

If the existing arrangement remains unaltered, Washington's commercial and industrial assets will be passed to the Commission for the New Towns following the wind-up of the Development Corporation. At present only the assets of four New Towns, Crawley and Hemel Hempstead on the 1st of April 1962 and Welwyn and Hatfield on 1st April 1966 - have been transferred. Expanded programmes for many of the remaining New Towns have postponed their completion, and meanwhile the future of the Commission is open to question. The current debate on the future of commercial and industrial assets of the New Towns is fully illustrated in the article "In search of a Landlord" in the February/March issue of Town and Country Planning 1979. (4). Here it is sufficient to outline the problems that might arise in the particular case of Washington if these assets are passed to the Commission for New Towns.

The Commission is a central and remote body, and despite the presence of ^{a local} ~~local~~ manager of the Commission, it is only experienced in promoting ^{and} ~~#~~ managing industrial and commercial activity in the London New Towns. The problems of the depressed areas are very different, and require different management techniques. Here the Commission of the New Towns would be at a disadvantage, especially if within it, there developed an element of competition for funds between New Towns. Furthermore, unlike rented housing, commercial and industrial property is a profit maker. The financial benefits that accrue from these assets will be remunerated to the Treasury, via the Commission for New Towns not to the Local Authority. Some would argue that this is perfectly justifiable, seeing as the Development cost was borne by the tax payer and not the rate payer. However, Washington was designated in order to create some form of industrial momentum in the north, through the "spill over" effects, of its own development. It would seem logical then that remuneration from this public investment should accrue to the local community. Sunderland Borough Council would argue that they must bear the cost of a large municipal housing stock, and cannot offset their