

III. ALTERATION OF BOUNDARIES: PUBLIC INQUIRIES HELD

GENERAL

Two important issues have presented themselves during the course of several inquiries relating to adjustment of boundaries.

One of these concerns the implementation of the provisions of the Town-planning Act, 1926. The need for such control by local governing authorities for present and potential urban areas is becoming more generally recognized. The long-term effect will be the diminution of a number of problems associated with urban development at present under the control of municipalities. There has been an indication that uneconomic utilization of land, with scattered urbanization taking place, has resulted in problems connected with the provision of amenities such as water, sewerage, transport, streets, footpaths, and so on. Haphazard development in the location of commercial and industrial areas has also manifested itself, although the Commission is not directly concerned with this aspect. In examining the areas and functions of local government, and determining a satisfactory solution, difficulties as to the extent of expansion of urban local government arise. Where applications for extensions of boundaries have been considered it has been evident in most instances that there has been a tendency to "spill-over" without due regard to control, and, as a consequence, heavy developmental costs must be faced to tie in these areas with the services which have been provided by the municipality. The implementation of the town-planning provisions, with particular regard to partial extra-urban planning schemes in counties adjacent to municipalities, would provide for the effective stabilization of boundaries, and the exercise of control of uneconomic development of a scattered nature, until the time has arrived when pressure of population demands an incursion into such areas for urban needs. Where decisions have been made by us to incorporate existing and potential urban areas in the districts of municipalities it appears desirable that, wherever possible, extra-urban planning should be undertaken by the counties concerned. This will have the immediate effect of stabilizing rural local government, and at the same time give to municipalities the advantages associated with the provision of amenities in a confined area over a period of fifteen to twenty-five years. The planning of services and amenities will, as a consequence, have a much greater long-term economic value. In most cases subdivisions in areas beyond the boundaries of municipal districts ultimately result in heavy capital expenditure to provide for footpaths, kerbing and channelling, and the installation of water and sewerage systems where pressure demands their inclusion in the confines of an urban district. Requirements as to subdivisions in counties must, of necessity, be confined to existing standards in the county, and accordingly where urbanization takes place such standards differ widely from those in urban districts.

Although the cost of certain amenities in partly-developed areas where extra-urban planning control is exercised would have to be met, and more services would have to be provided, the costs associated with future subdivisions would, when such areas were incorporated in a municipality's district, be an initial one, which would be met by the subdivider in each case.

The second issue which has resulted in difficulty where alteration of boundaries have been effected has been in regard to electricity-supply where the municipality is a Supply Authority and a Power Board undertakes the supply beyond its boundaries. In accordance with section 13, subsection (3), of the Local Government Commission Act, 1946, no scheme promulgated by the Local Government Commission may provide for the transfer of the whole or any part of any trading undertaking, or any functions relating thereto, of any local governing authority except upon the union, merger, or abolition of the district of a local governing authority. The Commission, as a consequence, cannot provide for the transfer of the whole or any part of the electricity-supply from