

FRESH-WATER FISHERIES

Fresh-water Fisheries Advisory Council.—This representative body continues to achieve its major functions of (1) co-ordinating, harmoniously, the administrative practices of the Marine Department and of the local fisheries authorities—acclimatization societies and the Department of Internal Affairs; (2) stimulating interest in fisheries research and confidence in the conduct of this work. Since its establishment no significant changes have been made by the Department in administration or research without prior consultation.

Legislation and General Regulations.—No changes were made in Part II (fresh water) of the Fisheries Act, 1908, during the year. A long-overdue consolidation and revision of the general fresh-water fisheries regulations has been carried out, and it is expected that the new regulations will come into force before the 1950-51 angling season. Substantial assistance was given by members of the Advisory Council in framing the new regulations, and all important proposed changes have been adequately considered by acclimatization societies. In drafting the new regulations a great deal of matter has been drawn from existing local regulations in acclimatization society and Internal Affairs districts. This was necessary to clear the way for the revocation of most existing local regulations and their reissue in simpler form.

In advance of consolidation certain urgent matters were dealt with by a further amendment. These were (1) the increase, at the request of the South Island Council of Acclimatization Societies, of licence fees to bring them into line with those in the North Island; (2) machinery changes, pursuant to the amending Act of 1948, to simplify greatly the procedure required for altering local regulations. The change in South Island fees was sought so that additional funds could be used for special purposes—namely, staff training and reinforcement of staff services in weaker districts.

Local Regulations.—Under the new and simplified procedure, a single, concise, regional set of local by-laws has been issued to replace separate Orders in Council relating to the Wanganui, Hawera, Stratford, and Taranaki acclimatization districts. This was done by ministerial notification in the *Gazette* under the new power of approving local modifications of general regulations in a restricted and relatively unimportant class of matters. It is proposed progressively to replace all existing district regulations in this manner. A great saving in time in this Department, the Crown Law Office, the Printing Office, and the Legislative Department will result. Further, a body of law hitherto contained in upward of sixty separate documents comprising over 160 pages will be reduced to a concise and more intelligible series of statements in relatively few documents. The co-operation of acclimatization societies has been sought very successfully in reducing the frequency of demands for amendment of local regulations, which too often related to matters of very little substance.

Local Administration.—What may be the most important changes in the history of administration of fisheries by acclimatization societies are developing well and along lines strongly supported by this Department. Basic weaknesses hitherto have been (1) wide divergence of policy between different organizations, (2) absence of a sufficiently factual basis for policy, (3) great differences in revenue, relative to responsibilities, of different societies, (4) absence of any system for technical training of fisheries staff. The first two weaknesses are being progressively overcome through the work of the Fresh-water Fisheries Advisory Council and of the two Island Councils of Societies. A solution of the other two difficulties is well advanced in the South Island, where it is proposed to create a pool fund from licence revenue to meet the cost of technical training, regional reinforcement of staff services, and also superannuation (or alternative) staff security benefits. Staff training in fisheries work has been given during the last two years at the Fisheries Laboratory to junior officers of the Department of Internal Affairs who will later replace older retiring men in the Taupo, Rotorua, and Southern Lakes districts.