

land, except the vague undefined area that should be reserved for his 'use and occupation.' But the causes that have conspired to the failure have not been investigated with a view to remedial measures. And where in spite of supreme difficulties the Maori has succeeded in making good use of his land the fact is not sufficiently recognized. The spectacle is presented to us of a people starving in the midst of plenty. If it is difficult for the European settler to acquire Maori land owing to complications of title, it is more difficult for the individual Maori owner to acquire his own land, be he ever so ambitious and capable of using it. His energy is dissipated in the Land Courts in a protracted struggle, first, to establish his own right to it, and, secondly, to detach himself from the numerous other owners to whom he is genealogically bound in the title. And when he has succeeded he is handicapped by want of capital, by lack of training—he is under the ban as one of a spendthrift, easy-going, improvident people.

"The land-settlement policy of the colony is framed in such a manner that the Waste Lands Boards undertake all the preliminary work of putting the titles to selections in order, of surveying them as far as possible with a view of practicable fencing-boundaries, road access, and homestead-sites. The selector concerns himself only with financial arrangements to effect the necessary improvements. Here again the State comes to his assistance and lends him money on easy terms. He claims such facilities and assistance as a matter of right, because he is a valuable asset to the State. Under the Land for Settlements Acts we sometimes spend as much as £13,000 for the settlement of one settler, and we suppose that the average cost of settling one settler on land under these Acts is not much less than £1,500.

"In dealing, therefore, with the lands now remaining to the Maori people we are of opinion that the settlement of the Maoris should be the first consideration. And it is because we recognize the impossibility of doing so on a comprehensive scale by the ordinary method of partition and individualization that we recommend the intervention of a body, such as the Maori Land Board, to be armed with powers sufficiently elastic to meet the exigencies of the situation."

The Native-land question could not be dissociated from the wider question of the welfare of the Maori race: a satisfactory solution of it was fundamental. The efforts to educate the youth of the race, to improve the hygienic conditions of the villages, to correct the malign influences of certain elements in European culture—all these would fail to produce enduring results unless they centred round and assisted in an industrial development based principally upon the cultivation of land.

The problem of cultural adjustment in relation to the cultivation of land is the most important in the consideration of the attempts made by the Maori to fit himself into his present environment. In this connection another parliamentary paper (G.-8, 1928) containing the report of a conference of Maori representatives held at Putiki, Whanganui, during Easter week, 1927, may be quoted:—

"The race had reached a stage in its development now when young men, not soured by past tribal grievances, must get together and gather into a coherent, conscious organization the fragmentary progressive attempts made by the Maori to fit himself into his present environment. Sir Maui Pomare and Mr. Ngata defined the present position of the Maori people and recounted the successive steps that had been adopted for its betterment. The leaven of progress had been steadily at work, and, when reviewed along all lines, the development had been remarkable. Physically there was abundant evidence of a wonderful improvement. Apart from the statistics of the last census, no visitor to any representative Maori meeting could fail to observe the health and vigour of the young generation, its poise and its self-possessed confident bearing, the full cradles, and the greater care of infant-life. The latter-day Maori is throwing off the shackles of the past, looking little, if at all, over his shoulder, and interesting himself in the activities and pastimes of his pakeha fellow-citizen. Socially he is rapidly fitting himself into the life of the country, where for a time he found himself in bewilderment. His deportment on the tennis-lawns of Rotorua and Wanganui, where good behaviour, sportsmanlike qualities, and control are part of the players' equipment, was favourably commented on by visitors from other lands. The communal Maori has become an individualist in proprietorship and in his home life. His womankind, as with other races, is speeding up the process of Europeanization in the home life and surroundings, so that the pakeha ideal of 'home' is being gradually realized in the Maori villages throughout the Dominion. And the culture complex that centres round the term 'home' (in its English significance) has with Native modification been adopted. Economically and commercially the influence of four generations of civilization could not fail to affect the Maori extensively. With the loss of the greater part of their landed inheritance, the increase in population, the increased cost of living, the raising of the standard of life, and the weakening of the protective elements of the old-time communism, the Maoris of to-day were feeling the economic pressure with progressive severity. The feature of the day was, perhaps, the desire of the young people to work for themselves rather than be casual employees of others. Much of the pioneering work in the backblocks—bushfelling, fencing, roadmaking, ~~sitar~~ draining and stumping, and suchlike—had been done and was still being done by the Maoris. That stage was almost passed in the industrial development of the Dominion. The younger Maoris were reacting on the already complicated Maori-land problem, and were demanding individualization, consolidation, readjustment of occupation conditions, and financial assistance. Their attitude towards the balance of their landed inheritance was much the same as that of Europeans towards the unoccupied Crown lands and the large estates of the Dominion. They were also compelled to look beyond casual employment in unskilled trades and on public works to the skilled