

Hawera Shows the Way

WHAT the Eiffel Tower is to Paris and Rangitoto is to Auckland the Water Tower is to Hawera. This sturdy compromise between Minoan art and 20th Century utility is an edifice of which any town might be proud. But the tower's dominance will soon be challenged. Hawera moves with the times, and the minds of its people to higher things. The wealth that has come to the town since a Chinese gentleman first introduced sheep to the area has meant an increase in leisure for the people. Increased leisure brings increased social and cultural activity, and the township intends that such activity will have the finest of physical settings. A community centre is to be built, and £100,000 has been raised for the purpose.

Before spending this considerable sum, however, Hawera's Community Centre Committee wished to find out what kind of centre would best suit the people's needs. What did people do with their leisure? What kind of facilities

should be provided? The town's active Progressive Association decided to sponsor a project that would answer these questions.

The story from this point shows what a community can do if it sets its mind to it. A consultative committee from Victoria University College was invited to assist. This consisted of A. A. Congalton and Mrs. M. N. Donald, psychology lecturers, H. C. D. Somerset, education lecturer, and J. R. McCreary, social science lecturer. Professor R. J. Havighurst, Professor of Education at the University of Chicago, at present in New Zealand on a Fulbright grant, also lent his experience and advice. An opinion questionnaire was drawn up, the decision on the questions to be asked resting with the local committee and the form of the questions with the consultative committee. The result was a list of 34 questions, beginning with the provocative "What do you think Hawera has most reason to be proud of?" and "What do you think Hawera has least reason to be proud of?" and ending with the equally provocative "Who should pay the running costs of the Community Centre?" The questionnaire was to be submitted to every tenth household in Hawera and its environs.

★ PRUDENCE GREGORY (left) and Ian Vernazoni (right), of ZXP, interview L. M. H. Cave, Professor R. J. Havighurst, A. A. Congalton and Marjorie Donald on Hawera's leisure-time survey

★ Early last month—after five months' intensive planning—a team of 12 trained interviewers from Victoria College's School of Social Science arrived in Hawera to conduct the survey. They were transported from Wellington in cars provided by local citizens, were billeted in private homes, and were supplied with transport to outlying districts every day of the fortnight's survey. And local participation did not end there. Every day four voluntary workers reported at the team's headquarters and spent long hours helping the consultative committee, which had accompanied the survey team, in the tedious task of transferring the replies to questions on to analysis sheets. In addition, local publicity was given in order to smooth the path for the interviewers. The Mayor went on record as saying: "If it (the survey) is successfully carried out it means that instead of having a plan for what we think might be needed, we can go ahead and plan for what we know is wanted. . . I wholeheartedly commend the public's attention to the survey." And the chairman of the County Council: "The social survey which is to be made in Hawera and district may be another step toward closer co-operation between town and country." According to L. M. H. Cave, Adult Education Tutor-Organiser for the district, who originated the idea, even sceptics set themselves out to make the survey a success. Professor Havighurst, he said, had found the co-operation between University and community unique in his experience, in New Zealand or abroad.

The result of this combined effort will be that when the analysis of results is complete Hawera will have the factual basis on which to plan not only its community centre, but also its expanding organisations for the use of leisure time. The Progressive Association intends to publish the results in a booklet which will include articles on the history of the district and on education, both child and adult. What form the community centre will finally take will, of course, rest with the committee charged with the administration of the fund. This money, incidentally, was raised by a

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