

cases they are represented by a professional engineer, on whose "presentments" the Court orders are issued. One or more Marsh Bailiffs hold office, and the duty of these officers, who are resident in the area affected, is to make constant inspection and supervise the execution of orders of the Court. If organizations similar in procedure to these Courts could be extended over all areas affected by erosion, and some measure of concerted action devised, it is safe to predict that the coast erosion problem would disappear. The bane of the elected authority is inefficient compromise in the face of obstruction. In many cases obvious requirements have thus been contested until disaster impended. The plea usually put forward in these cases is that of economy. It is frequently an economy of the inverted type. Scattered up and down the coast-line are many local authorities whose actions are models of business-like administration, but it is safe to say that, speaking broadly, government by Commissioners of Levels is at the present time the most efficient form of control in respect of a threatened coast-line. In some cases the Commissioners of Levels themselves carry out the necessary defence works, and either charge the cost of the same on the individual landowner concerned or allocate the collective cost by scot over the entire level *pro ratâ* on the areas of occupation. To a large extent this is a matter of custom. Probably the most economical arrangement is for each body of Commissioners to institute a works department of its own. Commissioners have skilled men in their employ, and are able to buy materials and secure the necessary plant more economically than the individual landowner. On the other hand, the landowner is generally the employer of agricultural labour, and can carry out orders economically in the off seasons. Where the present system works smoothly, the principle *quieta non movere* would appear to be the soundest. There is no doubt that the districts controlled by the Commissioners are in some cases badly delimited, and that a reorganization of the whole system would be desirable. All who have had practical experience of the working of coastal bodies will agree that, as a broad principle, the government by country gentlemen compares favourably with that of elected town bodies.