

Several important amendments to the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act were made during the 1948 session of Parliament to facilitate the more efficient administration of the Act.

Although progress in soil conservation work has been somewhat disappointing for the reasons given above, valuable experimental and research work has been initiated by the Council on Council reserves and demonstration areas in co-operation with Catchment Boards and interested Departments. Of these, two projects are of special interest :—

- (1) Experimental work in stabilizing a badly slumped area of 7,000 acres in the Waipaoa Catchment, Gisborne district.
- (2) Experiments and trials with aerial distribution of fertilizer and seeds as applied more particularly to hill-country farming. This project gives indications of making a major contribution to erosion control on large areas of hill country, as well as increasing production.

Research and experimental work generally has been handicapped by shortage of trained staff and the necessary equipment and facilities.

The Council has strongly recommended that senior engineering and soil conservation staff should be sent overseas to gain experience and bring the Council up to date in regard to the latest developments in soil conservation work and river control engineering, and it is hoped to arrange this during the next financial year. Overseas specialists in soil conservation and river control should also be encouraged to visit New Zealand from time to time so that we may have the benefit of their advice.

The Council is endeavouring to co-ordinate its activities to the fullest extent with the work of all Government Departments, local bodies, and special authorities who can assist in furthering the work of soil conservation and river control in this country.

LEGISLATION

During the 1948 session of Parliament a further amendment to the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act was necessary for more efficient administration. Among other things, provision was made for the appointment by the Council of advisory and technical committees; the undertaking of hydrological research; simplification in procedure of appointments of non-elective members of Catchment Boards; classification for rating by agreement with landowners; adjustment of rating system for the collection of rates; modification of procedure for minor river and drainage works; purchase and sale of plant and machinery to Catchment Boards; and the extension of provisions for dissolution of special drainage or river authorities to include districts administered by the Crown.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

During the year the undermentioned Committees have been actively engaged on the many aspects requiring consideration, and the Council is indebted to the assistance given and enthusiasm shown by the Committee members :—

Central Standing Committee, consisting of representatives of the Departments of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry, Grasslands Division of Scientific and Industrial Research, Soil Bureau of Scientific and Industrial Research, Botany Division of Scientific and Industrial Research, Meteorological Services, Marine (Fisheries Research), Internal Affairs (Wildlife), and Works, and Soil Conservation Council. The Committee advises on research and experimental aspects of the Council's activities.

Publicity and Educational Advisory Committee, comprising representatives of the Council, its staff, and New Zealand Catchment Boards Association, which advises on matters relating to information and publicity.