

Lake Coleridge Water-power Act, 1915.—Powers of Borough Councils with respect to lighting and the supply of electricity were conferred on the Eyre, Rangiora, and Wairewa County Councils.

Extension of Time.—These were granted as under :—

For holding elections : Palmerston North - Kairanga and Waipu River Boards ; Inter-Wanganui and Te Puke Drainage Boards.

For preparation of valuation rolls and rate-books : Grey and Southland Counties (rolls) ; Woodville County (rate-book).

For holding annual meetings : Hawke's Bay and Tuapeka County Councils (see also below, under "Epidemic.").

Milk-supply Regulations.—Applications for the War Regulations of the 10th September, 1918, to be declared in force in their respective boroughs were received from Sumner, Devonport, and Cambridge Borough Councils and the Wellington City Council. The only one granted was the last-mentioned.

Proportional Representations.—The Christchurch City Council abandoned proportional representation, and the city was once more divided into wards. The Woolston Borough Council adopted proportional representation.

A special point having been made that many returned soldiers possessing residential qualifications might have been struck off municipal rolls for not voting at the last elections in 1915, and so unjustly disqualified, a circular was issued to all Borough Councils pointing out that a soldier does not lose his residential qualifications by absence on active service, and drawing attention to the power possessed by Councils to reinstate names on their rolls.

Rating on Unimproved Value.—Rating on the unimproved value was adopted in the following districts during the year : Manawatu County, Taihape Borough, Otaki Town District, Moa and Mangaorongo Road Districts, and Waiatarua Drainage District.

Housing.—The workers' dwellings provisions in both the Counties and Municipal Corporations Acts were clearly shown by the experience of several Councils to be far too narrow in their scope. It is intended to amend them as soon as possible.

Epidemic.—The influenza epidemic made it necessary for County Councils to postpone their annual meetings, the date for which is fixed by statute. Legislation (section 66 of the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1918) was passed enabling statutory meetings of local authorities and other public bodies postponed on account of the epidemic to be held at any time before the 1st February, 1919. Other legislative measures arising directly out of the epidemic were section 65 (empowering Borough Councils to fill by appointment, in lieu of election, extraordinary vacancies occurring between the 1st October, 1918, and the 30th April, 1919), and section 66 (validating expenditure of local authorities and other public bodies in connection with the epidemic) of the same Act.

Commissions of Inquiry.—The following Commissions of Inquiry were appointed during the year by the Governor-General in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Internal Affairs :—

Act under which Commissions appointed.	Subject of Inquiry.
1. Town Boards Amendment Act, 1912 ..	Proposed Nightcaps Town District.
2. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Control and management of Manawatu River.
3. River Boards Amendment Act, 1917 ..	Alleged failure of Otautau River Board satisfactorily to protect from damage lands within the district.
4. Town Boards Amendment Act, 1912 ..	Proposed Henderson Town District.
5. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Proposed alteration of boundaries, Papakura Town District.
6. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Proposed alteration of boundaries, Oanui Irrigation District.
7. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Proposed Hauraki Plains County.
8. Town Boards Amendment Act, 1912 ..	Proposed Papatoetoe Town District.
9. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Proposed Inglewood County.
10. Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1908 ..	Boundary between Takapuna Borough and Waitemata County.

Legislation.—The only local-government legislation of general importance (apart from the River Acts and the epidemic legislation already referred to) passed last session was the Public Health Amendment Act. The provisions dealing with unhealthy buildings and the improvement of insanitary areas considerably extend the powers of local authorities. The Assistant Under-Secretary, as the officer in charge of local government in this Department, is made a member of the Board of Public Health constituted by the Act. His experience and knowledge of local-government matters will be of great value to the Board.

The Local Acts were fewer than usual. The Invercargill Borough Council Special Rate Empowering Act is an interesting experiment. The present Invercargill Borough Council is under the liability of meeting twenty-two separate loans. Distinct special rates have been struck in respect of these, the rating-areas for the most part not comprising the whole of the present borough, but the areas of the five boroughs the union of which, at various times, produced the Invercargill of to-day. The Act, while safeguarding the rights of debenture-holders, empowers the Borough Council to cease levying or collecting all the existing special rates and to make and levy one special rate to provide interest and sinking-fund charges in respect of the various loans. It is a consolidation of rates without a consolidation of the loans.

The Dunedin City Fish-markets and Empowering Act follows closely similar Acts passed in previous years empowering the Auckland and Christchurch City Councils to engage in fish-dealing