

D. THAMES BOROUGH

Mr. A. L. Burk, who was appointed Thames Borough Commissioner on 1st September, 1938, resigned that position as from 15th January, 1945, to accept the position of Assistant Secretary to the Lyttelton Harbour Board. Mr. Burk carried out his duties as Commissioner to the entire satisfaction of the Department, the debenture-holders, and the people of Thames. During his term the conversion of the whole of the debt of Thames was effected at 3 per cent. and other measures taken which further assisted in the rehabilitation of the borough. After discussions with the Thames Borough Loans Creditors Committee it was decided to continue Commissioner control of the borough, and the Department was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. C. L. Grange, who was the original Commissioner appointed on the passing of the Thames Borough Commissioner Act, 1932. Mr. Grange was appointed on 24th January, 1945, and assumed office on that date. Further substantial progress has been made towards the objective of providing an adequate and pure water-supply for the borough, and negotiations have been taking place between the Government and the Commissioner on this matter. Finality has been reached on the details of the scheme and the financing thereof, and it is anticipated that the first stages of the work will be commenced in the near future.

E. MATAKAOA COUNTY

It is with deep regret that the death on 20th May, 1944, of Mr. C. H. Bull, late County Commissioner, is recorded. Mr. Bull was appointed as Commissioner on 1st May, 1933, upon the institution of Commissioner control arising from the financial collapse of the county at that time. Mr. Bull was faced with a difficult situation on assuming office, but he was responsible for bringing about a great measure of stability and confidence in the county, and his untiring efforts throughout the years have now resulted in a great improvement in the financial economy of the county, whilst providing for reasonable services to the settlers. His untimely passing was a great loss to the Department and to the county generally.

Mr. Dawson E. Chrisp, of Gisborne, has been appointed to succeed the late Mr. Bull, and under his administration good progress is continuing towards the ultimate rehabilitation of the county. It is interesting to note that the high level of rates collected has been generally maintained, and in respect of the year just ended 98·375 per cent. of the current European rates were collected and 68 per cent. of the Native rates. This is regarded as being a very encouraging outlook for the future of the county.

F. LEGISLATION*Statutes Amendment Act, 1944*

Several sections in this Act were promoted by this Department. Under one section further powers were granted to County Councils regarding the eradication of *nasella tussock*, and another provision enables such Councils to make a greater contribution to the maintenance of cemeteries than hitherto. Amendments were made to the Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, providing for the making of regulations for the protection of the public from danger from fire or other emergency in theatres, &c., and authorizing Borough Councils to establish deferred maintenance funds for trading undertakings. The Urban Farm Land Rating Act, 1932, was amended to provide that a supplementary farm-land roll may be made in respect of any area added to a borough.

Local Legislation Act, 1944

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

Local Acts

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

Miscellaneous

A number of Bills which affected the activities of local authorities were promoted by other Departments, and this Department was consulted frequently during the various phases of the Bills. Mention may be made of the Milk Act, the Engineers Registration Amendment Act, and the Housing Improvement Bill.

IV. TOWN-PLANNING

By a direction of the Government, the duties and activities of this Department in relation to town-planning were transferred to the control of the Organization for National Development, under the direction of the Right Hon. the Prime Minister. The Hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs retains the Chairmanship of the Town-planning Board.

V. LAND-AGENTS AND AUCTIONEERS

During the year 716 (712) land-agents' licenses were issued and 7 (6) transfers granted; 460 (443) auctioneers' licenses were issued, and 2 (6) transfers granted (last year's figures in parentheses).