

1934.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT.

STATEMENT BY THE HON. SIR APIRANA T. NGATA, NATIVE MINISTER.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

THIS statement is in continuation of earlier statements presented to both Houses of the General Assembly during the session of 1933, and printed in the Appendices to the *Journals* of the House of Representatives as parliamentary paper G.—10, 1933, and covers the year ending the 31st March, 1934.

Satisfactory progress has been made during the year in the settlement of lands owned or occupied by Maoris, and the essential work of clearing, draining, fencing, grassing, and cultivating the areas comprising the Native development schemes has been steadily advanced. Assistance to units from development funds has in the main been confined to the supply of live-stock, farm requirements, building-materials, &c., and the discharge of liabilities secured on stock or equipment.

Labour costs, with the exception of wages of permanent hands, have been met as far as possible from grants from the Unemployment Fund. Since December last miscellaneous grants have been administered by the Native Land Settlement Board, which allocates the moneys and approves the individual contracts. It is estimated that more than three-fourths of the adult male Maori population are now registered as unemployed, and a large proportion of the assistance granted by the Unemployment Board through the Native Department has served a dual purpose in meeting the immediate needs of a large number of them, while at the same time assisting the schemes which have for their object the settlement of Natives on the lands, in order that they may become self-supporting farmers. The remainder of the Unemployment Board grants have been used for the construction of roads and the development of private Native lands under conditions similar to those under the 4B Scheme.

During the year the Native Land Settlement Board approved of an area of 13,847 acres, comprising subdivisions of the Okataina Block, being brought under the provisions of section 522 of the Native Land Act, 1931, to provide fencing-material for use on the development schemes in the Rotorua District. This land lies to the eastward of the road between Lakes Rotoiti and Tarawera, and contains bush areas estimated to yield fifty thousand totara posts. The Okataina Scheme was launched in June, 1933, when contracts were let for the formation of eight miles of roading necessary to provide access to the timber areas. The expenditure on this scheme amounted to £1,360 at the 31st March, 1934, the greater part of which was recovered in unemployment subsidies. Okataina totara is remarkable for its durability, due to the severe climatic conditions under which the trees grow in this locality, and the Department is fortunate in securing this area to meet the fencing requirements of schemes in the Waiariki District.

An important work undertaken during the year under review was the establishment of a nursery at Rotorua for the future supply of shelter-trees. Formal right to occupy an area of 10 acres at Wharenui, the property of the Waiariki District Maori Land Board, was granted to the Native Land Settlement Board in July, 1933, and nursery stocks of shelter-belt and hedge species were obtained from the State Forest Service and various afforestation companies. At the end of the year it was estimated that 2,400,000 seedlings were held, comprising principally radiata, macrocarpa, eucalypti, redwood, and other exotic timbers, and, in addition, considerable stocks of barberry are available for hedges. Labour costs have been met as far as possible from unemployment funds, and the net expenditure on the Wharenui Nursery amounts to £1,458.

The gross expenditure on development schemes during the period under review amounted to £190,391, as against £217,055 for the previous year, while revenue returns from cream, wool, and sales of live-stock amounted to £75,747, an increase of £32,972 over the year 1932-33.

The accounts published in the accompanying schedules have been prepared to show in full detail the expenditure and revenue on each scheme to the 31st March, 1933, for the year under review, and the total to date.