

should pay. The personnel of the three Commissions was the same—namely, R. M. Watson, Esq., Stipendiary Magistrate, Feilding; A. C. Koch, Esq., civil engineer, Auckland; and H. E. Leighton, Esq., auctioneer and estate agent, Wellington. The sittings of the Commissions commenced on the 28th August, 1926, and the final report was presented on the 27th October, 1926. In view of the fact that the three issues involved were so closely related to one another, the Public Works Department and this Department acted in close co-operation throughout the whole of the proceedings.

The estimated cost of the River Board's scheme is £500,000. In addition, the value of the Makerua Drainage Board's works to the River Board is assessed at £71,975, making a total cost of £571,975. This amount the Commissions recommended should be found as follows: (a) By the ratepayers in Manawatu-Oroua River District, £311,130; (b) by the local authorities in the district (other than the River Board), £59,804; (c) by the Government, £201,041.

The reports were made public, and, in view of the important and far-reaching effect of the recommendations both in regard to the control of the Manawatu and Oroua Rivers and of other rivers in the Dominion, the whole question is receiving very careful consideration.

The Kaituna River Board promoted a local Bill giving it very wide powers, and this Bill subsequently became law under the name of the Kaituna River District Act. The Department co-operated with the Local Bills Committee and with the River Board in considering the various provisions contained in this Bill.

Land Drainage Districts.—Only one new district—namely, Kuku—in the Horowhenua County, was constituted. The boundaries of the Auckland and Suburban, Buckley, Kirikiriroa, Oroua, and Sluggish River Drainage Districts were altered. In particular the alteration of boundaries of the Buckley District necessitated considerable correspondence.

The Hauraki and Horahia Drainage Districts were united under the name of the Hauraki United Drainage District, and arrangements made for the election of a Board for this district.

The general election of trustees for several drainage districts was held during the year. It was found necessary to extend the time for holding the election in some cases, and also to validate irregularities. The powers of the Governor-General to appoint trustees were exercised in the case of the Judea and Kuku Drainage Districts. The power to appoint is exercised very sparingly, and only after every opportunity has been given to ratepayers to elect their representatives.

An important provision in the Land Drainage Act, 1908, gives power to the Governor-General to direct that any drains or drainage-works shall be under the control of any local authority, and that other local authorities shall contribute towards the cost thereof. There is also power for a Commission to be set up with a view to reporting to the Governor-General concerning such matters. This provision was exercised during the year in two cases, and in pursuance thereof the control of a portion of the Hokio Stream, in the Horowhenua County, was dealt with, and also two drains, known as Jones' drain and the Hamilton-Eureka drain, in the Waikato County. In the case of the Hokio Stream legislation was necessary in view of the fact that certain Native fishing rights and the rights of user of the Horowhenua Lake as a recreation-ground were involved.

A conference of representatives of several Drainage Boards throughout the Dominion was held at Wellington during the year, and a number of resolutions passed asking for amendment of the law relating to land-drainage. These resolutions are receiving careful consideration.

Local Bodies' Finance Act.—In view of a number of floods occurring throughout the Dominion during the year, the provisions of section 7 of this Act were again availed of in a number of cases, and certain newly-constituted local authorities had their overdraft for the year fixed under section 3 (5) of the Act. This Act was affected by the Local Government Loans Board Act passed last session, and in consequence of that Act local authorities require to obtain the consent of the Local Government Loans Board, as well as your consent, before they may borrow for the purposes mentioned in section 7.

War Memorials.—The Wellington City Council, Wellington Harbour Board, and the Rotorua and Woodville Borough Councils were authorized to erect and maintain war memorials under the powers given by section 15 of the Finance Act, 1919.

By-laws of Local Bodies.—As usual, a number of by-laws of local bodies were under consideration from various aspects. The by-laws of the Collingwood, Hokianga, Makara, Waikohu, and Waitomo County Councils, and joint by-laws made by several Hawke's Bay County Councils, were approved by the Governor-General under section 109, Counties Act, 1920. Two sets of by-laws made by the Hastings Borough Council and one by the Whakatane Borough Council were confirmed by the Minister under the By-laws Act, 1910.

Public Bodies' Leases Act.—The Hawera County Council was declared a leasing authority under this Act.

Designation of Districts Act.—The name of the locality known as Maxwelltown was changed to Maxwell.

LEGISLATION.

A number of important Acts affecting the administration of this Department were passed last session. The Local Legislation Act, the Town-planning Act, the Maori Arts and Crafts Act, and section 14 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act, will be referred to separately later. In addition, a Cemeteries Amendment was promoted by the Health Department, which transferred the administration of cemeteries matters from this Department to the Health Department. A Cinematograph-film Censorship Amendment made provision for the making of regulations for the censorship of film posters. The Fire Brigades Acts were consolidated and amended. An Industrial Societies Amendment was promoted by the Industries and Commerce Department, which transferred the administration of the Industrial Societies