

of present-day standards, but that the numerous discharges, particularly into the Manukau Harbour, are resulting in serious pollution of the harbour-waters. With the increasing population of the present Auckland and Suburban Drainage District, and the resultant increase in the volume of discharge at Orakei, there have from time to time been complaints not only as to the pollution of the Waitemata Harbour therefrom, but as to obnoxious smells in the vicinity of the Orakei outfall.

It has been apparent, therefore, for some years that a more comprehensive and more satisfactory system for the disposal of the sewage of the Auckland Isthmus is imperative not only to prevent the pollution of the waters of the harbours, but also in the general interests of the health of the district.

The fact that the proposed scheme covered the areas of local districts at present outside the district of the Auckland and Suburban Drainage Board necessitated the creation of a new administrative authority to carry out the works. The Board, having approved of the scheme, requested the Government to set up a Commission to define the boundaries of the new district, to determine its form of administration, and to provide a scheme for the allocation of capital and revenue costs over the constituent districts. A Commission of inquiry, consisting of the Hon. Sir Francis Vernon Frazer (Chairman), Mr. J. W. A. Heenan, C.B.E., and Dr. M. H. Watt, C.B.E., sat in Auckland for the purpose of hearing evidence on the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th November, 1937. At its hearings evidence was heard from all the local authorities in the area. The hearing was marked by an evident desire on the part of all interested to co-operate in the solution of an urgent metropolitan problem.

The Commission's findings may be summarized as follows: At an early stage in the proceedings it became evident that the extension of the main intercepting sewer to the west so as to serve New Lynn, Glen Eden, and Henderson was, for several reasons, not justified at the present time. Consequently, the area to be immediately served by the Drainage Board was defined so as to include the whole of the present Auckland and Suburban Drainage District, plus the Boroughs of Onehunga, Otahuhu, and One Tree Hill (part not included in present drainage district), the town districts of Ellerslie and Papatoetoe, and the road districts of Mount Wellington and Mount Roskill (part not included in present drainage district). This area is to be known as the "inner area." Beyond the "inner area" an "outer area," to include the Borough of New Lynn, the Town Districts of Glen Eden and Henderson, the portion of the Waitemata County within a radius of nine miles of the chief post-office, Auckland, the portion of the Manukau County within a radius of fourteen miles of the chief post-office, Auckland, and the Panmure Township Road District, was suggested in which no new drainage system shall be instituted and no change in any drainage system at present in operation shall be made, except by the suggested Metropolitan Drainage Board. When such works are undertaken by the Drainage Board in any part of the area that portion shall immediately become part of the "inner area."

Beyond the "inner area" there is a considerable expanse of country, the natural drainage of which is into the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours. As one of the objects of the proposed scheme is to prevent the pollution of the harbours, the Commission suggested that the Drainage Board should have a general supervision over all sewerage works, the effluent from which drains into either of these harbours. It suggested that, although the Drainage Board should at present be given no authority to construct sewers in the area, it should be defined as within the "sphere of influence of the Drainage Board."

On the question of the constitution of the new Drainage Board, the Commission suggested that the Board should consist of persons appointed by the constituent local authorities—the Auckland City Council to appoint eight members and the other local authorities seven members. The Commission made detailed recommendations as to the allocation of the capital costs for the works. Its recommendations as to the method of apportioning the Board's levies for annual revenue as between the constituent local authorities breaks new ground. To assess the proportion payable by each local authority on the basis of rateable capital value alone would press unduly on the City of Auckland, and it was generally agreed by the representatives of the local bodies that the mean between the percentage of the rateable capital value of each local body district to the total rateable capital value of the drainage district and the percentage of the population of each local-body district to the total population of the drainage district would provide a fair basis for the allocation of costs. This method, which is definitely empirical, was recommended by the Commission. Although it was suggested that the total levy on a local body district should be calculated by the above formula, no change in the method of levying on the individual ratepayer was recommended—each local authority to continue to levy on the system of rating for the time being in force in its district. In view of the fact that large areas in some local authorities are at present unreticulated and are likely to remain so, it was suggested that, in so far as concerns the drainage rate, each local authority should be given power to introduce a system of differential rating in terms of the benefits derived from the drainage system.

An interesting recommendation of the Commission was that which suggested that the Board should be given power to issue drainage and plumbing by-laws for the whole district, including the "outer area." These by-laws would override existing by-laws and would provide a uniform code for the whole district. The actual administration of the by-laws is to be left to the local authorities.

The Auckland and Suburban Drainage Board has accepted the report of the Commission and proposes to incorporate the findings in a local Bill for submission to Parliament during next session.

*Town Districts.*—The Turua Town District was merged in the Hauraki Plains County. Authority to fix water charges according to the quantity consumed was conferred on the Manurewa Town Board.

*Road Districts.*—The Longbeach and Wakanni Road Districts in the County of Ashburton were abolished. This leaves only fourteen road districts in the Dominion, nine of which are situated in counties where the Counties Act is inoperative. Certain powers in regard to waterworks and the fixing of water charges were conferred on the Panmure Township Road Board.

*River Districts.*—A petition of ratepayers was presented praying for the abolition of the Waikiwi River District in the Southland County. The usual notice calling for objections to the proposal was