

PHASES OF NATIVE ADMINISTRATION.

The scope of activities of the Department may be said to comprise both the direct administration of matters relating to the social and economic welfare of the Maori people and co-operation with other Government Departments and local authorities for that purpose. Land development and housing for Maoris are prominent activities, but there is a wide diversity of matters dealt with by the Department, some of which are correlated with these major projects while others remain independent phases of administration.

The following are examples of matters commonly dealt with: Investigation of old and new claims in respect of Native lands; reports on petitions to Parliament for consideration by the Native Affairs Committee; supervision of the administration of the various Maori Trust Boards established by statute; various matters relative to Native land titles; consideration of the problems connected with rating of Native lands; statutory functions of the Native Trustee in the administration of Native Reserves; various classes of trust estates and mortgage investments; co-operation with (a) the Public Works Department in the provision of road access to Native properties, (b) the Department of Health in matters of water-supplies and sanitation for settlements, (c) the Education Department in questions mainly concerning Native schools, (d) the Labour Department relative to employment for Maoris, and (e) the Social Security Department in connection with claims by Natives for benefits.

GENERAL MAORI WELFARE.

In its administration of the Government's policy of social and economic advancement of the Maori people, the Department has a wide scope of activity. The co-operation of other Government Departments has been readily available, and particular attention has been given to matters of health and education.

The Department renders active assistance to Native applicants for the various classes of pensions, and in anticipation of the operation of the Social Security Act benefits in respect of temporary incapacity through illness have already been granted by the Department of Labour in many cases. With the full operation of this legislation there will be provision for all cases of need, and consequently the funds of the Civil List (Native Purposes) will be conserved to provide other amenities for the enjoyment of the Maori people. Of the annual appropriation of the Civil List (Native Purposes) approximately half the amount is transferred to the Department of Health for expenditure in connection with Maori medical services.

The Arawa, Taranaki, and Tuwharetoa Trust Boards continue to exercise their functions for the benefit of the tribes within the boundaries of their respective territories.

It is interesting to record a further substantial increase in the Maori population. The total figure as at the 31st March, 1938, was 86,767, and during the year under review this figure increased to 88,450. It will thus be seen that it is necessary to provide for a people whose numbers are steadily growing.

There has been a material improvement in the economic and living conditions of the Maori people through the operation of the Native land development and housing schemes. The Government's policy of developing unproductive Native lands is being vigorously pursued, and a section of the Maori people are thus being afforded the opportunity of living under conditions most suited to the race and at the same time being enabled to become self-reliant members of the community. Throughout the year efforts have been continued to provide work of a productive nature for Natives in need of assistance, and with the funds available from State sources the Department has been enabled to promote useful employment for a large number of the people.

NATIVE HOSTELRIES.

In order to provide accommodation for visiting Natives, hostelries are established at the following centres, viz.,—Auckland, Pukekohe, Tuakau, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Havelock, Nelson, and Bluff. In addition, proposals are in train for the establishment by local enterprise of further hostelries at Whangarei and Hamilton.

The most recent building erected was that of the Pukekohe Native Rest-room, which was officially opened in December last, and is of modern design and appointments. Approximately half the cost of the building was met from funds controlled by the Native Trustee, a contribution was made from the Civil List (Native Purposes), whilst the balance was met by the Pukekohe Borough and Franklin County Councils, and the former authority controls the building.

In the case of Auckland, Pukekohe, New Plymouth, Havelock, and Nelson, the maintenance of the hostelry is met from funds administered by the Native Trustee as distinct from public moneys.

These hostelries are a most useful amenity, as they accommodate for a limited duration Maoris attending sittings of the Native Land Court and Maori travellers generally.

FLOOD DAMAGE IN HAWKE'S BAY.

As a result of the serious flooding in Hawke's Bay in April last, the Maori population sustained material property losses. The first consideration for the Relief Committee was that of transporting food, medical supplies, and clothing to those flood-bound; the second and most difficult problem was that of restoration of homes and properties and general rehabilitation of the people.

A sub-committee, comprising officers of the Public Works, Health, and Native Departments, was formed to deal solely with the question of relief to Maoris, and subsequently an officer was specially detailed to administer the relief measures. Applications from Natives were treated similarly to those