

Staff

Facts were obtained concerning the staff of the various local authorities represented at the inquiry. The total number employed was 1,886, and of that number 88 per cent. of those employed by the territorial authorities were employed by the Christchurch City Council, but, including the staffs of the Christchurch Drainage and Tramway Boards, the figure for the city was 51 per cent. of the total. The Drainage and Tramway Boards were both fully staffed, technically and administratively. So far as the territorial authorities were concerned, apart from the city, Riccarton Borough employed a full-time joint civil and electrical engineer, who also carried out the functions of Town Clerk. None of the counties had a qualified engineer on a full-time basis, but two of them utilized the services of a consulting engineer when necessary. While this is understandable in the light of the financial capacity and general needs of the respective authorities, in the case of Waimairi, it was difficult to appreciate. This county did not appear anxious to extend its responsibility, and was prepared to hand over certain of its internal drainage systems to the Drainage Board, whereas this function is normally undertaken by a large number of counties.

In so far as staff in the various authorities was concerned, it is a natural tendency for opposition to arise in regard to proposals such as the city put forward. However, the position was clarified, and an undertaking was given by the City Council, which is understaffed, that the staffs of the bodies sought to be incorporated would be taken over.

Financial Structure

During the course of the inquiry consideration was given to the financial structure of the various local authorities. Such matters as the present rate revenue of the various authorities, which forms the major basis of their general financial structure, was considered, and the resultant burden to the over-all community was analysed. This, in the particular financial year reviewed, totalled some £758,335, which covered both territorial and *ad hoc* authorities. In the latter case the two authorities examined were the Drainage and Tramway Boards, whose rate levies collectively totalled £199,320. The questions which we felt deserved consideration and which arose out of this analysis, were as follows: first, the financial stability of the various local authorities as at present constituted; secondly, the ability of each to expand its activities so as to provide for proper urban services at reasonable costs; thirdly, as to whether any change in the constitutional and technical structure would detrimentally affect the stability of the remaining authorities; and, lastly, whether any change would react to the financial disadvantage of the rate-payers of the area as a whole. Consideration was also given to the present and proposed loan liability of each of the authorities. Figures were submitted and considered, which indicated the effect of a combination of the various territorial authorities, by a spreading of the rating burden over the areas proposed by the City Council as one administrative unit.

The rates levied by the Christchurch City Council to meet annual loan charges are, on the incorporation of any area in the city, spread over the new area. Those already levied on the area being incorporated are likewise spread over the city.

The incidence of rating, particularly where different systems are in existence, affects each individual ratepayer advantageously or otherwise, but it was evident that the incorporation of the areas proposed in the city would relieve as a whole the Christchurch and Riccarton ratepayers, and would impose additional burdens on the county areas in a varying degree in each instance. This increase, when related both to the counties and the Borough of Riccarton, would be spread more equitably when it is considered that the city ratepayers are already providing, in so far as certain general amenities are concerned, for the whole of the metropolitan area, and also when consideration is given to the fact that the increase represents less than a fair proportion of the additional costs met by the