

SESSION II.
1921.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

(ANNUAL REPORT OF THE) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 1921.

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

SIR,—

Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 2nd September, 1921.

I have the honour to submit herewith the annual report of the Department for the year ended 31st March, 1921.

I have, &c.,

J. HISLOP, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. W. Downie Stewart, Minister of Internal Affairs, Wellington.

REPORT.

WORK OF THE YEAR.

VISIT OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES arrived at Auckland on the 24th April by the H.M.S. "Renown," and, after visiting the various cities and most of the principal boroughs and other localities throughout the Dominion, departed from Lyttelton on the 21st May.

The general arrangements in connection with the visit of His Royal Highness were entrusted to this Department. Every praise is due the Railways, Police, Defence, Education, and Post and Telegraph Departments, and all local bodies in those districts visited by the Prince, for the valuable services rendered by them throughout the tour.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

In my last report I made reference to the activity on the part of local bodies, and the reawakening in local government after the war. The past year has proved this even more so, and several important changes in local-governing areas and activities have been effected.

A pleasing feature of the whole question of local government is the evidence which has been brought before the Department of the ever-increasing interest displayed in local-governing affairs by electors and ratepayers.

Counties.

The question of county control is becoming more and more complex, and there has been an increasing desire for the splitting-up of existing counties and the formation of new counties. The policy of the Government is, however, opposed to this unless it is clearly shown that there is a necessity for a new county, and if this is not shown the Department opposes all Bills introduced for the purpose of forming new counties. The invariable practice is to set up a Commission to inquire into the matter, and consider it on the recommendations of such Commission. Sooner or later, in conjunction with the whole question of local government, the formation of larger counties with increased powers will have to be considered.