

was responsible for the design and supervision of the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It is hoped that by the time site investigations are complete and the plans and specifications are prepared the steel position will have eased to such an extent as to enable the Government to consider the actual construction of this bridge. Following Mr. McKillop's visit the Government has sent Mr. R. H. Packwood, a member of the Bridge Commission, to England to confer with Sir Ralph Freeman and to supply him with full information of local conditions bearing on the design.

The Government desires to put in hand as soon as possible the provision of additional transport facilities to serve the Auckland metropolitan area, and in an analysis of these considerable divergence of opinion as to the location of these facilities became apparent. Because of the magnitude of the work envisaged and of the importance of a correct decision to the Auckland area, the Government has considered it advisable again to obtain competent outside advice, and following inquiries made in Great Britain the Government has invited Sir William Halerow, Past President of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and Mr. J. P. Thomas, late Chairman of the Transport Advisory Committee of the London Passenger Transport Board, to come to New Zealand and report on the question. These gentlemen are expected in New Zealand early in September, and it is hoped that as a result of their report an early start can be made upon the actual construction in the city and in the suburban areas.

Mr. McKillop also visited many of the largest construction works being carried out in the United Kingdom, in Europe, and in the United States and Canada, paying special attention to large housing developments, roading, aerodrome and hydro-electric construction, and discussed with the various constructing authorities and contractors methods of speeding up some of the larger projects which our own Government has in view.

Since the end of the war there has been a general realization of the need for planning both in urban and rural areas. Following upon the publication of the ten-year schedules of works covering the whole Dominion, a considerable amount of detailed work has been carried out in association with local authorities, and close co-ordination of Government development proposals with local-body plans has been secured in this way. Local authorities have been anxious to advance their town and extra-urban planning schemes, but the powers in the Town Planning Act, 1926, were not considered adequate to ensure that orderly development would take place in accordance with their schemes. At the instance of the Municipal Association, therefore, the Town Planning Amendment Act, 1948, was passed clarifying certain provisions of the principal Act and providing additional powers for acquisition of land and other necessary development. The Acts now provide a code which ensures that planning schemes will be effective, and local authorities can proceed with confidence.

Legislation enacted during the 1948 session which directly affected the Department comprises the Public Works Amendment Act, 1948, the Town Planning Amendment Act, 1948, and the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Amendment Act, 1948. The Public Works Amendment Act extended the scope of legislation dealing with access-ways and service-lanes, and contained a number of machinery clauses designed to facilitate the work of the Department to ensure greater safety on roads and to protect the public rights on roads and streets. The Town Planning Amendment Act, referred to in the immediate preceding paragraph, brought the administration of the Town Planning Act, 1926, under the Ministry of Works. The Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Amendment Act contained a number of important sections aimed at the more efficient administration of the original Act. These amendments should be of considerable assistance to Catchment Boards.

Section 68 of the Licensing Amendment Act, 1948, authorizes the holder of a works canteen licence to sell liquor in any canteen established on any public work, but no application for a licence may be made without my prior written approval.