

B. LEGISLATION.

(1) *Counties Insurance Empowering Act, 1941.*

The purpose of this Act is to establish a scheme whereby County Councils can have their insurances effected on a co-operative basis. The Act authorizes the registration of a company to be called "The New Zealand Counties Co-operative Insurance Company, Limited." Membership of this company is open to any County Council that complies with the conditions laid down in the memorandum of association or articles of association. That company arranges the insurances and generally operates in the same way as an insurance company does in so far as its members are concerned. The company will have to comply with the normal conditions applicable to insurance companies. The company will have to have a paid-up capital sufficient to enable it to carry the insurance itself from the beginning of the scheme. The nominal capital is £100,000. The company will not commence business until a minimum of £55,000 has been subscribed by County Councils and £27,500 has been paid up. In general, the County Councils will contribute the capital of the company on a *pro rata* basis according to the capital value of the land in their respective counties.

Most of the requirements for the formation of this company are contained in the memorandum of association or articles of association, and the actual purpose of the Act was to give the necessary statutory authority for the formation of this company and to allow County Councils to expend their funds for the purposes contemplated.

One section in the Act authorizes any County Council to raise a loan without a poll for the purpose of meeting its share of the cost of forming the company.

(2) *Local Elections and Polls Amendment Act, 1941.*

In this Act provision is made for the holding of the statutory general elections of local authorities on a Saturday and for the poll to close at 6 p.m. Another provision brings into operation at local elections the "cross" system of voting instead of the previous "striking out" method. Tenants of State houses are given the right to vote at local elections as though they possess a ratepayer's qualification, except on polls relating to loans or rates.

(3) *Statutes Amendment Act, 1941.*

Eighteen sections of this statute enacted amendments to Acts administered by this Department. Two of the principal provisions related (a) to finance to meet expenses arising because of storm damage, and (b) to amendments to the Town-planning Act.

(4) *Finance Acts, 1941.*

Seven sections of the Finance Act (No. 1) and one section of the Finance Act (No. 2) related to matters administered by this Department. Among the matters dealt with were the validation of expenses by Fire Boards for emergency equipment and the authorization of grants to retiring employees of local authorities.

(5) *Local Legislation Act, 1941.*

Seventy applications were considered, and of these forty-seven clauses were included in the Bill as finally passed. As usual, the Act dealt with a wide range of local-government matters.

(6) *Local Acts.*

Nine local Bills were submitted to the Department by the Local Bills Committee for examination and report. Eight of these were passed into law.

C. MATAKOA COUNTY.

The Department maintained the usual close contact with the Commissioner in regard to the administration of this county. The reports of the Commissioner indicate that the progress of the county towards rehabilitation is being maintained, although war conditions have brought about further problems in the county. Once again it is interesting to record that a high percentage of rate collections was continued, both in regard to rates paid by Europeans and Natives. The overdraft borrowing limits for the county were fixed by the Minister of Internal Affairs in accordance with section 10 of the Local Legislation Act, 1932-33.

D. THAMES BOROUGH.

Progress continues to be made towards the rehabilitation of Thames Borough, and the financial position is now more permanently stabilized. This has been brought about largely by the passing of the Thames Borough Commissioner Act, 1940, which was dealt with in the last report. The conversion of the whole of the debt of Thames at 3 per cent. over a maximum of forty years was completed during the year, and this will have a general stabilizing effect on the borough for many years to come. Consideration was given during the year to ways and means of improving the water-supply position of the borough, and certain proposals in this connection were placed before the Government. At present the town is supplied by a water-race system, and it is proposed to replace this by the construction of a high-pressure water-supply scheme. Considerable progress has been made in this direction.

IV. TOWN-PLANNING.

Three meetings of the Town-planning Board were held. The Dannevirke Borough Town-planning Scheme No. 2 was finally approved. Four appeals against decisions of local authorities under section 34 of the Act were dealt with. The One Tree Hill Borough Town-planning Scheme No. 1 was received, and referred to a Committee of the Board. Further progress has been made with the preparation of the Auckland Metropolitan Scheme.

Christchurch City Town-planning Scheme.

In response to the public notification of the Christchurch City Town-planning Scheme, a large number of objections were received.