

The poll resulted in a decision to retain the existing status, the majority being very small. An exhaustive preliminary investigation into the affairs of the borough was made by the Commission, and although it was apparent that the borough was efficiently carrying out such functions as it administered other matters merited consideration. Such questions as the necessity for a high-pressure water-supply, fire protection, and the sharing of costs of amenities provided by the city ratepayers must outweigh purely parochial considerations. The fact that on incorporation in the city the rating position would be advantageous to the Riccarton ratepayers, and that the special rates for loan charges would, taking some 52 per cent. of the area, be less, were significant factors which indicated some relativity in economy of a major authority compared with one of minor standing. In so far as electricity was concerned, it appeared that there would be little difference in the charges on incorporation in the city.

With the proposed adjustment of the county areas, if Riccarton remained a separate entity, it would be an island within the city, and would, as a separate authority, raise difficulties in regard to the administration of drainage, sewerage, and transport, which are at present administered by the two separate *ad hoc* authorities.

Due consideration was given to the incorporation in the City of lands at present used for farming purposes. However, where potential urban development would be likely to continue to take place, we were of the opinion that these areas should form part of the city. In the intervening period, until the urban development took place, such farming areas would, in terms of the Urban Farm Lands Rating Act, 1932, be entitled to relief. The City Council already had a separate rating roll for this purpose, so far as its existing area was concerned.

A substantial farming area, formerly in the Borough of Sumner, but incorporated in the city in 1945, was considered with a view to its exclusion from the city and its inclusion in the County of Heathcote.

Community of Interest

During the course of the inquiry the term "community of interest" was discussed, and it was apparent that most witnesses misconceived its true meaning in so far as local government was concerned. We are of the opinion that "community of interest" must be construed as relating to those services and amenities provided by local authorities which are available to the people as a whole; such matters, for instance, as traffic control and parking requirements in the centre of a city, over-all planning and location of zones for various types of development, the provision of open spaces throughout the metropolitan area, and the construction and maintenance of adequate transport routes to enable the business of the area to be carried on effectively. The more localized aspects related to this term, such as interest in local affairs, churches, clubs, Plunket Societies, and so on, would not be affected in any way should there be a change in the system of local government.

District Committees

In order to preserve, as far as possible, local interest in matters affecting any particular locality, consideration was given to the establishment of local district committees. These committees, given statutory recognition and certain powers of administration connected with purely local matters such as parks, reserves and halls, would tend to strengthen interest in matters of a purely local nature. Although perhaps not an entirely comparable case, the Commission, at one of its earlier inquiries relating to the amalgamation of the six northern hospital districts, made a similar recommendation for the constitution of local or district committees for each hospital, and this recommendation has been given statutory recognition. We are definitely of the opinion that the fostering and maintenance of local interest is very desirable.