

city ratepayers. There appeared to be no doubt that the financial position of each was affected materially, according to the extent to which services and amenities were provided. These, in the main, were lacking, when compared with those of the city, from a general community point of view. This comment is not in any way a reflection on the past efforts of various Councils, but it does indicate the concentrated effect of demand and the obligation to make adequate provision by the major local authority—the City Council. We were of the opinion that unification of functions and territory was definitely in the interests of the population in the Christchurch Metropolitan Area. To support this view the cases of the comparatively recent additions to the city of New Brighton and Sumner were examples of an over-all authority being able to use its financial capacity, technical and administrative ability, and staff and plant for the immediate benefit of these districts. We have no doubt that similar benefit will inevitably accrue to other areas on incorporation in the city.

### *Boundary Adjustments*

A further fact which raised the need for considering the question of stability of boundaries was that continual piecemeal additions were being made to the city from the adjacent territorial authorities. This frequent tinkering with local-body boundaries is obviously undesirable. In recent years the position became more accentuated, as indicated by the fact that some twenty-five adjustments took place between the years 1939 and 1947, while there were six petitions for such adjustments considered by us during the course of the inquiry. These had been withheld previously, in order that they might be dealt with at the public inquiry. Prior to the passing of the Local Government Commission Act, 1946, each petition would have involved the setting-up of a separate Commission in terms of the Municipal Corporations Act. The position had become so aggravated that any form of stabilization of boundaries as between the city and the adjoining counties had not been possible, and it was apparent that the time had arrived for such a stabilization for, in our opinion, approximately twenty-five years. The Commission, therefore, had to consider not only existing urbanization which has taken place in areas adjacent to the boundaries of Christchurch, but also the trend of such development, and the extent to which it could reasonably be estimated that it would take place during that period.

Clearly such reorganization will not only stabilize the position territorially, but will also provide for long-term permanent development, so far as services and amenities are concerned, and at the same time give stability to the county administration.

Although each of the proposed territorial adjustments affecting the four counties concerned posed different problems, they were very closely allied in so far as the community as a whole was concerned. Both the Halswell and Paparua County Councils were in agreement substantially with the proposals.

Substantial opposition came from both the Waimairi and Heathcote Counties, particularly from the two highly urbanized areas of Fendalton and Cashmere. The question of the absorption of Riccarton Borough, comprising an area of some 728 acres, wholly built up, and one mile from the centre of the city, gave rise to considerable opposition from the Borough Council. From the late "nineties" until 1911 the question as to whether Riccarton should be constituted as a separate borough had been strongly advocated by some, and just as strongly opposed by others. A Commission which sat latterly on the question, although unable to find that the area was suitable for municipal control, considered that the internal facilities for drainage and municipal control would be improved by incorporation of the area in the city. A few months later, when the question was again the subject of a petition, a Commission, comprising the same personnel, recommended that the district was suitable for municipal control. The question of the continuation of Riccarton as a borough has during the years frequently been the subject of local discussion, and in 1945 a poll of the ratepayers was held to determine the question.