

In certain areas there were serious existing erosion problems, and in others they were merely potential. In the former, long-term soil-conservation measures were necessary to minimize flooding of the plains and the filling in of stream-channels, while in the latter centralized control of land use with a continuous long-term policy was necessary. This question had been under consideration by the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council since 1945, when, following conferences with a number of local authorities, it was considered that two catchment districts for the area should be constituted.

Although there were differing views expressed at the inquiry by the various local authorities represented, in general there was agreement as to the desirability of the constitution of a catchment district.

One matter of considerable importance to rating authorities generally was revealed during the course of the inquiry. Administrative expenses of Catchment Boards are based on the rateable capital value, and the fact that some counties do not issue building permits results in capital accretions not being recorded to enable the Valuation Department to amend the valuation roll annually. As a consequence, where the capital-value system is used, such capital accretions do not bear rates until a general revaluation is made. This must react unfairly, particularly in regard to urban local authorities which issue building permits and are collectively within an *ad hoc* local authority's district. One large industrial concern in the district of one of the counties represented at the inquiry had effected capital accretions in recent years of upwards of £500,000, but the roll value of the property still stood at £500. This aspect, of course, not only affects Catchment Board rating, but also hospital rating, which is allocated on the basis of the rateable capital value in each local authority's district. This is a question which requires legislative action in order that the position may be generally rectified.

After giving consideration to all aspects of the position, the Commission found that one catchment district embracing all the territorial local authorities' districts previously referred to, should be constituted, and recommended a basis for representation of the various authorities on the Catchment Board. The main reasons for the Commission's decision in favour of one authority instead of two, were as follows:—

- (a) The area was a single geographic unit:
- (b) There would be unified control over several catchment areas of varying size by the grouping of rivers all flowing into the Bay of Plenty:
- (c) The size of the district—4,230 square miles—with a rateable capital value in excess of £17,000,000, would be large enough to ensure economy in administration, and also provide sufficient revenue for one Board:
- (d) The difficulty in obtaining adequately-trained technical staff:
- (e) The excessive demands on the time of Board members representing Government Departments if two Boards were constituted:
- (f) The economic use of plant, which is dependent on its continuous employment, this district presenting no obstacles to the easy movement of plant from one area to another.

A provisional scheme was promulgated, but as yet a final scheme has not been issued.

V. CHANGE OF STATUS

(1) ONERAHI TOWN DISTRICT

A petition addressed to the Governor-General praying for the declaration of the Town District of Onerahi as an independent town district was referred to the Local Government Commission in December, 1947, and on the 1st July, 1948, the Commission conducted an inquiry into the question at Whangarei. Prior to the hearing, the Com-