

however, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it, has at times extended the scope of the inquiry when a particular petition was before it. For instance, during the year the Devonport Borough Council decided that a Fire Board should be constituted for the Borough of Devonport. Investigations by the Commission's staff, and also evidence available on the files of the Department of Internal Affairs, established that the fire-protection services of the North Shore, Auckland, boroughs were inadequate in view of the large residential risks at stake. The Commission accordingly decided that, in addition to hearing the evidence on the petition for the creation of a Fire Board at Devonport, it would investigate the whole of the fire-protection services on the North Shore, with a view to determining whether the fire protection of the North Shore would be more adequately provided for by a united fire district rather than by a series of small, usually ineffective, local fire brigades, or whether the area should be included for fire-protection purposes in the Auckland Metropolitan District. Following a public Inquiry the Commission decided that a united Fire Board should be constituted, and as a result of its decision, the details of which will be given later in this report, a united Fire Board is now in operation in this area.

Another instance of the same character was the decision to investigate the boundaries of the Town District of Otorohanga. A petition had been received praying that a certain area of the Otorohanga County should be included in the town district. The relative frequency with which petitions of a similar character have of recent years been received by the Governor-General suggested that, in order to provide more effectively for the development of many of the growing towns of New Zealand, and to prevent the frequent applications for small areas so to be included, the Commission should ask the Otorohanga Town Board and the Otorohanga County Council to consider the future growth of Otorohanga and to submit proposals, if thought desirable, for redrawing the town district boundaries so as to provide for potential urban development for the next ten years. The Town Board and the County Council eventually agreed to certain adjustments of boundaries, and in addition to hearing evidence on the original petition, the Commission heard evidence as to the desirability of extending generally the boundaries of the Town District of Otorohanga. As a result, a logical boundary has been drawn providing adequate space for expansion of the Town District of Otorohanga.

The case of growing towns raises a very important question. In many parts of New Zealand the district of the boroughs has been practically built up. As a consequence, current residential development is taking place in the adjacent county areas. Subdivisional standards in boroughs and counties are usually widely different. Borough standards, which are decided by the borough itself in terms of its own by-laws or of its own town-planning scheme, are designed for urban conditions, particularly with a view to making easily available and at a minimum cost the services which are required by residential development. As far as subdivisions in counties are concerned, these are controlled under the Land Subdivision in Counties Act, 1946. Such subdivisions require approval of the Lands and Survey Department, and the standards attached to subdivisions in counties, even for residential development, is, in general, lower than in boroughs. In particular, road standards in subdivisions in counties are generally of a county standard and not of a borough standard. For instance, we were informed that in one area adjacent to a large urban area considerable residential development has taken place on county standards. County roading standards usually involve merely the provision of a graded and formed road surface and occasionally footpath construction, while borough standards, where kerbing, channelling, footpath-construction, and the installation of water, sewer, and storm-water reticulation is usually required, are much higher. Other things being equal, there is a strong case for this urban area in the county being included within the borough so that the various amenities can be provided by the borough; but the borough maintains, with some justice, that if it took over this area it would be involved in a heavy expenditure to bring the roads up to borough