

be so made in time to allow it to be brought into force and the required notice given of the election to be held on the altered boundaries. This point caused considerable difficulty in connection with special orders made just prior to the last general election, but I propose communicating with County Councils on the matter prior to next general election.

A special order made by the Bruce County Council merging the Mount Stuart Road District, and one by the Makara County Council altering the number of members of the Council, were validated. An extension of time was granted for holding the annual meeting of Councillors in two counties, and for the preparation of the county rolls of three counties.

Three County Councils had conferred on them certain powers of Borough Councils with respect to water-supply, and one Council with respect to lighting and the supply of electricity.

County Councils were given power to expend money on tree-planting. In the interests of economy regulations were issued authorizing County Councils to mimeograph their balance-sheets in lieu of printing them.

*Boroughs.*—For some years past Christchurch has been aiming at a "Greater Christchurch," and adjoining districts have from time to time been brought into the city. During the past year the scheme was carried further, and petitions were presented for the inclusion in the city of five large areas of the Heathcote and Waimairi Counties. A Commission was appointed in each case, and reported favourably in three cases. Each of these three cases was then submitted to a poll of ratepayers, the poll being carried in two cases, after which those two alterations were made. The areas included comprised a portion of the Bromley Riding of the Heathcote County, and the Papanui area of the Waimairi County. In consequence of these alterations the time for preparing the district electors roll for the general election for the city was extended, in order to allow the enrolment of persons residing in the areas. Concurrently with these alterations a proposal to include portions of the Waimairi County in the Borough of Riccarton was also agreed to, after being carried by a poll of ratepayers. Representations are being made to the Department to make the city and New Brighton contiguous, with the object of uniting that borough with the city.

There were several other alterations of boundaries made—viz., Blenheim, Marton, Masterton, Whangarei, Wellington, and Winton; and the boundaries redefined of those boroughs and others in respect of which alterations had previously been made. The only new borough constituted was through the formation of the Town of Rotorua into a borough by the Rotorua Borough Act. Action was taken to bring the Act into force, and arrangements subsequently made for the first election and first meeting of the Council.

Mayoral elections are fixed for the last Wednesday in April biennially. This day fell on Anzac Day in respect of last election, so an Order in Council was issued extending the time until the following day, Council elections being already fixed for that day.

Regulations were issued authorizing Borough Councils to mimeograph their balance-sheets instead of printing them as an economic measure; also prescribing the manner of appeals under section 335 of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1920, with respect to the decision of a Council concerning the subdivision of lands in a borough.

Certain Borough Councils, through a mistaken impression of the law, levied water rates on a graduated scale, and their action was validated by legislation.

*Town Districts.*—Four town districts were constituted, the boundaries of two town districts altered, and five town districts declared not to form part of the county in which each was situated.

The biennial election of members of Town Boards was held during the year in accordance with the Act, and the time for closing polling in connection with this election was extended in the case of two districts.

*Road Districts.*—Only one road district was merged during the year, and arrangements were made for holding the first election and first meeting of the Board of the newly constituted Taupo Road District. There are now only forty-eight road districts in the Dominion, eighteen of which are contained in districts where there is at present no other form of local government.

*River Districts.*—Two new districts—viz., Manawatu-Oroua and Otaki—were constituted, and the boundaries of the Wairau River District altered. Trustees were appointed for the Waimatuku River District.

The constitution of the Manawatu-Oroua River District, referred to in my last report, was an important factor in river-conservation in the Manawatu district, and it is hoped that the works of the Board will materially assist in the big problem of river-conservation in that locality. Before constituting the district you obtained a favourable report from Mr. Newton, Assistant Under-Secretary, who visited the district for the purpose of inspecting the proposed area and interviewing the several parties.

The difficulties arising out of the dual control of the district, as a result of the existence of several drainage districts and a harbour district, were removed by means of legislation, and it is hoped that the Boards will work in harmony and thus enable the works for which the district was constituted to be carried out effectively.

The difficulties of dual control, however, in some instances have been intensified by reason of a misunderstanding of the duties of River Boards and Land Drainage Boards. The primary object of the River Boards Act is the protection of lands from floods, whilst the Land Drainage Act is intended to provide for the drainage of low-lying lands. By process of time, however, the operations of both classes of Boards have become very similar, and it is now difficult in many cases to find exactly where the functions of a River Board and a Land Drainage Board differ. A case was recently brought under notice where a River Board had spent considerable money in obtaining reports from engineers, but these reports were not acceptable to the Board because they dealt almost entirely with the question of prevention of floods and not with the question of drainage. Finally the Board