

mation was forthcoming, and the matter was finally dropped. It is perhaps not out of place to mention as a result of this that very often, in the case of some of the smaller districts, it would be preferable if the County Council in which the area is situated were to exercise its powers of drainage. Whilst in some cases a small district may be justifiable, yet at the same time there is strong argument against it, and very often a County Council with the machinery and a staff at its disposal could more effectively carry out the necessary drainage-works than a small Drainage Board with a lack of sufficient funds.

The Mangapiko Stream and tributaries is controlled by four Drainage Boards, and as a result of representations made to the Department a Commission was set up to determine whether or not these districts should be united and the control of the stream be placed under one district. As a result of the report of this Commission it was decided not to unite the districts, but a further Commission was set up to inquire as to the advisability of vesting the exclusive control of the stream in one of the present drainage districts, and the proportion which should be paid by each district towards the control thereof. This matter is still under consideration.

A petition was received praying for the exclusion of certain lands from the Waiatarua Drainage District. It was ascertained that a portion of such lands was also included in the Auckland City, and legislation was passed providing for the automatic exclusion from a drainage district of any area which is included in a borough, and for an adjustment of assets and liabilities to be made thereon. A Commission was set up to inquire as to whether the remaining portion should be excluded from the drainage district, and this matter is still under consideration.

Balance-sheets of Local Bodies.

A large number of local bodies were granted exemption from the statutory mode of publication of their balance-sheets, and an alternative mode prescribed. This practice provided a considerable saving to those local bodies which took advantage of it. Since the close of the year a general provision was inserted in the regulations issued under the Counties Act allowing County Councils to adopt this mode of publication without application to this Department, and it is proposed to insert a similar provision in the regulations under the Municipal Corporations Act.

By-laws of Local Bodies.

The by-laws of thirteen County Councils were approved by the Governor-General under section 107, Counties Act, 1908. The by-laws of twelve local bodies were confirmed by the Minister under the By-laws Act, 1910. The by-laws of four Road Boards and of four Fire Boards were gazetted under their respective Acts. Irregularities in a special order made by the Dargaville Borough Council making by-laws were validated.

Public Bodies' Leases Act.

The Timaru Borough Council and the Cook County Council were declared leasing authorities under the Public Bodies' Leases Act.

Legislation.

I have already referred to two important local-government measures—viz., the consolidation of the Municipal Corporations Act and the Counties Act. In addition to these an amendment was passed to the Land Drainage Act. A large number of clauses were, as usual, inserted in the Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act. Several local Acts were passed bearing on matters dealt with by this Department.

Since the termination of the war the demand for legislation has greatly increased, and there is now a considerable volume of matter in the Department ready for legislation as soon as the opportunity presents itself. You have already approved of the preparation of several measures, including various consolidations.

PASSPORTS AND PERMITS.

The regulations in respect to passports and permits have been provided for in the War Regulations Continuance Act, 1920.

By an arrangement with the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, which came into operation on the 22nd October, 1920, the restrictions in respect to British-born subjects travelling between Australia and New Zealand were relaxed, and such persons may now travel on intercolonial vessels without being in possession of a passport or permit. The removal of restrictions upon British-born subjects travelling to Australia has relieved the permit section of a large amount of non-revenue-producing work, and the staffs at Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin have been reduced accordingly. Passports are necessary to facilitate travel to any other part of the world, excepting British possessions in the Pacific Ocean, and 4,313 passports were issued during the year. British passports, unless otherwise endorsed, are valid for travel anywhere within the British Empire without the name of the part of the Empire concerned being specifically endorsed thereon, but do not exempt the holder from compliance with the immigration regulations in force in the various parts of the Empire.

NATURALIZATION AND NATIONALITY.

In accordance with the provisions of the Aliens Act, 1908, 209 letters of naturalization were issued, and nine certificates or letters of naturalization were accepted and registered in the Dominion of New Zealand.

Naturalization is not being granted to subjects of countries recently at war with Great Britain unless such persons or their immediate relatives have served with His Majesty's Forces.