

TOWN-PLANNING.

There was a noticeable increase in town-planning activities during the year. The statutory period for the preparation and submission of town-planning schemes by Borough Councils and certain other local authorities is fixed as the 1st January, 1937, and the information before the Department showed that a number of the local authorities are taking steps to have their schemes prepared and submitted by due date. This factor alone entailed a good deal of correspondence and other work for the Department.

Two meetings of the Town-planning Board were held, and the Committee appointed to consider and report on individual schemes also met on a number of occasions.

Mr. J. W. A. Heenan, LL.B., was appointed a member of the Board to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. Malcolm Fraser.

The Timaru Borough town-planning scheme was provisionally approved by the Board, after which it was deposited and advertised in accordance with statutory requirements.

The City of Christchurch town-planning scheme was further considered by the Board, and, although correspondence thereon was taking place with the Christchurch City Council, it had not reached the stage where provisional approval could be given.

Schemes were received from the Dannevirke Borough Council and Papatoetoe Town Board, and certain progress was made thereon.

Three appeals were received under section 34 of the Town-planning Act, 1926, and the necessary action for the consideration of them by the Board was under way.

DEATH OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V.

Profound sorrow was caused throughout the Dominion on receipt of the news of His Majesty the King's death on 21st January. Appropriate action was immediately taken by this Department to advise local authorities of the procedure to be followed in connection with the arrangements for a period of mourning.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was proclaimed King on the 23rd January, His Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Galway, G.C.M.G., D.S.O., O.B.E., reading the Proclamation of Accession from the steps of Parliament Buildings before a very large gathering of the public. The Proclamation was also read at the same time by the Mayors and Chairmen of Counties, Town Boards, and Road Boards at the different centres throughout the Dominion.

NEW ZEALAND'S CENTENNIAL.

Although New Zealand's Centennial does not fall due until 1940, some preliminary action has already been taken by the Government to prepare for this important event.

Early in March a conference of Mayors of the main centres, as well as of cities and boroughs which were old provincial capitals, was called by the Hon. W. E. Parry (Minister of Internal Affairs) to lay before a representative gathering, tentative ideas and to obtain views of the local government representatives as to the nature of the celebrations intended. As a result, a National Centennial Committee, with the Minister as Chairman, the Minister of Industries and Commerce, and the Mayors of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and the heads of the Departments of Internal Affairs and Industries and Commerce, was set up to assist in the formation of a policy for the whole Dominion and to report back to the Government within three months, in order to enable it to gain an idea of what finance and organization would be required.

ANIMALS PROTECTION AND GAME ACT, 1921-22.

Birds.—It is pleasing to note the ever-increasing public interest in our native birds. There is definite evidence that some species, particularly the tui and bell-bird, are on the increase. The planting of suitable trees by bird lovers is resulting in attracting birds to localities where they had not previously been observed for many years.

Importations.—The ban placed on the importation of parrots and members of the parrot family from Australia, owing to psittacosis (parrot fever) having been found in some parrots, is still in force, and has been extended to apply to birds coming from the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Shooting-seasons.—Open shooting-seasons were declared for native and imported game in various acclimatization districts. There has been a good deal of discussion as to ways and means of conserving the grey duck and breeding and liberating ground birds to provide sport for the large numbers of shooters who are prepared to take out licenses, provided they have a chance of obtaining reasonable bags.

Sanctuaries.—The list of sanctuaries under the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921-22, is a lengthy one, and additions are made from time to time. During the year an area of 9,026 acres at Chatham Islands was added to the list. This is the first area in Chatham Islands to be declared a sanctuary, and the Department appreciates the steps which were taken by the owners of the property in bringing the matter under notice.

ROTORUA ACCLIMATIZATION DISTRICT.

It is very gratifying to report that many overseas and New Zealand visitors to the district have expressed their appreciation of the Department's efforts to maintain the high standard of fishing which is to be had. Many anglers visited the district for the first time, and there were many overseas sportsmen who paid their annual visit.

Fisheries.—Owing to most unseasonable summer weather, fishing was at times very difficult. While the number of fish taken was less than the previous year, the condition was maintained, and