

The Masterton Borough Council was authorized to raise a loan under section 7 of the Local Bodies' Finance Act, 1921-22, to provide temporary offices. The Lower Hutt City Council and the Papatoetoe and the Pukekohe Borough Councils were authorized to purchase certain areas of land on the instalment system. The New Lynn Borough Council was authorized to utilize a closed street for the purpose of the erection of a residence for the borough foreman. The Invercargill and Palmerston North City Councils and the Hastings, Blenheim, and Picton Borough Councils were authorized to publish booklets containing information and matters of interest regarding their respective districts. Members were appointed to Assessment Courts set up under the Urban Farm Land Rating Act, 1932, for the Cities of Palmerston North and Invercargill, the Boroughs of Gore and Waipukurau, and the Town District of Glen Eden. Judges were appointed to the Assessment Courts for the Boroughs of Northcote, Papatoetoe, and Otaki. A Judge was appointed to the Assessment Court under the Rating Act, 1925, for the City of Dunedin and the Borough of Green Island. Amendments to a fire-prevention by-law of the Te Puke Borough Council were approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The Tauranga and Rotorua Borough Councils were declared to be leasing authorities under the Public Bodies' Leases Act, 1908.

Considerable progress was made in the preparation of a Standard Code of General By-laws for adoption by Borough Councils which is being undertaken by the New Zealand Standards Institute. Officers of the Department gave assistance and attended meetings of the various Committees of the Standards Institute set up in this connection.

## (2) *Counties*

The twenty-fourth annual Conference of the New Zealand Counties Association was held in Dunedin from the 14th to 16th June, 1949. The Conference was addressed by the Under-Secretary for the Department, Mr. A. G. Harper, who conveyed a message from the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Hon. W. E. Parry, who was unable to be present. Mr. Harper spoke on local government matters of interest to the Association. The annual Conference of the New Zealand Institute of County Clerks, which was held in conjunction with the Conference of the Association, was also addressed by Mr. Harper. The Department was officially represented throughout the proceedings of both Conferences. Following the submission of remits from the Association Conference, the necessary action was taken to obtain departmental decisions thereon for transmission to the Association.

Close attention was again given during the year to the financial difficulties facing the Buller County Council. The geographical configuration of the county, with a lengthy mileage of roads, together with the extremely high annual rainfall, the heavy volume of coal and timber transport, and other factors, leads to the maintenance of roads being very costly. The usual close liaison in this matter was maintained with the Treasury, and discussions took place with a view to discovering some means whereby the County Council might attain a satisfactory degree of financial independence. It is not possible yet to see how this can be achieved.

The usual close contact was maintained with the Matakaoa County Commissioner, and discussions were held with him regarding the administration of the county affairs. In accordance with past practice the overdraft limit of the County Council for the year was fixed by the Minister of Internal Affairs.

Further progress was made in the amendment of the Standard Code of Building By-laws for adoption by County Councils and the Department has been actively associated with the New Zealand Standards Institute in this connection. It is anticipated that the Code will be available for adoption by County Councils within the next few months.

The boundaries of the Counties of Whakatane, Opotiki, Matamata, Taupo, Rotorua, Tauranga, Waipa, and Raglan were altered by the exchange of certain areas of land, and the boundaries of a number of other counties were redefined consequent on the alteration of the boundaries of certain cities, boroughs, and a town district.