

After careful consideration of the voluminous evidence presented to us, we were of the firm opinion that the system of local government at present operating in the Christchurch Metropolitan Area was both unsatisfactory and uneconomic, and did not provide for the full benefits of the various services being co-ordinated over the whole area. A reorganization scheme was accordingly promulgated, and we believe that implementation of the scheme will result in a combination of efficiency and true economy in the local government of the area.

(2) OROUA COUNTY : FEILDING BOROUGH

Reference was made in the annual report of the Commission for the year ended 31st March, 1948, to the proposed alteration of boundaries of the Feilding Borough, resulting from two petitions which had been received from ratepayers in two areas of the borough praying for their exclusion and inclusion in the County of Oroua, on the grounds that their properties were unsuitable for residential development, and were in fact, farm lands, more suitable for county control.

The Commission had formally opened the inquiry in Feilding on 27th of February, 1948, but as the whole question of the prospective development in the borough required further investigation the hearing was adjourned until the 23rd of April.

The areas the subject of the petitions comprised 309 acres. One of the areas had been the subject of a previous inquiry by a Commission set up in 1941 under the Municipal Corporations Act which had reported that the area was suitable for municipal control and should not be excluded.

Over the years some outlying rural areas, which formed part of the borough when constituted, had been excluded, and included in the County of Oroua.

The areas owned by the petitioners were provided with some borough amenities, and certain relief had been given under the Urban Farm Lands Rating Act, but they considered that their rates were out of proportion to the amenities supplied. The petitioners were also concerned at certain proposals to expend considerable sums of money for improvements to the water and sewerage services, which would involve them in a very heavy rating burden.

The principal question at issue was the potentiality of the areas for building purposes, and as this trend was, in their opinion, unlikely to take place in their localities it was considered to be a sound reason for their exclusion.

Both the Feilding Borough and the Oroua County opposed the petitions.

The Borough Council rebutted the claim made that the two areas were not likely to be used for residential purposes, and considered that if sections were made available for this purpose they would be taken up immediately. It was evident during the course of the inquiry that no adequate survey of potential development in the borough had been undertaken, and it was apparent that there was no real appreciation of the necessity for a town-planning scheme to provide for orderly development. Further, there seemed to be inadequate control in regard to subdivisions. In order to prevent what appeared to be partial urban development in the county adjacent to the borough, the Commission considered that immediate steps should be taken to prepare a town-planning scheme, when there would be a much stronger case for considering an adjustment of boundaries. The preparation of such a scheme would also have the effect of preventing future haphazard growth, with consequent additional cost to the ratepayers, resulting from scattered and unco-ordinated development.

The Commission accordingly decided that until such a scheme was available the areas should not be excluded from the borough.