

## VI. ALTERATION OF BOUNDARIES: INVOLVING PUBLIC INQUIRIES

## GENERAL

In our last report, attention was drawn to two general matters which caused us concern. These two matters have continued to obtrude themselves at public inquiries held relating to the alteration of boundaries of local authorities' districts. First, reference was made to the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Town-planning Act, 1926. The pressing need for such control by local governing authorities as provided for in this enactment cannot again be too strongly stressed. The need for town and extra-urban planning, more particularly where the districts of local authorities have been reorganized with a view to stabilization of their boundaries, is apparent, and the success of the reorganization depends to a large degree on the implementation of the provisions of the Town-planning Act. The uneconomic utilization of productive land where scattered urbanization has been taking place results in amenities such as water, sewerage, transport, streets, and footpaths being costly to provide and to maintain. We realize, of course, that many years must elapse before the mistakes of the past can be rectified, but we are of the opinion that these mistakes can be avoided in the future if a proper regard is had to the principles of sound planning. Costly services and amenities can be provided for urban areas more economically if the areas are reasonably and logically confined than if spill-overs and ribbon development are permitted. In the interests of both the rural and urban communities, as well as in those of the nation generally, the use of highly productive land for the production of primary produce should, as far as possible, be continued. It is evident that this function of local governing authorities is becoming more clearly recognized, and in some cases is being exercised, but we consider it should be exercised more widely.

The second general matter to which reference was made in our previous report was the question of the supply of electricity by the two types of supply authorities—territorial authorities and Power Boards. Anomalies occur in respect of the districts of supply authorities, and although the Commission has power to adjust the boundaries of power districts, it is precluded by section 13 (3) of the Local Government Commission Act from making any provision for the transfer of the whole or any part of any trading undertaking, or of the functions in relation thereto, from any local governing authority except upon the union, merger, or abolition of the district of the local governing authority. The disparity in the rates charged by different supply authorities accentuates the difficulties, more particularly when the district of a territorial authority is adjusted so as to include a portion of an adjoining local governing authority's district which forms portion of the district of a Power Board, or, conversely, where a portion of the area of a territorial supply authority is excluded from its district and included in the district of an adjoining local governing authority which is supplied with electricity by a Power Board. There arises not only the question of supply and the financial implications in so far as the individual consumers are concerned, but also certain electoral problems. As in the case of the adjustment of territorial districts, we are of the opinion that unless there is sound justification for any reorganization, the *status quo* should be maintained, and this principle would apply in respect of the distribution of electricity if the Commission was given power to adjust the boundaries of local governing authorities' areas of supply in the same way as it can adjust the boundaries of Power Boards' districts. The general effect, however, would be to overcome serious anomalies which are becoming more and more evident.

## (1) CHRISTCHURCH METROPOLITAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The inquiry relating to Christchurch metropolitan local government was conducted during the year 1948 and reference was made in our previous report to the issues involved. We do not consider it necessary, therefore, to make further detailed reference to these matters.