

# Ohewa Harbour To Remain With Two Authorities

**Fears that a proposed boundary change may take the whole of Ohewa Harbour into the Bay of Plenty Catchment Commission's area were allayed at an information meeting between the Opotiki County Council and executive staff of the East Cape Catchment Board on Thursday.**

The status quo is to remain whereby half the harbour is vested in the commission and the remainder in the catchment board.

County chairman, Mr Bob Butler, told the board's chairman, Mr K. Cooper and the engineer, Mr A. Armstrong, that the proposed boundary adjustment as the harbour was a very very touchy subject.

Mr Armstrong told the meeting that regulations were going through Parliament which required catchment authorities to arrange and promote water and soil management plans that cover operations on bodies of water.

"It is logical to have the harbour under one operating agency," he said. It is a straight forward piece of practicality which removes an artificial boundary from a body of water."

Mr Butler said the county council, acting as the Ohewa Harbour Board, was particularly concerned as it was felt one of the government departments was becoming interested in the harbour.

"I am frightened at possible gang ups whereby the uniqueness of the harbour could be lost to the people of this area.

"You will go a long way to find a harbour in New Zealand that has what this harbour has, and no way are we going to let it go to someone who will permit a change in designation."

Councillor Gault expressed concern that if the catchment board pulled out, Opotiki would not have representation on the catchment commission.

"I wonder if the board would like to be shot of this responsibility because of the problems associated with environmentalists."

Mr Armstrong said the board was attempting to pursue what appeared to be a rational method of control as, from Gisborne, it was a long link to provide services.

"But the board will have to consider the concerns you have expressed today."

The crunch problem was that the board was pushed for funds, Mr Cooper

possibility that lands and survey could take over the harbour has caused quite a stir in this area as it is thought the recreational facilities may be lost."

Councillor Tony Ed-wardson, former member of the Ohewa Harbour Committee, told board members that the Maori people were concerned that if the boundary line was shifted, what would happen next?

"They look to the harbour for food, particularly in today's economic climate, and if the boundary was shifted, they would not be too sure what was going on."

Mr Butler said he was concerned to hear from the

board chairman that the harbour was out on a limb and difficult to service.

The two board representatives assured council there was no thought of the board neglecting its responsibilities and no intention of withdrawing its services from Opotiki.

"If ecological functions escalate to try and keep ahead of demands for information, the board may be committed to doing ecological work and we could not sustain it," said Mr Armstrong.

"Just look round the town and see how totally the board is committed to the area."