of primary products, and some of the Maori dairy associations are feeling the pinch keenly; but it is worthy of note, and as exemplifying their zeal and enthusiasm, that the principal Maori dairy factory during the season just closed has doubled its output of butter, from 60 to 120 tons, and that next season the suppliers hope to have between four and five hundred additional cows in profit. Another noteworthy fact is that while, according to last year's sheep returns, the gross total of sheep owned by sheep-farmers in the Gisborne and Hawke's Bay sheep districts, being those localities where the principal Maori sheep-farmers are located, decreased by 118,669, the Native flocks in the same district show an apparent increase of 2,700 sheep. The total number of sheep owned by Maoris is estimated at about half a million out of a total of 24,904,993 sheep held by sheepowners in New Zealand in 1926.

The number of Maoris declared to be Europeans was during the period increased to sixty-six.

Six persons qualified for the position of Native Interpreters and had licenses issued to them, and one person had his license revoked.

R. N. JONES, Under-Secretary.

TABLE A.—NATIVE LAND COURTS.

RETURN OF BUSINESS AND FEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1927.

Native Land Court.				Native Appellate Court.			
Number of sittings	..	..	123	Number of sittings	..	..	10
Number of cases notified	..	..	19,887	Number of cases notified	..	..	95
Number of cases for which orders were made			7,871	Native Land Court decisions varied	..	..	19
Number of cases dismissed	..	..	2,295	Native Land Court decisions affirmed	..	..	12
Number of cases adjourned <i>sine die</i>	..	..	10,498	Native Land Court decisions referred back to Native Land Court	..	..	9
Number of partitions made	..	..	696	Native Land Court decisions annulled	..	..	5
Area affected (acres)	..	..	120,467	Appeals dismissed or withdrawn	..	..	37
Number of investigations of title	..	..	22	Appeals adjourned <i>sine die</i>	..	..	15
Area affected (acres)	..	..	245	Application under section 208 ordered	..	..	1
Number of succession orders made	..	..	5,912	Applications under section 208 dismissed	..	..	2
Number of other orders made	..	..	2,584	Applications under section 208 adjourned <i>sine die</i>	..	..	3

Court Fees.

£ s. d.				£ s. d.			
Fees received	6,239	17	1	Fees outstanding for period	243	10	8