

The Municipal Conference was held at Rotorua on 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th March, 1947, and was officially opened by the Hon. W. E. Parry, Minister of Internal Affairs, who addressed the Conference on local-government matters. In the course of his address the Minister referred to the impending retirement from public office of the President of the Municipal Association of New Zealand, Mr. J. W. Andrews. He referred to Mr. Andrews' outstanding ability in the local-government field and eulogized the able service he had rendered not only to the Association, but also to local-government generally. A representative of the Department attended the proceedings.

(2) *Counties*

An emergency Conference of the New Zealand Counties Association was held in Wellington on the 22nd and 23rd August, 1946, for the purpose of considering the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Local Government and proposals to be made to the Government for the stabilization of hospital rates. The Conference was officially opened by the Minister of Internal Affairs (Hon. W. E. Parry), and a representative of the Department attended the proceedings.

The boundaries of the Counties of Waikato and Matamata were altered by the exchange of land, and the boundaries of a number of other counties were redefined consequent on the exclusion of areas coming under Borough Council control. The Matamata County Council passed a special order altering riding boundaries. The Rangitikei, Ellesmere, and Springs County Councils were authorized to levy rates on a uniform scale over internal drainage districts. Action was taken to validate certain irregularities in connection with the making of a roll of mining property by the Lake County Council. The Eyre County Council passed a special order under the authority of the Counties Amendment Act, 1931, abolishing the system of separate riding finance. This made a total of eighty-one County Councils to avail themselves of this legislation. A special order was passed by the Clutha County Council abolishing the Clinton Town Board and merging the town district in the county. The Pohangina County Council was authorized to borrow moneys under section 7 of the Local Bodies' Finance Act.

The usual close contact was maintained with the Matakaoa County Commissioner, and discussions were held with him at various times in connection with problems arising in the county. In accordance with past practice, the overdraft limit of the County Council for the year was fixed by the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Particular attention was paid to the Chatham Islands during the year. That somewhat remote part of New Zealand is administered by a County Council, and the Department has for many years been interested in the development and administration of the islands.

Difficulties of communication, particularly during the war years, had always prevented that close interest that is necessary being paid to this locality.

The opportunity of a few trips to the Chatham Islands by Sunderland flying-boats, arranged by the Air Department so as to assist the Public Works Department in certain road and bridge constructional work that had been undertaken by that Department, was availed of by this Department to arrange for the Assistant Under-Secretary, Mr. A. G. Harper, and other officers to fly to the islands to make some study of the needs of the islands as regards local government, acclimatization matters, recreational activities, and general amenities for the islanders. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. W. E. Parry, also made the trip on one of the flights. The information gained and the direct contact made with the settlers in the islands was very helpful in enabling the Department to acquire a better understanding of the needs of these parts, and it is hoped that beneficial results will accrue from the visits.

The constructional works undertaken by the Public Works Department are being partly financed by direct contributions by the Chatham Islands County Council, which, in turn, has to find the money from the general revenues of the Council. That Council does not levy local rates in the ordinary way, but instead it imposes import and export dues on stock and goods entering and leaving the islands. One immediate result of the