

TOWN-PLANNING

The administration of the Town-planning Act has been transferred to the Ministry of Works. At the last Municipal Conference a resolution was passed urging that further trained personnel should be made available by the Government for the assistance of local authorities.

In one form or another assistance has been given by the Ministry of Works in regard to the town-planning proposals of most of the local authorities in the Dominion. Having regard to the lack of independent professional advice, town-planning schemes have been prepared for a number of smaller local bodies at their direction and charge, while many more are now in the course of preparation.

Special committees have been set up to deal with the problem of localizing Government office accommodation in the larger cities in properly planned Government centres, and considerable progress in this direction has been made.

Liaison has been continued with the larger metropolitan authorities who have assumed responsibility for the preparation of their own town plans, and in this connection the benefits have become apparent of the public announcement of the regional schedules of works, which enable the metropolitan authorities to proceed with the planning of their areas in the full knowledge of the Government's intentions. It is not too much to say that, had this step not been taken in Auckland and Wellington at least, consideration of Government and local-body schemes in isolation would have rapidly produced most unfortunate effects. The problem in Auckland itself is of sufficient magnitude to warrant the special appointment of a District Commissioner of Works, and this was made in the early part of this year.

There is now a general realization by most local authorities that future developments cannot safely be permitted in the absence of properly prepared town plans, and steps to have these built up are now being taken. It will be some years before the benefits of this will become generally apparent. In the meantime, however, assistance is being given in regard to traffic and zoning problems already causing acute difficulty in some of the larger centres.

It is much to be desired that local authorities should, wherever practicable, assume responsibility for the preparation of their own town-planning schemes, but it is realized that, with the limited professional advice available outside the larger areas, it will be some time before this can be attained.

The University is looking to this office to provide opportunities for architectural, engineering, and geography students and graduates to obtain experience in the planning field. Useful employment, therefore, is given to a number of students during the long vacations. Although graduates may remain only a year or so, even this limited experience in the planning field will serve to broaden their approach to the problems they will encounter in their basic professions.

REGIONAL PLANNING

You have now completed the public announcement of the regional schedules of works covering the whole Dominion. These have been popularly, but erroneously, termed "ten-year plans." They can serve only as a basis from which development plans can be prepared after much more consideration has been given to the characteristics of each region by both the Government Departments and the local authorities concerned. What is actually meant by regional planning is the examination of the natural resources of each particular region with a view to its further development,