

335. These accounts should all be controlled by one administrative officer, and all expenditure other than ordinary trust estate disbursements made subject to parliamentary appropriation.

336. A number of small Boards has been constituted by the Native Land Act, 1931, or the Native Purposes Act, 1931, for the purpose of safeguarding the rights of Maoris or for providing for their religious or moral welfare, &c., and funds have been made available to these partly from the separate accounts and partly from the Consolidated Fund. We think that any future grants should be voted from the Consolidated Fund with full or partial recovery from the Maori Purposes Fund or Board funds as may be deemed expedient. In this way the assistance given would be capable of proper review.

337. With regard to the future of the Maori Purposes Fund and the unallocated Board funds, we are inclined to the view that they should form the nucleus of a Reserve Fund for general Native benefit.

*Purchases of Land for European Settlement.*

338. We have already dealt fully with this phase of the activities of the Native Department, and it is only necessary here to reiterate that the Native Land Purchase Board should be abolished, and that the purchase of Native land for European Settlement should be controlled by the Dominion Land Purchase Board. Also the retention of a special loan account for transactions of this nature is not justified, and the funds required in future for the purchase of Native land should be drawn from the Land for Settlements Account.

339. We recommend,—

- (1) That the balance remaining in the Native Land Settlement Account be transferred to the Loans Redemption Account, to be used for the redemption of securities :
- (2) That the revenue derived from Native Lands heretofore purchased and settled be credited to territorial revenue :
- (3) That Native lands, whether already settled or still on hand, be deemed to be ordinary Crown lands, subject to all the provisions of the Land Act, 1924 :
- (4) That the loan capital of the Native Land Settlement Account be deemed to be part of the national development expenditure, the interest on which must be met from general revenue :
- (5) That the proceeds derived from the sale of Native land heretofore purchased be credited to the Land for Settlements Account as in the case of ordinary Crown lands ; so that they would be available for the acquisition of further land, either European or Native :
- (6) That the law be amended to provide for the abolition of “ thirds ” on Native land heretofore purchased.

340. We would also reiterate that in view of the disastrous experience of the Crown in regard to purchase of Native lands, further purchases, except for the purpose of consolidating areas suitable for immediate settlement, should cease until (1) economic conditions are such that successful land-settlement is possible, and (2) the law is amended to provide for a rental return at least equal to the interest payable on borrowed money.

*Survey Liens.*

341. We recommend that no further surveys be undertaken unless an amount sufficient to cover the estimated cost of the work is first deposited with the Department of Lands and Survey. The law should be amended in this direction.

CONCLUSION.

342. It would be futile to attempt to enumerate the economies which will result from the foregoing recommendations for the reason that the Department is understaffed in certain directions and an extensive redistribution of duties will be entailed.

343. The changes in administration which we recommend will tend to eliminate further losses and be conducive to greater efficiency and more effective control.

VOTE—COOK ISLANDS DEPARTMENT.

344. This Department is nominally a part of the Native Department, in that the vote forms a subdivision of the Native vote. We propose, however, to review the expenditure as distinct from that of the Native Department.

345. The vote is to provide for the administration of the Cook Islands Group. The relative expenditure for 1914–15 and 1930–31 was as follows :—

1914–15.			1930–31.		
Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.	Salaries.	Other Charges.	Total.
£ 3,556	£ 1,507	£ 5,063	£ 16,716	£ 10,557	£ 27,273