

(2) LOCAL GOVERNMENT: AUCKLAND METROPOLITAN AREA AND ENVIRONS

A preliminary investigation concerning the functions and districts of local authorities in the Auckland metropolitan area and environs was undertaken by the Commission during 1949. On the completion of this investigation it was decided to hold a public inquiry to review the local government structure in the area embracing the whole or portions of districts of thirty local authorities—namely, the Auckland City Council; the Ellerslie, Henderson, Manurewa, Mount Albert, Mount Eden, Mount Roskill, New Lynn, Newmarket, Onehunga, One Tree Hill, Otahuhu, Papakura, and Papatoetoe Borough Councils; the Glen Eden and Howick Town Boards; the Mount Wellington, Orapiu, Panmure Township, and Western Waiheke Road Boards; the Manukau and Waitemata County Councils; the Auckland and Waitemata Electric-power Boards; the Auckland Harbour Board; the Auckland Hospital Board; the Auckland Metropolitan Drainage Board; the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board; the Auckland Metropolitan Milk Board; and the Auckland Transport Board.

The inquiry was opened at Auckland on the 7th November, 1949, and a comprehensive survey of the developments in the structure of local government which had taken place in Auckland from the foundation of the city in 1840 to date was made by the Chairman of the Commission in order that the evolution of local government in this locality could be appreciated by all interested parties.

The parliamentary Select Committee which was set up in 1944 to inquire into and report on all phases of the local government system in the Dominion had made special reference to the problems in Auckland, and had stated that they required immediate attention. The Select Committee had also reported that it considered that there was no virtue in the multiplicity of local authorities, and if simplicity could be obtained with as close a relationship as possible with the people served, then it was better that there should be as few as possible local governing authorities in existence. The Commission desires to emphasize, however, that it is not in any way committed to the policy of the wholesale amalgamation of local governing authorities as being the solution to the problems which exist in various parts of New Zealand, and that a scheme of reorganization in any particular locality will be promulgated only if it is evident, after a thorough examination of all aspects of the position, that some reorganization is necessary and desirable. This observation has particular reference to local government in the Auckland metropolitan area and environs.

The issues submitted by the Commission to the interested parties at the inquiry were as follows:—

First, the overriding and major issue as to whether the existing structure of local government control in Auckland and its environs was satisfactory from the point of view of efficiency and economy, or whether a reorganization scheme should be prepared in respect of any of the districts of local authorities included within the scope of the inquiry.

Secondly, in the event of the Commission concluding that a reorganization scheme should be prepared—

(a) Should any two or more adjoining districts, whether districts of the same kind or not, be amalgamated, and, if so, which districts.

(b) Should any district be merged in any other district.

(c) Should any or all of the functions of any local authority be transferred to any other local authority. This issue necessarily involved consideration of the question whether, in the event of the Commission deciding that the local government of Auckland should be concentrated in a single body, any or all of the functions now being exercised by certain *ad hoc* authorities should be transferred to the single authority.

(d) Should any of the boundaries of adjoining districts be altered.

(e) Should any existing district be converted into a district of a different kind.