

devised to promote settlement in the meantime. It was urged that moneys might be advanced on the security of a Native block to develop it from the funds of a Maori Land Board and secured by a charge, which the Board was in a unique position to protect. No alienation of the land could be made without prior confirmation by a Board, which could thus insist on the discharge of the debt due to it. As soon as the title was available for mortgage purposes any Board could secure its advance in the orthodox manner.

Section 8 of the Native Land Act of 1926 was the result, and marked a distinct advance in the attitude of Parliament towards the problem of Native-land development and settlement. It is sufficiently important to justify an extensive quotation:—

“Section 8.—(1) Subject to the approval of the Native Minister, given either generally or with respect to any particular Native freehold land, a Maori Land Board may from time to time advance out of its account moneys for any of the following purposes:—

“(a) For the purpose of any agricultural or pastoral business carried on by it:

“(b) For the payment of any debts or liabilities of any body corporate constituted under the principal Act:

“(c) For the discharge of any charge, encumbrance, rates, or taxes affecting any Native freehold land:

“(d) For the farming, improvement, or settlement of any Native freehold land, &c.

“(2) Any moneys so advanced shall become a charge upon the land, and shall bear interest at such rate as the Board shall from time to time decide.”

[Then followed provisions regarding the execution and registration of a memorandum of charge upon the land.]

Thus, under pressure, a further device was found to overcome the delays and difficulties inevitably associated with the Native title. In the circumstances the expedient needed to be applied with great care, and it ultimately compelled the exercise of strict supervision. For the purposes of this review, the importance of the provision was that Parliament had come to recognize the predominant need to proceed with the cultivation of Native lands, allowing titles to be adjusted in due course.

In 1928 it was suggested from the Gisborne district that a number of deserving cases could not come within the scope of the legislation of 1926. Some machinery was required to bring areas under the administration of an authority with resources and the will to bring the same into production. The Native Land Court therefore was empowered to authorize a Maori Land Board to administer an area on behalf of and for the benefit of the owners, and to expend its funds for the purpose.

#### LOANS BY MAORI LAND BOARDS.

A summary may be given here of the loans made by Maori Land Boards to Maori farmers up to the 31st March, 1931, as follows:—

##### *Loans to Maoris by Boards to 31st March, 1931.*

Board.	Amount advanced. £	Number of Mortgagors.
Tairāwhiti .. .. .	62,349*	81
Wairariki .. .. .	27,073	94
South Island .. .. .	4,170	8
Ikaroa .. .. .	16,198	28
Waikato-Maniapoto .. .. .	16,899	48
Tōkerau .. .. .	43,900	120
Aotearoa .. .. .	11,710	20
	£182,299	399

The Native Trustee has been the banker for the Maori Land Boards, which have drawn from time to time on their deposits or investments with the Native Trustee for their needs. These are (1) payments to be made to Native beneficiaries, and (2) loans to Maori farmers or expenditure on lands farmed by the Board for the benefit of the Native owners. The lending operations of the Boards quickly expanded after the year 1926. The fact that in some districts instalments of consolidation schemes were being finalized, thus releasing titles as securities for loans, was reflected in the increased volume of advances. Scope for employment on breaking in land and on public works was being steadily reduced in spite of the high prices realized for farm-produce before the 1928-29 season. This reacted on the funds of the Boards in another way, through the demands of beneficiaries for rents and money held in trust for them. The drain on the Native Trustee became severer, and deposits of Board funds with him declined.

This position, however, was not appreciated, or, if known, was not taken into account when the legislation of 1929 was framed to give effect to the policy of developing Native-owned lands with State funds made available to the Native Department from the Native Land Settlement Account.

#### THE LEGISLATION OF 1929 AND 1930.

Thus far, although repeated and influential representations had been made, Parliament had not been moved to apply State funds to the development and utilization of lands owned or occupied by Maoris, but had been content to authorize the application to these purposes of accumulated Maori

\* Includes £9,800 lent to the East Coast Commissioner.