

The Secretary of the Commission, who is a solicitor of the Supreme Court, appears at all inquiries to assist the Commission by cross-examination of witnesses to bring out such facts of value as may not have been brought out by the examination or cross-examination of the parties. His function, in general, is not to take sides, but purely to elicit such evidence as may enable the Commission to form a just and sound decision.

A verbatim report of all evidence is prepared for the use of the Commission and is made available to the principal parties engaged in the inquiry. When the inquiry is completed, the Commission proceeds to an examination of the evidence before it, and if it decides that some reorganization is necessary, it prepares, as provided by section 16 of its Act, a provisional reorganization scheme providing for such adjustment as it deems fitting in the circumstances.

In addition, a report is always prepared by the Commission setting out its reasons for any decision it has arrived at. This report and provisional scheme (if one is prepared) is sent to all the parties previously mentioned as well as to Ministers and Government Departments concerned. The general content of the scheme is published in the newspapers. Within one month of the issue of a provisional scheme, any party or other person or body interested has the right to object to the scheme and to give to the Commission notice in writing of such objection and of the grounds thereof. Where objections have merely reiterated matters which have been fully explored at the public inquiry, the Commission, after consideration, has generally decided that such objections do not lie. Where, however, the grounds are that the decision is against the weight of evidence (*weight* of evidence has a different connotation from *volume*) or where new evidence is available, the Commission is prepared to give the parties an opportunity of further discussing the matter. Up to the present time it has not been necessary to reopen an inquiry to consider objections which have been lodged, but one such case is now pending.

The objections having been considered and dealt with, the Commission may issue a final scheme with or without amendments. Such final scheme is transmitted to the Minister of Internal Affairs. Section 20 of the Local Government Commission Act gives to the Governor-General power by Order in Council to implement the scheme under the Local Government Commission Act or "in such manner as may be prescribed by any Act for the time being in force making appropriate provisions in that behalf."

It should be pointed out in passing that no evidence is excluded at any public hearing. The Commission has taken great pains to see that all persons likely to be interested are acquainted not only with the proposals, but also with their rights to appear before the Commission.

In so far as Government Departments are implicated either directly or indirectly in any proposal, opportunity is always given to these Departments to appear and state their case. Frequently Government Departments have, at the request of the Commission, appeared to give technical evidence as to particular issues. In addition, the Commission, through its officers, always has available to it extensive financial and statistical information as to the issues involved. The Commission has also made it a matter of policy that it will personally visit all areas involved in any inquiry so as to acquaint itself with the actual physical conditions. It is thus able to appreciate more adequately much of the evidence given.

One final provision of the Local Government Commission Act should be stated. Where the Commission's recommendations in a final scheme involve the union, merger, or abolition of any borough, county, or Town Board or Road Board in the County of Eden, the Commission may in its final scheme provide that before the scheme is to come into operation a poll of electors of the local-governing authority on the proposal shall be held. If the Commission does not so provide, then a request in writing that such poll be taken signed by not less than 20 per cent. of the electors of the district concerned may be delivered to the Returning Officer of the district at any time within one month