

C. LEGISLATION

(1) *Local Elections and Polls Amendment Act, 1947*

The purpose of this Act was to give effect to the wishes of the Government regarding certain policy matters relating to local-body elections. Although the provisions of the Act are not extensive, nevertheless its provisions are of considerable importance and provide for the following matters :—

- (a) Every worker to be granted time off for the purpose of recording his vote not later than 3 o'clock in the afternoon of polling-day and for the remainder of the day. Special provision is made with respect to employees in essential undertakings.
- (b) Any primary school may be appointed a polling-place under section 12 of the Local Elections and Polls Act, 1925, and any school so appointed shall be placed at the disposal of the Returning Officer from 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the day preceding election-day.
- (c) The verification of the declarations and the counting of declaration votes is deemed to form part of the scrutiny of the rolls and the official count, thus automatically ensuring that scrutineers may be present when declaration votes are being counted.
- (d) Any blind or illiterate voter may elect, in lieu of the usual practice of being accompanied to a voting-booth by the Returning Officer or his deputy, to take another qualified person into the voting compartment for the purpose of assisting in the marking of the voting-paper.
- (e) Qualified persons residing in the area occupied by the Auckland Hospital are given the right to vote at the elections of the Auckland City Council.

(2) *Statutes Amendment Act, Finance Act, and Finance Act (No. 2), 1947*

Several sections included in these Acts, covering a wide range of local-government activities, were promoted by the Department. County Councils were authorized to pay the travelling-expenses of representatives attending ward conferences of the New Zealand Counties Association, and the limit of £40 per annum for travelling-expenses payable under section 132 of the Counties Act, 1920, was removed. Section 198 of the Counties Act was amended to permit County Councils to contribute towards the cost and maintenance of women's rest-rooms, Plunket rooms, and similar amenities established in adjoining districts.

Power was conferred by two separate provisions on County Councils and Town Boards to make by-laws regulating and controlling the design and construction of buildings in relation to their resistance to earthquake shock. This provision will enable County Councils and Town Boards to utilize the Standard Code of Building By-laws in framing their building by-laws.

A number of important amendments were made to the Land Drainage Act, 1908, and the River Boards Act, 1908, covering the following matters :—

- (a) Authorizing River and Drainage Boards to make and levy special-works rates of a limited amount over the whole of their districts or over defined portions thereof to meet the cost of particular works which cannot be met out of general rates and are too small to justify the raising of special loans.
- (b) Providing that no special-works rates shall be made over the whole district or a defined portion thereof except on a petition of the majority of the ratepayers concerned.
- (c) Empowering River and Drainage Boards to provide dwellings for their employees, and to raise a loan without taking a poll of ratepayers for the purpose of acquiring land and erecting or purchasing such dwellings.