

Municipal Association Act, 1932.—This Act incorporated the Municipal Association of New Zealand as a statutory body and made certain provisions for the functioning thereof.

Section 26, Finance Act, 1932 (No. 2), and Section 27, Finance Act, 1932–33 (No. 2).—These sections further extended the power given to local authorities to remit the 10-per-cent. penalty on unpaid rates.

Local Legislation Act.—The usual Local Legislation Act contained sixty-five clauses affecting the activities of numerous local authorities and public bodies.

Local Acts.—Sixteen local Bills were submitted to the Department by the Local Bills Committee for examination and report. Twelve of such Bills were passed into law.

Municipal Corporations Bill.—This Bill was originally prepared as a consolidation of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1920, and amendments, but later on an opportunity was taken to revise and rearrange the existing provisions and to make such substantive amendments and additions as were considered necessary to remedy defects and meet present-day needs of Borough Councils. The Bill created considerable interest in Parliament and in boroughs generally, and progress on it was slow. At the close of the session it had only reached the stage of the Short Title having been passed.

Local Government Officers' Bill.—The New Zealand Institute of Town Clerks and the New Zealand Institute of County Clerks had combined in making representations to the Government for the provisions of this Bill, and it was introduced during last session. The objects of the Bill were to provide a legislative system whereby examinations may be conducted in subjects relating to local government and the administration thereof, and diplomas granted to those qualifying. This innovation in local government in this Dominion was sought for the purpose, *inter alia*, of raising the standard of efficiency of local government officers and enabling local authorities which so desire to use this academic test as a guide to them in selecting their officers. The Bill was referred to the Local Bills Committee which heard considerable evidence, and reported that, as certain organizations connected with the local authorities named in the Bill had not had an opportunity of fully considering its provisions, the Bill should be held over. It was therefore not proceeded with last session and in the interval it has been receiving the consideration of the organizations referred to by the Local Bills Committee.

TOWN-PLANNING.

The activities of the Town-planning Section of the Department were again severely restricted during the past year, owing to the paramount need for economy.

One meeting of the Town-planning Board was held. In addition, one meeting was held respectively of the Napier Town-planning Scheme, Recess, and Legislation Committees of the Board.

A short amendment was made to the Napier Town-planning Regulations, 1931, so as to provide for claims for compensation under those regulations being heard and determined by the Hawke's Bay Adjustment Court.

The term of office of the nominated members of the Town-planning Board expired during the year and appointments were made to fill the vacancies. All the retiring members were reappointed with the exception of Messrs. J. G. Alexander and A. G. Harper, the two new members being Messrs. F. C. Widdop and Malcolm Fraser.

Mr. J. W. Mawson, F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I., M.I.Struct.E., relinquished his position as Director of Town-planning on the 31st March, 1933. He was appointed to that position on the 1st October, 1928, for a period of five years, but sought the consent of the Government to the termination of the contract, which was agreed to.

ANIMALS PROTECTION AND GAME ACT.

Shooting Seasons.—As in the past, open seasons for the taking or killing of imported and native game were declared in the various acclimatization districts. For the first time it has been decided to impose a bag-limit on the number of godwits which may be shot per gun per day. The number of acclimatization districts in which an open season for godwits will be observed in 1934 has been reduced. It has also been decided to observe a close season for knots throughout the Dominion next year.

Importations.—Representations are made from time to time to the Department that fur-bearing animals such as the musk-rat should be introduced. These have, however, been definitely resisted.

Consequent on an outbreak of Newcastle Disease (pseudo fowl pest) in Victoria, it was decided in November last not to grant any further authorities under the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921–22, for the importation of birds from Australia until more information as to the incidence of the disease had been obtained. While authorities have later been granted in some cases, the conditions have been made much more stringent than previously, to obviate the possibility of the introduction of disease and spread to our wild birds and poultry. In practically all cases the applications dealt with have been in respect of cage birds.

Birds.—It is pleasing to note the growing public interest in New Zealand birds. Reports from the Department's Officers and other sources indicate that some species of absolutely protected birds are on the increase. Unfortunately, poaching, particularly in the case of the native pigeon, is still being carried on. There have, however, been numerous convictions for these breaches, and salutary fines in most cases inflicted.

The policy of declaring areas as sanctuaries has been followed where the necessary consent of owners or controlling authorities has been forthcoming and the areas are suitable.

Concern is being displayed as to the reduction in numbers of grey duck, and it is apparent that methods of conservation will have to be seriously considered.