

Therefore, what remains to be done to complete consolidation of titles in North Auckland is the finalizing effort, namely :—

- (1) More topographical sketches.
- (2) Final consolidation conferences between Natives and the field officers.
- (3) Final sittings of Native Land Court.
- (4) Clerical summarizing and adjusting in Auckland office to prepare for Minister's approval and for issue of Court orders for title.

It is most regrettable that finality has been delayed for years through shortage of staff, but it is hoped to finish Mangonui and Whangaroa consolidation of Native titles this coming summer.

Better housing-conditions, more dental treatment, a wider knowledge of the nutrition value of various foods, and closer attention to ordinary health precautions are what are needed in the North. In these matters the Native Department is co-operating with the other Departments concerned and seeing every sign of good results being achieved.

Education of Natives in the North is leaning towards those subjects which will help the young Maori to cope with the battle of life. Thus everywhere throughout the tribes there is a keen desire to have cookery rooms and workshops established as adjuncts to the village school, with club-rooms where the young people might indulge in musical evenings and debates and games as relief from the monotony of dairying life. Something like this is essential to provide mental relief and change, and stop the drift of young Maoris to the towns.

Growing Maori Population.—An astonishing increase is seen everywhere throughout the North, particularly in the territories of the Rarawa and Aupouri tribes, who for the most part are located alongside or close to the sea. A combined school sports gathering at Panguru on the Hokianga will bring together five hundred vigorous Maori children. At Te Kao, on Parengarenga Harbour, the school roll has increased from 56 to 122 in the last decade. This state of affairs, if accentuated as it will be by even more rapid increases in the near future, must raise new problems for administrators to face, and an early effort should therefore be made to guide it into a channel where it will be a service and a source of strength to New Zealand.

WAIKATO-MANIAPOTO DISTRICT.

This district of the Court extends approximately from Auckland in the north to Taumarunui in the south. Nine sittings of the Court were held during the year in Auckland and on circuit at Thames, Ngaruawahia, and Te Kuiti, the number of sitting-days being 133. The normal business of the Court was well maintained during the year and involved consideration by the Judge of applications in all aspects of the Court's jurisdiction. Applications for succession to interests in Native land, as is usual, predominated, and, in addition, a large number of questions involving partitions, alienations, trusteeship, and probate were brought forward for consideration and decision. Owing, perhaps, to the improved economic outlook there is a tendency for dealings in Native land to increase. The Court has, of course, statutory duties imposed upon it in connection with alienations, but the policy of the Government to encourage development by the Natives themselves throws an additional duty upon the Court to scrutinize these transactions with that consideration in mind.

In addition to the usual routine Court work a large number of matters have been dealt with in Chambers. The Judge of the district has also attended a number of sittings of the Native Appellate Court.

Consolidation.—In the Maniapoto district various schemes of consolidation have been in progress for a number of years. Of late, however, the Court has been hampered in the completion of these schemes by lack of experienced staff, the Department having found it necessary to withdraw the staff engaged on this work on to other duties. A decision was therefore taken during the year to complete the schemes up to a point where they could be conveniently halted. This has been done and the necessary orders made during the year. Actual completion of the orders will have to await survey in many instances, and this is held up pending a final determination of departmental policy on this point. The work is now in a position where all interests dealt with have been accounted for and is in such a state that the process of consolidation may be recommenced when the time is considered to be opportune. Parliamentary paper G.—10 (1932) sets out at some length the position in the King-country at the time consolidation of interests was launched.

Maori Land Board.—The vested lands of the Board are extensive and the Board has an important trusteeship to perform in connection with these areas. The lands are held by the Board under the provisions of Part XIV of the Native Land Act, 1931. The demand for areas for leasing has increased and further leases have been granted during the year, but for various reasons a number of blocks still remain unoccupied. In common with other leasing authorities, the Board has been affected by the provisions of the Mortgagees and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936. Applications for relief have been received from a number of the Board's tenants and are now being dealt with. The Board also acts as a statutory agent for Native owners under the provisions of Part XVIII of the Native Land Act, 1931, and in other cases.

The Board has collected during the year considerable sums by way of rents on account of Native beneficiaries and, in addition, a very considerable proportion of purchase-money payable on sales is paid to and distributed by the Board. In all cases, where on inquiry it is deemed desirable, moneys available are held by the Board under the provisions of section 281 of the Native Land Act, 1931. The moneys so held are invested on behalf of the beneficial owners or disbursed for approved purposes. In the course of the year in a number of cases houses have been built with such moneys for beneficiaries; stock, manures, and farming implements purchased; payments have been made for the education and advancement in life of minors; and in one instance a farm was purchased out of funds held for two of the Board's beneficiaries.