

(6) *Fire Boards*

As a result of extraordinary vacancies occurring on Fire Boards, steps were taken to arrange the appointment of thirty-one new members, five being new Government members, twenty-four insurance representatives, and two appointments made by contributing local authorities. No new Fire Boards were set up during the year, but, by Order in Council, the Auckland United Fire District was created, this in effect being an extension of the previous metropolitan district to include the Otahuhu Borough. The New Plymouth and Timaru Fire Boards were granted extended borrowing powers to enable them to proceed with building extensions, and a new by-law for Napier Fire Board was approved. Loan authorities were issued to several Boards, and consents were also given to a number of agreements for fire protection outside of fire districts.

After consultation with the Council of Fire and Accident Underwriters Associations, it was agreed to facilitate the revocation of the Fire Boards (Insurance Companies' Contributions) Emergency Regulations 1943, and the Council was advised that returns would most likely be required from insurance companies for premium income accruing after 1st January, 1946. The estimates of expenditure of all Boards were reviewed and approved in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Brigades Act 1926. The Report on the Fire Brigades of the Dominion (H.-12) prepared by the Inspector of Fire Brigades, covered a survey of the war period, and also gave some forecast of the proposals for the reorganization of the fire service for the future.

C. LEGISLATION

(1) *Statutes Amendment Act, Finance Act, and Finance Act (No. 2), 1945*

Several sections included in these Acts covering quite a large range of local-government activities were promoted by the Department. Under one section County Councils were authorized to expend moneys, with the consent of the Minister of Internal Affairs, on booklets containing information about their counties; another section extended their powers to control the driving of stock over county roads; and another provision authorized the expenditure of county funds in aid of athenæums, mortuaries, and libraries, &c., outside the county boundaries, providing that they are not conducted for private profit.

Drainage and River Boards were authorized to pay subscriptions to the New Zealand Drainage and River Boards Association and travelling-expenses of their representatives incurred in attending meetings thereof.

By means of another section, local authorities and others were authorized to make donations for the establishment of a Chair of Obstetrics and Gynæcology at any constituent college of the University of New Zealand.

A further provision validated any expenditure incurred by local authorities in celebrating the cessation of hostilities and the return of peace.

Another section extended existing provisions by permitting local authorities to make grants to the dependants of deceased employees.

A further section amended the Local Elections and Polls Act, 1925, by clarifying the position as to offences on polling-day and made the provision with respect to influencing voters uniform for both parliamentary and local-body elections.

(2) *Local Legislation Act, 1945*

As finally passed, this Act contained thirty-three clauses covering a wide field of local-government activity.

(3) *Local Acts*

Eleven local Bills were submitted to the Department for examination and report, and, of these, nine were duly passed into law. The Department was represented at the meetings of the Local Bills Committee when these Bills were under consideration.