

(4) *Land Drainage Districts.*

The boundaries of the Christchurch Drainage District were altered by the inclusion therein of a certain area of land. The South Hautapu Drainage District was abolished. A petition was presented praying for the abolition of the Steward Settlement Water-race District, and the matter is still under consideration. The results of the election of trustees of drainage districts were gazetted in accordance with law. Eleven trustees of drainage districts were appointed in terms of section 10 (3) of the Land Drainage Act, 1908. The time for the holding of the election of trustees of the Pyramid Block Drainage District was extended.

(5) *River Districts.*

The results of the election of members of River Boards were gazetted in accordance with law. The appointment of a member of the Waikiwi River Board was also gazetted.

A petition of ratepayers was presented praying for the abolition of the Otaki River District, situated partly in the Borough of Otaki and partly in the County of Horowhenua. The usual notice calling for objections to the proposal was published, and an objection was lodged by the Horowhenua County Council on certain grounds. The objection was not upheld, and a Proclamation abolishing the district was duly issued. Arrangements were made for the assets and liabilities of the River Board to be apportioned amongst the local authorities in the area.

(6) *Urban Farm Land Rating.*

From the correspondence that has taken place between certain Borough Councils and the Department it is evident that the benefits of the Urban Farm Land Rating Act, 1932, continue to be availed of. Although no new Courts were constituted, existing Courts were operating in a number of districts. As usual, the Department was called on to deal with a considerable number of questions arising out of the operation of the Act.

(7) *Public Bodies' Leases Act.*

The New Lynn Borough Council and the Wairoa County Council were declared to be leasing authorities under the Public Bodies' Leases Act, 1908.

B. LEGISLATION.

(1) *Municipal Corporations Amendment Act, 1938.*

This Act contains thirty-eight clauses and a schedule, and provides for several amendments to or extensions of the provisions contained in the Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, the principal Act governing the activities of municipalities. Many of the provisions were made as a result of remits passed by Municipal Conferences over a number of years, and all the proposals in the Act had been either sought or agreed to by the Municipal Association.

In order that all the provisions contemplated could be closely examined by municipalities and others affected, arrangements were made for the Bill to be introduced during the previous session of Parliament. This having been done, it was circulated to the municipalities and their criticisms invited. Several practical suggestions for alteration of the Bill were made, and quite a number of these were adopted. The Bill was then reintroduced last session in the amended form. Before it was finally passed it was the subject of conferences with representatives of the Municipal Association, with the idea of unanimity being reached on all the proposals in the Bill, and this was actually accomplished. It is not necessary in this report to outline in detail the provisions contained in the Act as finally passed, but it is opportune to say that, whilst none of the provisions were in the nature of major policy provisions, they were all aimed at helping to keep the wheels of municipal government running smoothly.

2) *Local Legislation Act, 1938.*

Application by local authorities and public authorities for the inclusion of clauses in the Local Legislation Bill again involved a good deal of correspondence and work in the consideration of such applications. Seventy-five applications were considered, and as finally enacted the Act contained fifty-two sections dealing with a wide variety of matters of a temporary or transitory nature as affecting the activities of local authorities and public bodies.

(3) *Statutes Amendment Act, 1938.*

The opportunity was taken of including in this Act legislation of a general and permanent character which presented certain urgent features, but which did not justify a separate amending Act. The matters dealt with are briefly outlined hereunder.

Section 6 authorizes County Councils to insure their members against accident whilst travelling on the business of the Council.

Section 7 enables County Councils to make by-laws relating to the construction of dams.

Section 54 was designed with the object of making a permanent provision with respect to the remission of the 10-per-cent penalty on rates. The section provides the necessary authority for local bodies to remit the penalty or to grant concessions in connection with the imposition of the penalty in cases of undue hardship.