

1920, No. 47.—The Counties Act, 1920.—This Act is a consolidation and amendment of the Counties Act, 1908, and the other enactments mentioned in the Third Schedule to this Act. The form of the original Act has been preserved, but a number of verbal alterations have been made in the provisions consolidated, together with a large number of machinery amendments. Many new powers are also conferred on County Councils. Section 15 enables neighbouring islands to be included in a county. Section 30 makes further provisions regarding the merger of road districts. The provisions dealing with electors and elections have been amended, particularly with regard to the miner's-right qualification and the date of county elections. Defaulting rate-payers are disqualified from voting. Section 123 removes the limit on sanitation rates. Section 129 confers on County Councils the power to borrow by way of temporary loan. The half-yearly balance-sheet has been abolished, and various other amendments of the provisions dealing with county accounts have been made. Section 178 considerably extends the powers of County Councils to make drainage by-laws. Section 182 enables the Governor-General to confer on County Councils certain powers of Borough Councils. The powers of County Councils with respect to fire-prevention, supply of electricity, workers' dwellings, cemeteries, public libraries, and other institutions have been extended, and they are empowered to contribute towards the cost of war memorials, to purchase and sell rabbit-proof wire netting, and to establish cattle-dips. A number of the provisions of the 1908 Act respecting counties in which the Act is suspended have been omitted as no longer necessary.

1920, No. 48.—The Municipal Corporations Act, 1920.—This Act consolidates and amends the Municipal Corporations Act, 1908, and the other enactments mentioned in the Twelfth Schedule to this Act. The form of the original Act has been preserved. A large number of machinery amendments have been made, and the powers of Borough Councils have been considerably extended. Borough Councils are empowered to leave unfilled vacancies occurring within six months before a biennial election. When the biennial election falls on Anzac Day (25th April) it is to be held on the following day. The limit of the general rate that may be levied by a Borough Council is raised from 2s. on the annual or 6 farthings on the capital value to 2s. 6d. and 2d. respectively. The limit of the sanitation rate has been removed. A separate drainage rate may be made, and authority is given by section 95 to consolidate general and other rates. Section 96 empowers Borough Councils rating on the unimproved or the capital value to make their own valuations of new buildings. Important new provisions are contained in Part XIII (Accounts). Borough Councils are required to keep profit and loss accounts in respect of their trading undertakings. They are empowered to establish fire-insurance funds, and (in respect of their trading undertakings) accident, renewal, and reserve funds; the provisions as to constitution and alteration of boroughs are extended, and the division of a borough into wards may be declared to be for purposes of representation only. Section 164 (f) authorizes the borrowing and expending of moneys for the purpose of improving and developing borough endowments. Section 166 confers a power to purchase land on a system of time-payment. By sections 172 (3) and 180 respectively it is provided that no street or private street with a grade of more than 1 in. in 12 in. shall be laid out without the consent of the Minister of Public Works. The powers of Councils with respect to the removal of overhanging trees have been extended by section 205 (1) (c). The powers of Councils with respect to common private drains have been extended by sections 224 and 226. The hours within which Council officers may enter private premises to inspect water appliances are extended by section 237. By section 267 Councils may light private streets at the public expense, and section 269 contains additional provisions respecting the supply of gas and electricity to private persons. Section 288 (g) enables Councils to purchase land, erect buildings, provide plant, and purchase stock in connection with the supply of milk. Paragraphs (a) to (e) of section 322 (1) are taken from section 13 of the Cost of Living Act, 1915, but paragraph (f) is an important new provision enabling the Governor-General to authorize the establishment by Borough Councils of any other trading undertakings deemed to be necessary or desirable in the interests of the citizens. The powers of Councils with regard to workers' dwellings have been extended. Part XXXIX contains important new town-planning provisions. Under it no land in a borough may henceforth be subdivided for sale or lease or other disposal without the consent of the Council. By section 374 (2) references in the Town Boards Act, 1908, and its amendments to provisions in the Municipal Corporations Act, 1908, are deemed to be references to the corresponding provisions in this Act, and, except as may be otherwise specifically provided, those references shall include amendments of or additions to the relative provisions of this Act that may hereafter be made.

1920, No. 49.—The Housing Amendment Act, 1920.—This Act amends in various particulars the Housing Act, 1919, and the rent-restriction provisions of Part I of the War Legislation Amendment Act, 1916. Section 2 empowers the Crown to acquire a leasehold interest in land acquired for workers' dwellings. Section 3 confers special leasing-powers on the Board constituted under the principal Act. The maximum prices of dwellings are increased to £900 and £1,000 by section 4. Section 8 adds to section 29 of the principal Act certain other purposes for which moneys in the Housing Account may be expended. By section 12 public servants are empowered to promote companies for the purposes of Part II of the principal Act. Section 13 provides for the giving of assistance to public-utility societies to carry out schemes for the provision of workers' homes. Section 14 empowers the State Advances Office to lend money for the acquisition of land for workers' dwellings, and section 15 empowers Harbour Boards to borrow money for the acquisition of land and erection of workers' dwellings. Sections 16 to 22 contain modifications and extensions of Part I of the War Legislation Amendment Act, 1916, and other enactments