

Ad Hoc Authorities

In Christchurch two *ad hoc* authorities—a Tramway and a Drainage Board—were constituted in 1876 and 1902 respectively, principally on account of the number of territorial local authorities in the wide confines of Christchurch at that time, and in order that the requisite over-all functions could be carried out. In both instances they are rating authorities, the Drainage Board deriving practically the whole of its revenue from this source, while the Tramway Board levies rates in order to effect recovery of operating losses and portion of the standing charges on loans. The collection of these rates, however, has been a matter for the territorial local authorities, wholly or partially, in the two Boards' districts.

On a number of occasions since the Drainage Board was first constituted the question has arisen as to the transfer of its functions to the Christchurch City Council, but the difficulties associated with an over-all drainage system could not reasonably be undertaken where the territories of other local authorities were involved.

As the territorial claims of the city were of such extent as to reasonably cover the problems, so far as area was concerned, of the Drainage Board and the Tramway Board, a good deal of consideration was given to the matter. The necessity for the continued existence of these authorities in such circumstances was therefore of vital concern. In so far as the question of area was concerned we were of the opinion that the functions of each authority could be efficiently undertaken within even a lesser area than that proposed by the city, if administered by it. It then resolved itself into the question of whether the City Council could economically and efficiently undertake the operations of these two authorities. Other cases where control was effective were cited—for instance, Wellington—and there was no doubt in our minds that the City Council could satisfactorily undertake the administration and the technical difficulties at present confronting both authorities; further, the city would be in no worse position in regard to over-all economy and efficiency. Certain of the problems—for instance, in Waimairi County—so far as drainage was concerned, would have to be undertaken by the county instead of by the Drainage Board. It was made clear that the Catchment Board, which is the final authority in such matters, would co-operate to the fullest extent necessary.

Christchurch Drainage Board

The provision of drainage and sewerage has, in general, been undertaken by the Drainage Board, although in respect of drainage, there are a number of anomalies. The City Council is still responsible for a large number of storm-water drains in the city area, as well as for maintaining a number of gully traps. In one area it was found that a divided control existed, the Board being responsible for the household drainage, while the waste water, when it reached the side channels, came under the control of the City Council. When it reached the main drain, the Avon River, it again became the responsibility of the Board.

Drainage in Christchurch, owing to the flat terrain, is regarded by technical experts as a matter of major consequence, and in order that effective control at its outlet could be established, and adequate provision made, we considered it necessary to incorporate the estuary of the Heathcote and Avon Rivers in the city.

The Drainage Board's proposals involved extensions of its existing boundaries, mainly for the purpose of land drainage. The North Canterbury Catchment Board, which has an over-riding authority in such matters, stated, through its Chairman, that it could, and would, not only exercise supervision, but, where necessary, give practical assistance in carrying out such works as might be necessary.

The sewerage problem in Christchurch has been aggravated by the spread of urbanization over a large area, which has resulted in the inner area reticulation becoming inadequate for present and future needs. The position has been reached where some