Society, for example, in 1905 advocated the formation of seven large-scale regions or provinces for England with each province containing several counties (Sanders, 1905).

Later, Fawcett (1961) divided the country into twelve provinces. Some of Fawcett's principles for the regional sub-division of the country may still be appropriate this century (Figure 4.5). He suggested that the regional boundaries should interfere as little as possible with the ordinary activities and movement of people. He thought that each province should have a definite capital city easily accessible from all parts of the province. Fawcett was quite circumspect about the size of the province, placing the lower limit at one million but harking back to Aristotle's definition of city size by suggesting that the province should contain a population sufficiently numerous to justify regional self-government. In terms of population size, he added a further caveat recommending that no province should be large enough to dominate the others. The growth of London and the South East since Fawcett wrote would now make this principle difficult to implement. Two of Fawcett's principles which seem particularly appropriate for sustainable development are: first, his suggestion that regional boundaries should be drawn near watersheds not across valleys, and rarely along streams; and second that boundaries should pay regard to local patriotism and traditions. The first of these principles could be considerably strengthened for purposes of sustainability by the inclusion of ecological factors other than watershed boundaries, such as patterns of soil and vegetation.

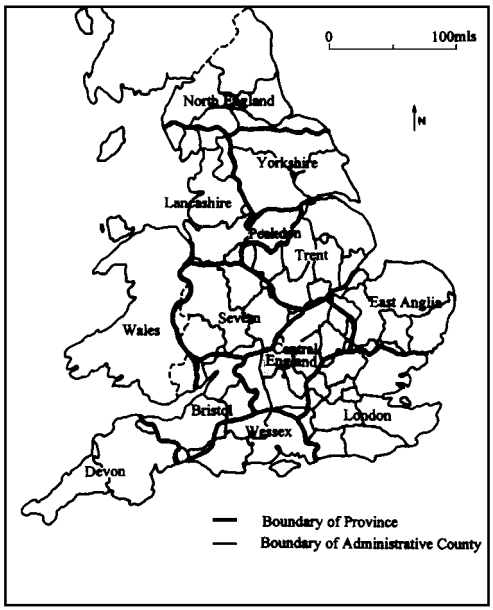

Figure 4.5 Fawcett's regional structure (Fawcett, 1961)

In mid-twentieth century Britain the Second World War provided the impetus for government action on regional organization. An effective war effort required an effective administration for the country. Perhaps the threat of losing a war in the 1940s is a parallel for the present situation in the early twenty-first century with the ever-present environmental threat hanging over mankind like the 'Sword of Damocles'. In the 1940s, Regional Commissioners were appointed to control the affairs of nine Civil Defence Regions. Ministries had representatives in the regional capitals to coordinate regional transport and other aspects of the regional economy in order to maximize efficiency for the war effort. The 'command economy' for the moment is not the 'flavour of the month': draconian measures acceptable in wartime may not appear appropriate in peacetime unless the perceived threat of climate change and environmental degradation become more immediate. Nevertheless, there is much that can be learned about regional planning from the 1940s.

The development of regionalism in Britain after the war, with the exception of Scotland, is one of vacillation, confusion, compromise and neglect. The wartime regional framework was maintained by the Attlee Government as Standard Treasury Regions. The main purpose of the regional framework was to facilitate post-war reconstruction. Also in the 1940s and 1950s several Statutory Boards with their own regional boundaries were established. These Boards dealt with hospitals, railways, gas, electricity and coal: all were major components of the economic and social life of the country. After a period of stagnation in the 1950s there was a re-awakening of regionalism in the early 1960s that culminated with the establishment of the Regional Economic Planning Regions under the Labour administration in 1965. The new planning regions were similar in geographic structure to the original post-war Standard Regions with the exception of an enlarged south-east region and an integrated Yorkshire and Humberside (Figure 4.6). Under the Conservative Government from 1979 onwards regionalism, indeed local government itself, was out of favour and declined in influence. There was a growing shift of power to the centre, that is, to the national government until 1997. The Conservative Government's attitude to regionalism was clearly illustrated in its dissolution of the Greater London Council at a time when its 'Fair Fares' policy was a first step towards an integrated and sustainable public transport system for the capital. It is too early to determine if the current proposals to re-invigorate civic leadership by instituting the concept of elected mayors and local city executives will be successful in reviving the spirit that launched the local innovations in social provision for which the nineteenth-century

Figure 4.6 The Standard Region 1975 (Glasson, 1978)

municipalities in this country are known. Poor relief, hospitals, clean water supplies, schools and subsidized housing were often, in the nineteenth century, the result of local initiatives. The same process and spirit are needed to serve the requirements of sustainable development centred upon civilized cities. The case of London and its elected Mayor does give reason for optimism.

The privatization of water, gas and electricity, the possible break-up (as some would assert) of the National Health Service, the deregulation of bus services together with the disastrous privatization of the railways all have great consequences for regional planning. Delegation of power to the anarchy of the market or, at best, to the tyranny of the boardrooms is counter to ideas formulated in the European Union and