

The maintenance of signposts has been carried out on main highways by automobile associations under subsidy from the Board. Although it has not been possible to make personal contact with local authorities and motor organizations during the year, the usual spirit of co-operation and good will has existed, and the Board looks forward to a continuance of the same good feeling in the future.

The Board acknowledges the continued co-operation of the Public Works Department in matters relating to main highways administration, and records its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by officers of the Department.

Signed on behalf of the Main Highways Board:

W. L. NEWNHAM, Chairman.

APPENDIX F

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION AND RIVERS CONTROL COUNCIL

The Hon. the Minister of Works.

SIR,—

In accordance with the requirements of section 33 of the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act, 1941, the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council has the honour to submit its first annual report for presentation to Parliament.

The report covers the period from the constitution of the Council on 9th June, 1942, to the 31st March, 1943.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Act has as its objects conservation of the soil resources of New Zealand and the more effective protection of property from damage by flooding, and places under the control of this Council the administration and co-ordination of all activities in relation thereto.

River control has in the past been the responsibility of River Boards, Drainage Boards, and local authorities generally, and while much good work has been done with Government assistance, much that has been achieved has, with certain notable exceptions, been lost by lack of maintenance. Works, moreover, have for the most part been local and have not formed part of a comprehensive scheme covering the whole of a river. In every province considerable river-control work will be necessary, with provision for adequate maintenance of new and existing works.

Erosion has also received the divided attention of individuals, local authorities, and of Government Departments within the scope of respective departmental activities, but in the absence of sufficient statutory authority there has been little unity of effort and no adequate machinery for the institution of a programme of correct soil-conservation practice. Information available to the Council from the Soil Survey Branch of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and other sources, indicates that erosion in many areas has reached a serious stage and must be controlled at an early date if further deterioration is to be arrested. The need for river-control work is perhaps more prominently before the public eye than the need for soil-conservation practice, but even at this early stage in the Council's existence members are of the opinion that soil conservation will be the more important phase of the Council's activities.

COUNCIL

For the purpose of the Act a Council to be known as the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council was established, and this Council was constituted by His Excellency the Governor-General on 9th June, 1942, with the following membership:—

Chairman—

Mr. W. L. Newnham (Wellington), Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department.

Members—

Mr. R. G. Macmorran (Wellington), Under-Secretary for Lands.

Mr. T. G. G. Beek (Wellington), of the Public Works Department.

Messrs. J. Callesen (Karere) and G. A. Monk (Reikorangi), representing River Boards, local authorities, Drainage Boards, and Catchment Boards.

Mr. A. J. Davey (Waitohi), representing agricultural and pastoral interests.

POLICY

At the initial meeting of the Council held in Wellington on 9th September, 1942, it was realized that during the course of the war the Council would not have the finance, or the staff, man-power, and material, necessary to embark on an extensive programme of works, and with this knowledge it was decided that the preliminary period should be devoted to the development of a sound policy and an efficient organization, which could implement fully the functions of the Act immediately the war is over.

Individual matters receiving the Council's attention are dealt with below.