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DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

THE APPLICATION OF SYSTEMS ANALYSIS TO A PROBLEM OF COUNTY AMALGAMATION: THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF KAIRANGA, KIWITEA, MANAWATU, OROUA AND POHANGINA COUNTIES.

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the Degree of Master of Arts in Geography
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By

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PREFACE.

Throughout New Zealand County Councils are endeavouring to fulfil various designated functions without imposing an increasing rate burden on their ratepayers. Rising costs of county operation have confronted a number of county councils with prospects of reduced expenditure on development, rate increases, greater efforts to secure more subsidies and reorganisation of county operations so that available money goes further. The last alteration has often taken the form of an amalgamation between counties.

In the Manawatu area the counties of Kairanga, Kiwitea, Manawatu, Oroua and Pohangina undertook an investigation of the desirability of amalgamation. An independent investigation was recommended as a suitable thesis topic by Mr B.G.R. Saunders of the Geography Department, Massey University. After a preliminary study of the county investigation it was decided to examine in detail aspects that would not be covered by the counties.

Only a few studies have so far been carried out on examples of county amalgamation. These were comparative and descriptive studies that failed to provide factual evidence either for or against amalgamation. It was, therefore, necessary to find an approach that would assist the compilation of analytical evidence about any proposed amalgamation.

Systems analysis was adopted as the broad problem solving method. This approach requires a step by step analysis of the central problem, that of the desirability of county amalgamation. Because of the absence of any systems study of government operations in New Zealand, it was necessary to outline in detail the 'system' before any attempt was made to solve the problem. The approach of systems analysis could be applied to any level of government or to any other government problem. The associated techniques used in the thesis are some examples of analytical techniques that can be readily used within a systems framework.

Attention is also focused on the results of several controlled or simulated aspects of amalgamations. These are treated as system changes.

Changes in performance are measured in terms of alterations in efficiency and effectiveness of county operations.

The extent of the study, particularly the simulation of amalgamated county operation, has been limited by the amount of information available. As the counties are preoccupied at present with auditing and financial procedures there has been little recording of information about other aspects of their output or work. In the thesis suggestions have been made of possible topics worthy of further research and some of the information requirements and procedures necessary before more detailed studies of county amalgamation can be undertaken.

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