

This is a case where it appears that the Christchurch City Council cannot reasonably avoid some responsibility in the event of the Sockburn area being incorporated in the city, and provision being made for the supply of electricity by the municipality. However, as indicated previously, the provisions of the Local Government Commission Act, 1946, preclude the Commission from reaching what would no doubt be a satisfactory solution to the problems of electricity-supply between the Rakaia and Waimakariri Rivers. It may be mentioned in passing that the supply area of the City Council covers substantial county areas already, including those of Waimairi, Halswell, and portions of Heathcote. An anomaly arises in that there is no representation on the Supply Authority from these county areas. Should electricity funds be appropriated by the City Council for other purposes—for example, the relief of rates or the provision of amenities for the ratepayers of Christchurch City—these disfranchised areas would have no say in the application of such moneys. We make no observations regarding the administration of the City Council or the distribution of electricity, but, nevertheless, the serious anomalies as stated do exist.

(1) CHRISTCHURCH METROPOLITAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

During the year under review the Commission undertook a major inquiry into the areas and functions of local Government in the Christchurch metropolitan area. The inquiry, which commenced on the 18th May, 1948, extended over a period of forty days. The number of witnesses who appeared before the Commission in various capacities was 104.

Issues Involved at the Inquiry

(a) The alteration of boundaries to exclude portions of the Counties of Heathcote, Halswell, Paparua, and Waimairi, and to include these areas in the City of Christchurch.

(b) A proposal to include in the Borough of Lyttelton certain portions of the Mount Herbert County extending from the Borough of Lyttelton to Governor's Bay along the foreshore, and along the southern extremity of the harbour, including Charteris and Church Bays, to Diamond Harbour, which at present forms part of the Borough of Lyttelton.

(c) The question of the exclusion of any area of the City of Christchurch, and its inclusion within the district of a county.

(d) The question of the inclusion of the Boroughs of Riccarton and Lyttelton in the City of Christchurch.

(e) The question of the inclusion of the estuary of the Heathcote and Avon Rivers in the Christchurch Drainage District for the purpose of undertaking such work as might be necessary for the drainage of the city.

(f) The transfer of the functions of the Christchurch Tramway and Drainage Boards to the Christchurch City Council.

(g) The hearing of eight separate petitions which had been lodged regarding adjustment of boundaries and inclusion of certain areas in the Christchurch Drainage District.

(h) Consideration of a petition by D. W. Dell and others, of Christchurch, presented to the Hon. the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives. This was referred to the Commission in view of the implications arising out of the subject-matter contained therein. The petition prayed that the right be granted to the ratepayers of Christchurch to determine the system under which drainage-rates should be collected in Christchurch.

The inquiry had its origin in a request by the Christchurch City Council dated 29th July, 1947, asking that the Commission investigate the problems of local government in the Christchurch metropolitan area. However, prior to this request and the