

Court, a second member is to be appointed by the Government because of his knowledge of local affairs, and two other members are to be appointed from the nominees of certain national associations of local authorities. The passage of this Bill marks a definite milestone in the history of local government in this Dominion. For many years an attempt has been made to provide machinery to carry out much-needed reform. Almost without exception the Act has received the support of the local bodies in the country and of the public in general. At the end of the year steps were in train for the setting-up of the Commission.

B. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

The Local Government Branch was again very active in carrying out the various statutory functions required by the local-government Acts administered by the Department.

The close contact of the Branch with local authorities was maintained and advice and assistance given when requested with regard to problems confronting local authorities and others interested in this field. Some idea of the more general matters dealt with may be gained from the following :—

(1) *Boroughs*

The boundaries of the City of Christchurch were altered on four occasions by the inclusion of defined areas of adjacent counties. Three of these areas were the subject of inquiry and report by Commissions of Inquiry. The boundaries of the City of Dunedin and the Boroughs of Invercargill and Port Chalmers were altered by the inclusion of areas previously under County Council control. Proposals involving the alteration of the boundaries of the Boroughs of Upper Hutt and Tauranga by the inclusion of lands, and the Borough of Carterton by the exclusion of lands, were considered by Commissions of Inquiry, but were unfavourably reported on and no subsequent action was taken. Three petitions were received praying for alterations to the boundaries of the Borough of Mosgiel. The signatories to these petitions consisted chiefly of ratepayers owning fairly extensive areas of land in the borough not yet built on and used principally for farming purposes. Objections having been lodged by the Borough Council, the petitions were considered by Commissions of Inquiry, which in each case reported unfavourably on the proposals on the grounds that the areas were suitable for municipal control and that in the interests of the general progress of the borough the areas should not be excluded therefrom. After a Commission of Inquiry had reported favourably, the boundaries of the Borough of Waipukurau were altered by the exclusion of an area of land.

Action was taken with regard to the change of status of no less than five town districts which had qualified for borough status by reason of attaining the necessary one thousand of population. Of these town districts, Helensville, Henderson, and Papatoetoe were constituted boroughs, and preliminary action was taken with regard to the proposed constitution as boroughs of the Town Districts of Kaikohe and Putaruru.

Loans were authorized under section 7 of the Local Bodies' Finance Act, 1921-22, for the Boroughs of Shannon and Akaroa for purposes of flood-damage restoration. The Boroughs of Masterton, Eketahuna, and Woodville also raised loans under that section for earthquake-damage restoration and other purposes. Members were appointed to Assessment Courts under the Urban Farm Land Rating Act, 1932, for the Boroughs of Opunake and Levin, and Judges were appointed to the Assessment Courts for the Boroughs of Manurewa and Papakura. A Judge of Assessment Courts under the Rating Act, 1925, for the City of Dunedin and the Borough of Green Island was appointed. A Board of Appeal to consider a subdivisional plan for an area in the Borough of Ashburton was set up in terms of section 332 of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1933. The Blenheim Borough Council was declared to be a leasing authority under the Public Bodies' Leases Act, 1908.