

The consolidated Acts are arranged in alphabetical order; and in the margin of each section is stated in figures the original enactment from which it is derived. Short Titles, with inverted commas, have been retained in accordance with the usage in force in New Zealand prior to 1907. In England the practice has not been uniform, inverted commas being used in some cases and not in others. We think them an advantage, as they catch the eye more readily, and this, particularly in the case of lengthy or involved titles, greatly facilitates reference. We have also retained the clause enacting the Short Title. This appears to be contemplated by the New Zealand Interpretation Acts, which have always provided that an Act having a Short Title may be cited by it. Hence, where the Act contains a Short Title, it is superfluous to say it may be cited by it. Each Act also contains a comprehensive saving clause, so designed that there shall be no breach of continuity in the immediate and complete operation of the consolidated Act.

We may add that all the important departmental Bills were previously submitted to the permanent heads of the various Departments concerned for their suggestions and remarks as to arrangement, and adherence to the existing law.

It is proposed that each volume shall as soon as possible be supplied with an index to the Acts contained in it, and at a later date a fuller and more comprehensive index can be supplied if circumstances justify. Indeed, a large part of the material for such an index had been prepared, but was unfortunately destroyed in the fire at the Parliamentary Buildings.

In classifying the subject-matter of the consolidated Acts we have endeavoured, as far as possible, to keep in view their proper object, and to comprise all the statute law upon one particular subject in one Act, not leaving it scattered in many Acts; and grouping those parts together which have the closest connection, so that they may aid each other in their construction and operation. For instance, the Judicature Act now comprises the statute law as to the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, with each of their rules of procedure, and also several Acts affecting the practice and working of these Courts. Again, Part III of this Bill contains certain provisions of law which are applicable in *all* judicial matters.

There existed hitherto various enactments called "Law Amendment Acts," which contained provisions relating to the administration of justice generally, or the law affecting property, or mercantile matters. These have now been inserted in the Acts to which they primarily relate.

In many cases provisions of Acts have been retained, although it may be doubtful how far they are still operative, considering that if still operative the right course has been taken, and if not operative Parliament can easily pass a repealing measure to deal with such instances. In other instances we have felt that mistakes exist, but have not deemed it to be within our province to make what we consider proper provision, especially where amendments would revive an express enactment or alter its existing terms.

As recited in the Enacting Bill, Appendices B and C contain together a complete list of all the Public General Acts printed as such in the statute-books up to the close of the last session of Parliament and then not specifically repealed. Under our scheme those in Appendix B are consolidated and repealed, whilst those in Appendix C are not dealt with.

The latter Appendix contains all the existing Acts relating to Native-land law and the administration of the affairs of Natives. Of the others, most are Local or Personal in character, as appears by their titles, and the remainder are Public General Acts which are spent or obsolete, but are inserted so as to exhaust the statute-books. We desire to offer some remarks on these several classes of Acts :—

(a.) *As to the Native Acts.*—In the report we had the honour to make to Your Excellency in July, 1904, we referred to this subject in the following terms : "Native Land Acts: These Acts involve title to land, and raise many difficult questions of implied repeal which should be settled by the Legislature. We therefore suggest that the Government introduce a consolidating measure." Further experience has only strengthened the views we then expressed. The