

- (b) " . . . this Conference is of opinion that, because of the wide scope of its activities the national character of any Council of sport and recreation can best be secured by direct appointment of the same by the Government as an advisory body and not by elective representation of sectional national interests, and recommends the Government accordingly.
- (c) " That this Conference considers the whole question of sport and physical recreation generally of such national importance in connection with the rational use of increased leisure as to warrant the immediate attention of the Government and the people generally."

Following on this Conference, steps were immediately taken to draft an Act to carry into effect the wishes of the representatives of the meeting.

The Act, which is framed largely on the lines of a similar Act passed by the British House of Commons but with certain differences to meet the Dominion's requirements, was passed by the New Zealand Parliament and brought into law in November, 1937.

The Act provides a means for putting into effective operation the Government's scheme for the national development of facilities for and the encouragement of physical training, exercise, sport, and recreation, and facilitates the establishment of centres for social activities. Provision is made for the establishment of a National Council of Physical Welfare and Recreation, the general functions of which are to advise the Government on matters relating to the maintenance and improvement of the physical well-being of the people by means of physical training, exercise, sport, recreation, and social activities. District Committees may be appointed for the purpose of co-operating with the National Council in regard to the provision of facilities for defined areas. Authority is given to make grants out of moneys appropriated by Parliament for the purpose towards the expenses of local authorities and voluntary organizations in providing facilities for the promotion of physical welfare. Local authorities are authorized to expend moneys from their ordinary revenues and to raise loans, without taking a poll of ratepayers, for the provision of facilities for recreation and physical training.

Owing to certain preliminary work which is necessary to the successful formation of the scheme, and partly due to the Hon. the Minister's absence in Australia for a period of six weeks, the National Council was not appointed until after the close of the year under review.

The further steps necessary to implement the legislation are well under way.

AUSTRALIA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS.

The Minister of Internal Affairs represented New Zealand at these celebrations. As a result of his visit much information of value to the Department in connection with our own Centennial celebrations of 1940 has been gained. The Department is also indebted to the Premier's Department of New South Wales for very full information concerning the organization of the Australian celebrations. A New Zealand Ensign and a special message from the Prime Minister were forwarded to Australia.

The Government having decided to pay the internal cost of transport to and from Wellington of all members of the Anzac Contingent to Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations, this Department, in co-operation with the Railways Department and the Returned Soldiers' Association, helped to organize the gathering of the men in Wellington.

BUSH PRESERVATION AND AMENITY TREE-PLANTING.

As indicated in last year's Annual Report, a Dominion Conference, presided over by His Excellency the Governor-General, of interested organizations, Government Departments, and private individuals was held on the 2nd April, 1937.

Representatives from one end of the Dominion to the other were present, thus showing the widespread interest in this work. An enthusiastic discussion took place on a number of subjects, amongst which may be mentioned: The future of existing areas of bush-clad land; amenity planting in general; the future of Arbor Day; and the powers of local authorities and public bodies, both with respect to planting and the welfare of trees.

As the result of the work of the inter-departmental committee a proposal was placed before the Conference and an outline submitted for the formation of a comprehensive national organization to co-ordinate the work of the many interested organizations and to carry out much-needed propaganda and educative work. A remit was passed recommending that the Government set up an interim committee to obtain the views, and any suggested improvements to the outline submitted, of all interested, and bring the national organization with its district and local committees into being.

Many suggestions and views have since been received and considered. They have been collated in readiness for the interim committee on its appointment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Counties.—Three County Councils passed special orders under the authority of the Counties Amendment Act, 1931, abolishing the system of separate riding finance. This made a total of fifty-five County Councils to avail themselves of that legislation. The boundaries of four counties were altered by the transfer of land from one county to another. Three County Councils passed special orders altering riding boundaries. Certain powers of Borough Councils with respect to water-supply, drainage, and sanitation were conferred on five County Councils. An irregularity in connection with the annual meeting of the Patea County Council was validated by Order in Council.