

(3) WHAKATANE: OPOTIKI COUNTIES

An inquiry was held by the Commission at Whakatane on the 30th April, 1948, in respect of the adjustment of boundaries of the above two counties. This arose out of a petition by the Whakatane County Council dated 23rd September, 1947, which was supplemented by a petition by certain residents in the Opotiki County praying that certain areas of land should be transferred to the County of Whakatane. The areas were situated on the eastern boundary of the Whakatane County, and on the Ohiwa Harbour near Wainui Road, which forms the boundary between the two counties.

The over-all proposal was opposed by the Opotiki County Council, which submitted a counter-proposal for the exclusion of a smaller area. This included the Ohiwa Peninsula and the land between Wainui Road and the Ohope Beach. The inquiry was necessary on account of the fact that the two counties were unable to reach agreement on the matter.

The evidence of the petitioners substantiated the fact that their community of interest lay with Whakatane rather than with Opotiki. As the whole of the Wainui area was essentially one, it was considered that the control should be undertaken by one local authority. Ohope Township, at present wholly within the Whakatane County, showed definite indications that it would extend into the Opotiki County in the near future, and it was considered undesirable that there should be any division of the area of the present township between the two local authorities.

There were certain proposals submitted by the Whakatane County in regard to the provision of a wharf at the southern shore of Ohiwa Peninsula. This installation would be solely for the benefit of Whakatane, and it was considered that it should therefore be under the control of that County Council. There was some conflict in regard to the question of community of interest which was raised by the Opotiki County Council, in view of the fact that cream-supplies were transported to Opotiki and certain of the residents did in fact conduct their commercial activities there. The opinion was expressed that, if the Wainui district was to be treated as one, the Whakatane portion should be transferred to Opotiki. As this, however, was not a matter within the scope of this particular inquiry, the Commission did not express an opinion on the merits of that claim, which would require further consideration by the respective local authorities. The Commission decided that the area between Wainui Road and Ohope Beach, including the Ohiwa Peninsula, should be transferred from the County of Opotiki and included in the County of Whakatane.

(4) ROTORUA: TAUPO COUNTIES

An application was made by the Rotorua County for an extension of its boundaries to include approximately the whole of the Taupo County lying north of the Waikato River between its junction with the Whangapoa Stream in the west, its junction with the Waiehu Stream in the east, and with the Kaingaroa State Forest blocks lying in the extreme east of the county. A small portion of this area is occupied by New Zealand Forest Products, Ltd. The balance of the Reporoa Block has been settled during the past twenty-five years. That portion of the Ngakuru Block in the north, which is in the Taupo County, and occupied by farmers in large areas in the east of the proposed additions, is being developed by the Lands and Survey Department for future settlement.

It may be mentioned that the Taupo County is one in which the Counties Act, 1920, does not operate. The only rates derived from the area are those in regard to hospital rating, collected by the Valuer-General.

As a consequence, occupiers of land were not responsible for the construction or maintenance of roads and bridges in the locality, this being undertaken by the Ministry of Works. During the past two decades farmers in the Reporoa Settlement have had considerable difficulty in farming the land, due to the absence of a suitable water-supply and the general problems of soil content. From evidence submitted it was apparent