

will, of course, in all cases exercise its discretion as to the type of procedure best suited to the particular circumstances. The new procedure was adopted in the year under review in the case of the constitution of secondary urban fire districts in the Bulls Town District, the Rawene Town District, and the urban areas of Culverden, Ranfurly, Murchison, and Titirangi, and also in connection with the reclassification of the Runanga Borough as an urban fire district.

In the case of applications which were submitted to the Commission for the constitution of the fire districts of Te Kuiti and Eastbourne, the procedure of issuing provisional and final schemes was adopted, but following the passing of the Fire Services Act, 1949, they were constituted as urban fire districts under that Act. An application for the constitution of the Fire District of Motueka was also received by the Commission, and this district was duly constituted a secondary urban fire district under the new Act.

(2) RABBIT DISTRICTS

Since the Rabbit Destruction Council was constituted in pursuance of the Rabbit Nuisance Amendment Act, 1947, a considerable increase in the number of applications, either for constitution of new districts or for the extension or alteration of the boundaries of existing districts, have been submitted to the Commission. Observations have been made from time to time by the Rabbit Destruction Council and other parties regarding delays which have occurred in the constitution of districts. To enable the position to be clarified, a meeting was arranged between the Chairman of the Commission, the Chairman and Secretary of the Rabbit Destruction Council, and a representative of the Department of Agriculture.

It was pointed out by the Chairman of the Commission that although the Rabbit Nuisance Amendment Act, 1947, provided for the compulsory constitution or alteration of the boundaries of rabbit districts without regard necessarily to the views of the ratepayers in the proposed districts, the Commission had decided that it would not consent to any proposals until the views of the ratepayers in the areas concerned had been ascertained. It was also pointed out that the Commission had previously requested that information as to the views of ratepayers and the acreages of their properties be submitted when applications were referred to the Commission. The Department of Agriculture had accordingly circularized its officers in the various districts with a view to giving effect to the Commission's requirements. A number of proposals, however, which had been submitted to us were not adequately supported by the factual information, and a good deal of work had been thrown on the small staff attached to the Commission in investigating the position in each case and referring the matters back for further inquiry. This had resulted in certain delays. The Chairman of the Rabbit Destruction Council indicated that he would extend every co-operation that was possible to meet the position.

It was indicated subsequently that in order to meet the position the former procedure of circulating a petition in pursuance of the Rabbit Nuisance Act, 1928, would be undertaken.

A marked improvement has resulted from this procedure, and we have accordingly been able to determine without delay most of the applications submitted to us. Instances have arisen, however, where the procedure is not being followed, and certain delays are still occurring. We consider that proper attention should be given to the administrative requirements relating to the constitution and alteration of the boundaries of rabbit districts, in order that the work of the Rabbit Destruction Council can be expedited, and control in the eradication of the pest can be effectively undertaken without undue delays.

During the year under review, forty-six requests were made by the Director-General of Agriculture to the Commission concerning proposals for the alteration of the boundaries of existing rabbit districts, the constitution, and the union of rabbit districts.