

1919.
NEW ZEALAND.

TOWN-PLANNING CONFERENCE, 1919.

(REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.)

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

COMMITTEE NO. 1 (POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF BOROUGHES UNDER THE TOWN-PLANNING BILL)
AND COMMITTEE NO. 2 (POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF COUNTIES, TOWN DISTRICTS, AND ROAD DISTRICTS).

I HAVE to report that Committee No. 1, appointed to report as to the respective powers and functions of boroughs under the Bill, and whether the principles of the Bill should be mandatory, and how far such mandatory powers should be vested in (a) the Government, (b) the separate or combined districts affected, (c) a Local Government Board for the Dominion, and Committee No. 2, to report similarly in respect of counties, town districts, and road districts, decided to amalgamate.

The committee, which held three meetings, carefully considered the Bill, and has to report as follows :—

The amalgamated committee unanimously adopted the following resolutions :—

1. That this committee is of opinion that the principles of town-planning should be applied to New Zealand, and town-planning schemes prepared without delay.
2. That for this purpose legislation is necessary in the form of a Town-planning and Housing Act.
3. That there be a Town-planning and Housing Department and an expert Town-planner appointed, the Department to have supervision over all town-planning schemes.
4. That it is advisable to appoint a Central Town-planning Commission, to consist of the Town-planner and four other experts in engineering, architecture, surveying, and public health.
5. The Town-planner should be a competent and experienced town-planner, with a salary that would enable the Dominion to obtain the services of a first-class man who has had actual experience both in town-planning schemes and garden cities, and who is recognized by civic authorities as a town-planner of eminence.
6. That the provisions in the Bill for the creation of local Town-planning Boards is approved, subject to further provision being made for the creation of special areas covering more than the existing boundaries of any local authority, with representation thereon of all the local authorities interested.
7. That where, owing to the development of any district, the immediate preparation of a plan for town-extension becomes necessary, the Minister may, in default of action by the local authority, direct the Town-planning Department to prepare such a plan for the consideration of the local Town-planning Board set up with or without the consent of the local authority, such plan to have legal effect after the steps provided in the Bill for consideration of objections have been taken.
8. That this committee approves of the betterment principle (*to be payable in either land or money*) embodied in clause 19 (7), and suggests that with a view to its effective operation a special valuation should be made in areas to be covered by town-planning schemes at the earliest possible date, such valuation to serve as a standard of comparison for the purpose of levying a special betterment rate when it has become evident that land-values have increased owing to preparations for or carrying out of a scheme.
9. That the Bill should make provision for the preservation of our historical buildings and relics, and that the Town-planning Commission be given the power to decide which of these buildings are considered proper for preservation, in which case the owners shall not be permitted to remove, alter, or destroy without special permission from the Commission.
10. That the Conference be recommended to appoint this committee a permanent one to further the passage of the proposed Bill through Parliament; Mr. C. J. Parr, M.P., C.M.G., Mr. C. E. Wheeler, and Mr. H. F. von Haast to be convenors.

11. Clause 12 (2) of the Bill : Resolved, That the words " exceeding ten acres in extent " be struck out, the committee being of opinion that an area of 10 acres is much too large to be subdivided without the approval of the Commission ; and, further, that every subdivision should be subject to approval.

12. Clause 20 : That the words " not exceeding £5,000 " be struck out, the committee being of opinion that a town-planning scheme having the public health, comfort, and amenity for its object, and after passing through all stages of inquiry and investigation as required by the Act, should not necessitate a poll of the ratepayers.

The committee, however, favours the retention of the safeguard provided by the Bill where 10 per centum of the ratepayers may demand a poll.

Wellington, 22nd May, 1919.

C. J. PARR, Chairman.

[NOTE. The words in italics were added by the Conference.]

COMMITTEE NO. 3 (IMPROVEMENT OF TOWNS AND CITIES) AND COMMITTEE NO. 5 (RESERVES, PARKS, DOMAINS, ETC.).

I have to report that Committee No. 3, appointed to consider the improvement of towns and cities, and Committee No. 5, appointed to consider reserves for public utilities, parks, domains, &c., amalgamated.

Considerable difficulty was experienced getting meetings of the committee together, but at a meeting held on Thursday evening the questions referred to the committee were discussed. It was felt that as these matters comprised nearly the whole of the scheme of garden cities and suburbs it was hopeless for the committee in the time at its disposal to discuss details.

The committee heartily approves of the general principles of town-planning, and trusts that legislation will soon be passed which will give local authorities power to deal with the various matters urgently required for the improvement of towns, the providing of adequate reserves for public utilities, parks, &c.

The question of providing small areas for playgrounds for children near the places of residence in addition to the larger parks and domains was brought up, and the following resolution was carried : " That on the passing of the Act it shall be compulsory, when any area exceeding 5 acres is cut up for subdivision, for the owner to make over to the local body as a public reserve 10 per cent. at least of the total saleable areas so subdivided."

Wellington, 23rd May, 1919.

CHAS. CHILTON, Chairman.

COMMITTEE NO. 4 (THE HOUSING PROBLEM) AND COMMITTEE NO. 10 (TOWN-PLANNING AS IT AFFECTS THE RETURNED SOLDIER AND THE WORKER).

1. The committee reports that there is ample evidence that a pronounced shortage of houses, numbering many thousands, exists throughout the Dominion.

2. That many of the existing houses are not up to a standard of civilized comfort, a fact which intensifies the acuteness of the problem.

3. We recommend that the Government recognize the housing shortage as one of pressing national necessity, and that the Government co-operate with the local authorities in carrying out housing schemes on town-planning lines ; that the State undertake to finance the schemes, while leaving a reasonable degree of initiative and subsequent full control in the hands of the municipalities.

4. That the Government subsidize local bodies up to one-third of the cost of approved building schemes.

5. That the Government be recommended to at once set aside the sum of £1,000,000 as a subsidy to carry out the above resolution.

6. That the Government be earnestly requested to undertake the building of a garden city on the lines laid down by Mr. S. Hurst Seager in his paper. We are of opinion that the housing problem can be materially assisted in this way, that the prosperity of the country will be increased, and the comfort and happiness of the workers secured.

7. That the Government should restore the pre-war railway service as early as possible.

Wellington, 23rd May, 1919.

J. T. PAUL, Chairman.

COMMITTEE NO. 6 (THE FINANCIAL ASPECT OF TOWN-PLANNING).

The committee appointed to consider the financial aspect of the town-planning problem have the honour to report as follows :—

1. That the total cost of the Town-planning Department, including the salary of a town-planning expert, should be paid by the Dominion Government.

2. That the cost of carrying out local schemes should be borne by the districts affected, but the money required should be provided by the Dominion Government at the lowest possible rate of interest, the local authorities concerned being only called upon to pay the interest and sinking fund.

3. That provision should be made for assistance from the Consolidated Fund for some of the smaller local authorities in exceptional circumstances.

4. That clause 24, subsection (2) (d), of the Town-planning Bill be amended to provide for the assessment of all rates required for the payment of interest and sinking fund on the cost of town-planning schemes on the unimproved value of the land.

[NOTE.—Paragraph No. 4 was struck out by the Conference.]

COMMITTEE NO. 7 (TOWN-PLANNING AS IT AFFECTS THE SCHOOL, THE COLLEGE, AND THE UNIVERSITY).

1. The committee wishes to lay it down as a general principle that schools and surroundings should be such as to form a centre of local interest and pride, a stimulus as to the æsthetic development, and an inspiration to the community.
2. That in anticipation of future development larger areas should be set aside for school-sites and playing-fields in all sparsely settled parts of the Dominion.
3. That all existing school-sites, including University and secondary schools, should be so enlarged as to have adequate playing-areas and garden-spaces.
4. That this committee recommends to the Conference to suggest to the Minister of Education that steps should be taken to exhibit to the school-children of the Dominion lantern-slides descriptive of town-planning schemes.
5. That in all reserves hereinafter set aside in urban areas under the provisions of town-planning legislation special sites for the use of children under school age shall be allocated (crèches, kindergartens, &c.).
6. That any scheme for laying out playgrounds and building schools hereafter on sites set aside under town-planning legislation shall be directed with special reference to sanitation, scientific lighting, heating, and ventilation, hygiene, limitation of size of class-rooms, and proper attention to the amenities, decencies, and conveniences of life.
7. That the school playgrounds should, under proper supervision, be available for the use of the children of that neighbourhood at all times.
8. That school grounds and gardens should be so planned as to educate the children for community life and citizenship.
9. That greater attention be paid to the study of school architecture.
10. That the attention of the authorities controlling our various educational buildings and churches be immediately called to the advisability of removing all ugly fences now surrounding their buildings.
11. That this Conference recommends to the University Senate that town-planning be added to the curriculum.

M. J. REARDON, Chairman.

COMMITTEE NO. 8 (TOWN-PLANNING AS IT AFFECTS THE WOMAN, THE CHILD, AND THE HOME).

1. Your committee congratulates the Minister of Internal Affairs for his vision and public spirit in having arranged this Town-planning Conference, which should prove of inestimable educational value to the people of this Dominion.
 2. Your committee is thoroughly in accord with the aim of the town-planning movement, and hopes that practical town-planning legislation will be placed on the statute-book during the coming session of Parliament.
 3. Your committee urges the Minister to provide for adequate representation of women on all bodies specially set up to deal with town-planning.
 4. Your committee is of the opinion that, as at the present time this Conference is dealing with the broad question of town-planning, it would be premature and ill-advised to enter into details of town-planning in respect to the needs of women and children.
- We respectfully submit to the Minister that this committee be not disbanded, and that, when required, it consider specific matters under the above reference. We submit further that the Government be requested to arrange for a conference of women, with this committee as a nucleus, to consider these matters in detail.

(MRS.) P. C. CORLISS.

COMMITTEE NO. 9 (TOWN-PLANNING AS IT AFFECTS THE ARTS, THE SCIENCES, THE CRAFTS).

The committee appointed to consider the above aspects of town-planning have to report that, in view of the scope of the other committees appointed and that their investigations naturally covered so large a field, it was felt that this committee was not justified in doing more than making a few general recommendations, as follows :—

1. That in carrying out all town-planning or housing-work there must be due regard to beauty of design.
 2. That local bodies, who now have the necessary power, should more closely supervise all external advertisements to prevent the erection of such as are unsightly.
 3. That it be a recommendation to the Education Department to institute a series of elementary illustrated articles in school journals upon the subject of town-planning, stress being laid on the fact that beauty and simplicity do not add to expense.
 4. That whatever is available of the very fine exhibition of town-planning now in view in Wellington should be shown in the various towns of the Dominion when applied for, and that the Government bear the cost of such exhibition.
 5. That electric power be made available for household and manufacturing purposes in all parts of the Dominion as soon as possible by the utilization of the natural sources of power.
 6. That war memorials should conform to the principles laid down by Mr. Montgomery, as follows :—
- (a.) It is the duty of the people of New Zealand to erect fitting memorials for our soldiers who have fought and suffered in the Great War.

- (b.) Such memorials should be permanent.
- (c.) They and their surroundings should be artistic.
- (d.) They should not be erected with utilitarian objects.
- (e.) No parochialism should prevent us securing the best talent in the world to design them.
- (f.) They should not be erected haphazard but on a co-ordinate system. To study the question and ensure such co-ordination a Government Commissioner should be appointed without delay.
- (g.) No stereotyped form can be laid down for the forms of memorials, but some general principles may be formulated.
- (h.) We should look on a memorial with the vision of those who live a hundred years hence.
- (i.) Memorials should express the emotion of the present, memory of the past, and be an inspiration for the future.
- (j.) They should include decorative art.

CYRUS J. WILLIAMS, Chairman.

COMMITTEE NO. 11 (TOWN-PLANNING AS IT AFFECTS NATIONAL UTILITIES AND SERVICES).

1. Close co-operation is necessary between Government Departments, particularly Lands, Public Works, Railways, Post and Telegraph, Tourist, and the Town-planning and Housing Departments, especially where these Departments are carrying out public works. They should observe the town-planning and housing by-laws, and when proposing to carry out works appertaining to a particular district they should give the local authority concerned an opportunity of seeing the plan, &c., so that, if necessary, objections may be considered by the Town-planning and Housing Board.

2. Catchment areas in all cases should be purchased or reserved in any part likely to become a centre of population.

3. The practice of the Telegraph Department in placing unsightly poles for carrying telegraph or telephone wire (rough tree-trunks, bark-skinned and unpainted) down streets that are tree-planted and grass-plotted with the object of beautifying, without in any way consulting the local authorities, and entirely destroying the effect aimed at, is to be deplored.

4. That the Town-planning and Housing Board must approve all subdivisions under the Land Transfer Act before the Registrar can register title.

W. BLOOMFIELD, Chairman.

[NOTE.—The full report of the Conference has been separately printed in octavo, and laid before both Houses of Parliament.]

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