

II. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A. GENERAL ORGANIZATION

The Local Government Branch was fully occupied in carrying out the various statutory duties required by the local-government Acts administered by the Department.

Close contact with local authorities and local government organizations and Government Departments was maintained, and advice and assistance was given when requested with regard to problems confronting local authorities and others interested. It is not possible to deal in detail with all the matters which came before the Branch, but some idea of the work involved may be gained from the following :—

(1) *Boroughs*

The thirty-seventh annual Conference of the Municipal Association was held in Auckland from the 7th to 9th March, 1950. The Conference was officially opened by the Hon. W. A. Bodkin, Minister of Internal Affairs, who addressed the Conference on matters of interest to municipalities. The annual Conference of the New Zealand Institute of Town Clerks was held at the same time. A representative of the Department was present throughout the proceedings of both Conferences. The necessary action was taken to circulate remits from the Conference to the Departments concerned and to obtain decisions thereon for transmission to the Association.

In accordance with a directive issued by the Minister of Internal Affairs, as mentioned in the last annual report, the Local Government Commission held a public inquiry into the financial and economic position of the Borough of Waihi. A report of the inquiry was duly received from the Commission, and its recommendations are under review by the various Governmental authorities concerned. When this review has been completed, the recommendations of the Commission will be submitted to the Government for final decision.

During the year the population of the Borough of Napier reached 20,000, the figure required for city status, and a Proclamation was issued declaring this borough to be a city, thus increasing the number of cities in New Zealand to thirteen. Appropriate celebrations were held in the city to mark this event at which the Department was officially represented.

Preliminary action was taken in connection with the receipt of a number of petitions praying for the alteration of the boundaries of districts. These petitions were duly forwarded to the Local Government Commission for consideration, and following the issue by the Commission of final schemes in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Commission Act, 1946, the boundaries of the Cities of Nelson and Palmerston North and the Boroughs of Whangarei, Tauranga, Lyttelton, Papatoetoe, and Whakatane were altered by the inclusion of areas of land previously under County Council control. The boundaries of the Boroughs of Rotorua and Papatoetoe were also altered by the exclusion of certain areas. Consequent on the alteration of the boundaries of the Borough of Whangarei, provision was made for the transfer from the North Auckland Electric-power Board to the Whangarei Borough Council of responsibility for the supply of electric power in the areas involved. The boundaries of the Cities of Dunedin and Hamilton and the Boroughs of Port Chalmers and Whangarei were redefined consequent on previous alterations of boundaries.

Consequent on an inquiry by the Local Government Commission into a proposed alteration of boundaries of the Borough of Whangarei, the question was raised of the desirability of the merging with the borough of the Town District of Kamo. The Commission's finding was favourable to the proposal and a final scheme was duly issued. The Local Government Commission Act, 1946, provides, however, that when requested by 20 per cent. of the electors in the area concerned a poll shall be held on any proposal to merge one such district with another. In this case a poll was requested by the requisite number of electors and resulted in the proposal being defeated. Accordingly the proposal was allowed to lapse.