

INTRODUCTORY

The Auckland metropolitan area is not authoritatively defined. The area included in the Auckland Metropolitan Co-ordinating Planning Scheme is not co-terminous with the Auckland urban area as defined by the Government Statistician. Another area, that within the circumference of a circle with a radius of 13 miles from the chief post-office at Auckland, has also been described as the Auckland metropolitan area. For the purposes of our inquiry we have regarded the Auckland metropolitan area as comprising the Auckland urban area, the population of which in 1945 was 263,370, and parts of the Birkenhead and Takapuna Ridings of the Waitemata County and a small part of the Borough of Takapuna not included in the urban area. The northern boundary of these additional areas is approximately the arc of a circle of $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles radius with the chief post-office at Auckland as its centre, extending from Albany to the sea-coast north of Brown's Bay. The inclusion of the areas to which we have referred brings the total present population to 268,000, of which 35,000 are resident in the North Shore boroughs and in those parts of Waitemata County that can be regarded as being more conveniently served by means of a bridge across Waitemata Harbour, or a tunnel, under it, than by the proposed new road from Dairy Flat to Whenuapai and Auckland, or by the existing roads leading to Auckland from the north and north-west.

Though roads exist by which vehicular traffic between Auckland City and the North Shore area and the remainder of the North Auckland Peninsula can avoid crossing Waitemata Harbour, a long and circuitous journey is necessitated. For all practical purposes the only route to the North Shore area and points farther north involves crossing the harbour. The projected new road from Auckland City via Whenuapai to Dairy Flat, at which point it will join the existing No. 5 State Highway to the north, will, if located where at present proposed, provide a route to the north approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles longer from the chief post-office than that provided by a bridge crossing the harbour from St. Mary's Bay to Northcote and linking up with existing highways on the North Shore; and this distance may be reduced by a relocation of the new road. It is probable that the greater part of the vehicular traffic to and from points north of Albany or Dairy Flat will use the new road, which will, for the greater part of its length, be a high-speed road, in preference to saving $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles or less and incurring the payment of bridge tolls; but part of that traffic, more especially the pleasure traffic, will no doubt prefer to travel across the harbour by means of a bridge. We stress the point, however, that the population living north of Albany, and at present numbering 80,000, will be adequately provided for by the new road, and that the justification for the erection of a bridge rests mainly on the probable use that will be made of it by the residents of the North Shore area, who at present number 35,000, by the commercial firms supplying their requirements, and by visitors to the area.

We have therefore had special regard to statistical data in respect of the rate of increase of population in the North Shore area, the number of motor-vehicles in the area in ratio to population, the rate of increase in the number of vehicles crossing the harbour by means of vehicular ferries, and the relative percentages of traffic movements between the business area of the City of Auckland and the North Shore area and between the city business area and the suburban areas on the south side of the harbour. We received evidence from a number of sources indicating the influence on future trends that would probably be exerted by the existence of a bridge or other form of direct access between the City of Auckland and the North Shore area. We have given careful consideration to this evidence, and have taken into account a number of factors, particularly post-war factors, that may tend to accelerate or retard the increase of traffic, and have reached the conclusion that, though by reason of economic factors such as present-day shortages of materials and labour and high freights and costs generally it would be unwise to make an immediate start on the construction of a bridge or its approaches, there are sound reasons for recommending the early commencement of the necessary investigations and studies of the project; and we consider