

responsibility. It is clear that all these authorities recognize that conditions are unsatisfactory and that there is need for remedial action to be taken. The Harbour Board has been active in the matter since the year 1927 and the Drainage Board (or its predecessor) since the year 1928. We consider that we should state that the evidence makes it clear that the authorities have appreciated their responsibilities and have earnestly sought the most satisfactory solution of the problem. The problem is, however, a difficult one and it is very important that mistakes should not be made. The Drainage Board has therefore proceeded with proper caution, and we consider that the fact that so little effective progress has been made cannot be attributed to negligence or incompetency on its part.

Disregarding the opposition of the Auckland Provincial Yacht and Motor Boat Association to the 1931 proposals (the Brown's Island scheme) and certain other opposition prior to the enactment in 1944 of the Drainage Act and taking into account only the events since the Act was passed, the main responsibility for the delay since then must rest with the Drainage League. As we have previously mentioned, the league, which was formed shortly after the Act was passed, is an active organization. We have also mentioned that whereas prior to 1944 any opposition to the Brown's Island proposals was based on the risk of injury to the public health, shortly after the formation of the league the principal ground of opposition became the contention that the proposals prevented the utilization of the sewage by composting. It is not suggested that the pollution objection was abandoned, but it did become of secondary importance in the activities of the league. This will be appreciated when it is pointed out that the Drainage League's schemes (if it were to be found that its oxidation lake and composting proposals were impracticable) for the treatment of the sewage and the disposal of the effluent are in substance no different from those of the Drainage Board, excepting that the league advocated that all the sewage should be dealt with at the Manukau Harbour.

(4) In addition to the evidence of representatives of the Harbour Board, the Drainage Board, Government Departments, the Onehunga and Otahuhu Borough Councils, and the Manukau County Council, a considerable amount of testimony on the pollution aspect of the inquiry was given by witnesses who gave evidence either as individuals or on behalf of various organizations such as the Drainage League, the Auckland Provincial Yacht and Motor Boat Association, and the Auckland Centre of the New Zealand Swimming Association. The evidence of these witnesses showed that there is a strongly and widely held view that the discharge of sewage into harbour waters, and particularly those of the Waitemata Harbour, is a menace to the health of the community, even if the sewage is treated by the activated-sludge process or any other process and that in no circumstances should it be allowed.

We were impressed by the earnestness and obvious sincerity of the witnesses who supported this view, and it was clear that they expressed opinions which are held equally earnestly and sincerely by a very large number of the residents of the Auckland district. Some, but by no means all, of these witnesses were supporters of the composting proposals, but these witnesses for the most part also appeared to hold the view that there is a risk of pollution involved in any scheme which includes provision for discharging sewage effluent into harbour waters and that that risk is a sufficient reason in itself for keeping sewage away from these waters.

In the case of some of the witnesses, the objections to the use of the Waitemata Harbour appeared to be based on æsthetic or psychological or sentimental considerations. They stressed the many benefits and privileges which the public enjoy by reason of the great beauty and natural features of the harbour and its many attractive bathing beaches and picnic resorts, and maintained, as we understood them, that even if all risk to public health were to be eliminated the use of the harbour for sewage disposal would have the effect of seriously interfering with the full use by the public of an asset of incalculable value.