

statute-book for a number of years (*vide* the Town-planning Amendment Act of 1929). This Act states that the general purpose of a regional planning scheme is—

the conservation and economic development of the natural resources of the region to which it relates by means of the classification of the lands comprised therein for the purposes for which they are best suited by Nature or for which they can best be adapted, and by the co-ordination of all such public improvements, utilities, services, and amenities as are not limited by the boundaries of the district to any one local authority or do not relate exclusively to the development of any one such district.

It is to this end that regional studies are now being commenced in the Ministry of Works, and steps are being taken to extend these out through Regional Councils which have been established by local authorities in the various regions throughout the Dominion.

Regional studies, to be done scientifically, will take a period of years before they are completed, but until they are prepared, the estimating of traffic loads, direction and capacity of communication systems, location of industries, and practically all development works must be largely the expression of opinion, perhaps well qualified but not founded upon basic data derived from a full study of natural resources. As regional surveys proceed, works plans, therefore, will be adjusted in accordance with any fresh evidence which becomes available as a result of these studies.

11. TOWN AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING

It is hoped now that with the general supervision of all planning activities by the Ministry of Works, and the attachment of the secretariat of the Town-planning Board to this office, much better progress will be made in the field of town and metropolitan planning. It is of the greatest importance that sporadic and unplanned growth should no longer be allowed to take place. The Dominion has reached a stage in its development when proper planning, instead of being regarded as a luxury, has become an absolute necessity.

As urban populations expand, an increasing importance must inevitably become attached to the problems of zoning industrial and residential areas; locating of community facilities, schools, and play areas; steering great traffic arteries away from residential and shopping areas; providing suitable transport services, traffic outlets, water-supply, and similar services and amenities. Contiguous both to Wellington and Auckland there are opportunities for planning in areas now being opened up which, if not taken advantage of, will result in unbalanced development and consequently huge economic loss.

It is an extraordinary fact that expenditure on planning work has in the past often been prevented or even viewed with disfavour. When it is recognized that for many years ahead the Dominion may expect an expansion of urban housing at a rate of some ten thousand houses per annum, involving an investment of considerably more than £20,000,000 per annum in total urban capital, and the work of more than thirty thousand men on the site and in the various supply industries, it will be realized how very important it is to secure the provision at the earliest possible date of town and metropolitan plans to guide the pattern of development, and, on the other hand, what considerable sums can be wasted if this large expenditure is allowed to take place in the absence of co-ordinated plans.