

Newspaper cuttings from the Album of Councillor Galton.

**BURGESSES VOTE FOR REFERENDUM ON CHRISTCHURCH JOINING
BOURNEMOUTH**

**Mr. Tom Budden, One Of Oldest Inhabitants Seconds Motion.
Hants County Council's 2½ Millions Budget.
Coun. Oakley Predicts Supplementary Rate Next Half Year.**

A mass meeting of ratepayers of Christchurch was held in the Town Hall on Monday evening, when the following resolution was passed, with only two voting against, out of nearly 300 present:—

"That this mass meeting of burgesses respectfully requests the Christchurch Town Council to hold a referendum of the qualified electors through the post on the following, or similarly worded, questionnaire : —

"Are you in favour of the Christchurch Corporation opening up negotiations with the Bournemouth Corporation in order to ascertain whether the Corporation of Bournemouth is prepared to consider the question of amalgamation of the two Boroughs, and if so upon what terms such amalgamation can be effected."

Mr. C. B. Hudson presided, and after announcing the object of the meeting, read a letter from Lord Manners, in which his lordship said that no satisfactory explanation had been given of the amazing expenditure of the County Council.

Mr. C. T. Curry, who gave a review of the Hants County Council Budget for the coming year and of some of the clauses of the Local Government Act of 1929, as he saw how they would affect Christchurch, first gave a word of explanation as to why the meeting had been called. He stated that a number of recently formed organisations in the Borough had decided to call a Town's Protest Meeting against the County rate, but ultimately called it "off." He asked whether this was because the Towns-women's Guild had not sufficiently mastered the art of mothercraft to teach the new baby, "The Chamber of Trade," to stand on its own legs and set up a vigorous yell against having 9s. 5d. taken out of us till?

It was the women—the wives of the working men—who would suffer the biggest burden under this increased rate, and 1s. a week less in the workmen's home meant a great difference in the family budget.

He pointed out that it was unfair to expect the President of the Chamber of Trade to take a prominent part in calling a Rates Protest Meeting in view of the fact that he also held an official position.

The speaker stated that the same remark applied to the Mayor, Mr. F. E. Abbott, C.C. His was a most awkward position. Where did he stand? With the County Council rate or against it? And in the same way his Worship's dual office put the Town Council in a most invidious position. If they passed a resolution of protest, as other Councils were doing throughout Hampshire, would not Mr. Abbott regard it as a vote of censure upon himself—not as the Mayor, but as the County Councillor for the Borough? Out of loyalty to the County Council he could not be expected to organise a town's protest meeting, but if no protest were made, Winchester, next year, would say "Ah! the ratepayers are sleeping peacefully under our dope, let's give them another dose and take another half-a-crown out of their pockets."

**THE COUNTY'S BUDGET.
RAISING £1,144,793 IN RATES.**

Proceeding, the speaker gave an analysis of the County Council Budget, remarking that on page 1 there was a footnote which stated, "Approved by the Finance Committee on the 12th February, 1930, and ordered to be laid before the Council." Did that mean that the whole of the County Council estimates were cut and dried before the County Council meeting, and that not one of the 81 members dare get up and move to reduce the estimates?

The Hants County Council in the year beginning 1st April are spending £2,497,478. In the year ending with this month they will have spent merely £1,683,161—or something about half what they propose to do in the coming year.

They would receive various grants amounting to £1,263,960 in the coming year, but after allowing for this and balance's in hand there remained the enormous sum to be taken out of the ratepayers' pockets of £1,144,793,—almost as much as the whole of the sum spent in the year now ending. That accounted for the 9s. 5d. in the £.

Last year the County raided the ratepayers' pockets to the tune of £529,353, and it was only fair to say that this doubling of the expenditure had been forced on the County by successive Governments in order to capture the people's votes.

The latest instance was the Local Government Act of 1929, which abolished Boards of Guardians and put the Poor Law Administration under the County. This would cost no less a sum than £315,973, and that was before the scheme was actually started. The sum of £80,450 is down for out-door relief, but he could see no item for the relief of the ratepayers. There was another distinct item for £30,000 for mental deficiency, but that was nothing. Already Devonshire County Council were considering the erection of homes for mental defectives costing a quarter of a million, in addition to upkeep costs.

A total of £926,500 was to be spent on roads, but here again it was only fair to say that the County had been saddled with the maintenance of District Council roads which, no doubt, partly explained the increase of £425,000 under this head.

One point was particularly unfair. The Christchurch Rural District Council had maintained their roads in very good condition, at a cost to the rural ratepayers of Christchurch of about 2s. in the £ for many years. Application was made by the District Council to retain control of their roads, but the County Council refused and the refusal was upheld by the Ministry, with the result that Christchurch Rural ratepayers—just as they might be expecting a reduction in their road charges—were called upon to pay a rate of almost 5s. in the £ to put roads in order in other parts of the County.

TOWN'S "OLD BAILEY." AND ENORMOUS EDUCATION COST.

Referring to the administration of justice, the biggest item of which is £3,000 for criminal prosecutions, the speaker remarked, "Here we are in the 'Old Bailey' of Christchurch. You know this room, is a police court and a cold old place it is, too. The Town Council were thinking of doing up the floor so that we could have a dance after our meeting to-night to get a little bit warmer. Yes, and in case the ladies felt chilly in their evening dresses they even thought of putting in a hot water heating apparatus. Alas! it cannot be done with £25,000 going to Winchester—£2 10s. per head of every man, woman and child in Christchurch."

Winchester was also carrying out an extension of the County Council offices costing £15,000, and there was another item of £2,700 for furniture. "They like to do themselves well at our expense," he remarked.

"Let us have a change and go to Bournemouth Pavilion, it is nearer home," he added. "It does not matter about our cold Town Hall—Winchester wants our money to keep the log fires burning at the Castle, no doubt with Turkey carpets and high tea at 4 o'clock.

Winchester believed devoutly in Higher Education; they made grants of £4,000 to the University of Southampton and £750 to Reading University. Secondary Schools cost us £56,600 with Secondary School Teachers' salaries amounting to £39,144, while £3,500 came from the rates towards their pensions. But if anybody in Christchurch wanted to give their children secondary education they had to send them to Brockenhurst; wasn't the Bournemouth School a lot nearer home for the children?

There were grants to various Grammar Schools totalling £15,276, while Schools of Art, Technical Classes, etc.—of which we did possess one in Christchurch—were a mere £5,233. Aids

and loans to students amounted to £25,144. How many students in Christchurch got a farthing of it? The total cost of Higher Education in the County of Hampshire was £139,195.

Elementary Schools in the County cost almost half a million pounds; to be exact—£457,237—a rate of 2s. 4¼d., while in Bournemouth it was less than a shilling. Teachers' salaries came to more than half of it—£278,608, an increase of £5,339. There was £1,300 for books, stationery and needlework and £13,256 from rates towards pensions. "Is it any wonder that the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Malmesbury, Chairman of the County Council, is alarmed at what the County rate will be with the additional number of teachers required when the school age is raised to 15"? he asked.

Caretakers' and cleaners' wages at the Elementary Schools came to £11,470. Fuel, light, water and the cleaning materials to £10,900.

Medical inspection and treatment of children totalled £17,130, with salaries of officers at £5,400, including travelling expenses of £1,800, and £3,200 for school nurses. The Public Health Services cost £62,715.

A Dental Staff totalled £6,350 with £3,150 for officers' salaries and just a round £1,000 for nurses, with travelling expenses at £1,300. These two items of salaries and travelling expenses of Dental Staff have gone up by £1,410 this year. Medical and dental inspection cost £23,480, an increase of £2,920.

The Police pay and allowances came to £120,600, plus £4,000 for motor cars, bicycles, etc., and their boot leather to £1,330. The total cost of the police force amounted to £207,188, including £45,200 in pensions. The Government paid £92,000 of it, while the County Borough of Bournemouth paid the County £24,000 for the police. The business men of Bournemouth were no doubt alive to the fact that they could run their own force at a much reduced figure, and that was why they had got Parliamentary powers to that effect.

Sir Morgan Crofton's Views.

VIGOROUS DENUNCIATION BY A COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

The speaker read a lengthy letter from Col. Sir Morgan Crofton, Bart., member of the County Council from the New Forest District, in reply to a vigorous protest sent to him by the New Forest District Council. In the course of this letter, Sir Morgan Crofton said: I fully share your feeling of alarm at the County rate. For the past eight years I have viewed with increasing misgivings the ceaseless and increasing outpourings of the ratepayers' money on a myriad of schemes, the large proportion of which are, to my mind, entirely unnecessary and extravagant. . . . At the last meeting of the Agricultural Education Committee, a string of the most futile demands was made, many of them were comic opera appointments, which we succeeded in crushing, but the Vice-Chairman actually said: 'We've asked for these as there seems a lot of money floating about, and if we don't get it some other county will.'

Col. Sir Morgan Crofton's letter further stated: "There are a few of us who miserably contend against demands for increased expenditure, but our voices are the voices of those crying in the wilderness. There is every possibility of your rates being higher. The whole thing works in a vicious circle. Park Prewitt is another heavy and increasing expense, but here at any rate a home of rest is provided for the weary ratepayer when he can no longer stand the strain of further demand notes." The writer added that in May, members of the County Council were to be provided with free railway passes—which would be a high permanent charge on the County—and there were also whispers of payment for members. He concluded: "I am extremely glad that you have sent a resolution of protest to the Clerk of the County Council. If every District Council did the same, there might be some result, especially with the County Council elections coming on next March, but it is my humble opinion that nothing short of indignation meetings of ratepayers all over the County, violently protesting against this increasing extravagance, will have any effect."

Unfair To Christchurch.

HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT WILL AFFECT THE TOWN.

In referring to the Local Government Act of 1929, Mr. Curry remarked that Christchurch had paid its quota towards the erection of that magnificent institution known as Fairmile House, which was now "a bit of Bournemouth in Christchurch." Bournemouth would pay into the general coffers of the County whatever Christchurch had paid towards its construction. Not a penny of this would be credited to Christchurch, but under the Act the County had to provide special buildings, for the relief of the poor, and Christchurch, having paid its share for its own building, would be called upon to pay towards the erection of other buildings with specialised staffs all over the County. Arrangements had been made for Christchurch poor to go to Fairmile House until the County Council got their schemes going.

These specialised institutions include hospitals. Christchurch people requiring hospital treatment went to Boscombe Hospital, and was not it better that they should go there rather than miles away from their relatives?

Twenty-eight Boards of Guardians in Hampshire would cease to exist at the end of this month. The Christchurch and Bournemouth Guardians would finish up with a balance in hand of over £2,500. The Christchurch district proportion of this amount would also be handed over to the general funds of the County. What of the other 27 Boards of Guardians? The greater part of them budgetted so finely for their last year of office that they would finish up with a deficit, so that Christchurch, in addition to losing its share of £2,500, would have to help make good these debit balances. These were but details, unfair as they might be.

The great thing to bear in mind was that in leaving Bournemouth to come under the County, the Poor Law rate in Christchurch had gone up from 10½d. to 2s. 3½d. in the first year, before any schemes of any new buildings and specialised staffs had been worked out.

Under Section 46, Clause 2 of the Act, it was held by some authorities that by agreement between the County and Bournemouth, Christchurch could be amalgamated with Bournemouth. Most Acts of Parliament, however, were so framed as to provide food for lawyers.

The Town Council had asked the County Council to enlarge the Borough, which would involve very heavy financial obligation in the preservation of the cliffs of Highcliffe and in providing main drainage for that village. "A conference has to be held regarding this re-arrangement of the local councils' area, and I suggest that it is not too late for Christchurch Town Council to hold its hand, instead of tying itself down absolutely to control by Winchester," said the speaker.

"If you are intending to enter into partnership and find before definitely signing the agreement that a better proposition presents itself, would you sign it or would you withdraw-?"

Section 57 stated that once a scheme for re-arrangement of County Districts had been approved it could not be altered for ten years— "ten years of rising rates under Winchester control, with the Town Council powerless in its protests, its voice lost in the New Forest, and what would happen to Christchurch"? he asked. "The more people who leave this town to live in Bournemouth, with its greater advantages and lower rates, the heavier will be the burden be for those remaining here."

Christchurch had already provided its own sewerage scheme, but under this Act the County Council had power to contribute towards the provision and maintenance of any sewers or sewage disposal works, or of a water supply, such sums as appear to them to be reasonable, having regard to the resources of the district and the circumstances of the case. In other words, Christchurch, having paid for its own sewage system could be mulcted for an unknown amount of money to sewer the rest of Hampshire and to help provide water supplies all over the County.

Referring to the Exchequer grants, he said that that for Christchurch was provisionally fixed at £6,000—but it was subject to revision after three years, and some of the conditions made one think that Parliament would raid this fund like they did the Road Fund and throw additional burdens

on the ratepayers.

County Council officials compiled a list of 22 administrative counties, which they said were comparable with Hampshire, and showed that Hampshire was the fifth lowest rated. The real fact was that Hampshire was the fifteenth highest rated of the 62 County Councils in the country.

The rate in Christchurch this year was 12s. 2d. This had been brought down by the Town Council allowing less for street cleaning, less for house refuse removal—two most essential health matters—not only that, but they had even allowed less for infectious diseases, and they were stated to be faced with reducing roadmen's wages or the number of employees to keep the rate to 12s. 2d., which meant even less being done for the roads.

"While we may feel grateful to the Town Council for keeping the total rate down to 12s. 2d., yet there is not a single member of the Council who would not admit that the rates of this Borough would have been more than double those of Bournemouth if Christchurch had carried out even the most reasonable policy of progress," he asserted. The demands of Winchester crippled the Town Council in such a way that it must take the heart out of them.

It was expected that Bournemouth's rate in the coming year would not be more than 7s., and rateable values in comparative districts of the two towns were much about the same, especially in the homes of the workers. In Windham Road a six-roomed house was let at 8s. 3d. a week including rates. What chance had Christchurch of existing with the rate kept to 12s. 2d. this year but bound to increase in the future as against a rate of 7s. in Bournemouth?

The workers here would find their rents increased by the addition of the rates and those who remained in Christchurch would ultimately be compelled to live, not two, but three and perhaps four families in a house, to pay the rate demands in the future. No wonder the County Council were increasing their health services and had been given power to build infectious diseases hospitals.

THE SOLUTION. BUTTER AND JAM OR BREAD AND WATER?

Proceeding, the speaker said that the solution that he could see was the amalgamation of Christchurch with Bournemouth. Members of the Town Council declared that they would not move in the matter unless backed by the burgesses. The ratepayers ought to be given the opportunity to decide their own fate and no blame would then rest on the Town Council. Could anyone produce any logical argument against amalgamation? The one question, that everybody asked was "Would Bournemouth have us"? Did this attitude of mind account for the great number of bachelors in the Priory Town—that they were too proud to ask eligible girls to be their brides? "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady."

Half the workers who lived in Christchurch got their butter and jam in Bournemouth, but Winchester robbed them of it with this iniquitous rate and left them bread and water instead. By amalgamation Christchurch would not have a Mayor, but had there been any great rush to fill this ancient office in recent years—and as for the Corporation—were not our own little "corporations" far more important?

Lord Malmesbury, Chairman of the County Council, recently said: "Christchurch and Bournemouth to all intents and purposes are one." Bournemouth had already one part of Christchurch, viz., Southbourne. Had Southbourne ever regretted leaving her mother Christchurch for the beautiful mansion of her daughter Bournemouth?

Christchurch had a number of valuable assets to take into partnership with Bournemouth—our wonderful old Priory—a cathedral in all but name—and who would not like to see Canon Gay as the first Bishop of Christchurch Priory Cathedral?

Look at our wonderful harbour—shades of Alderman Tinsley—what a fine yachting centre the amalgamated boroughs could make of that, and, if the two boroughs amalgamated, Bournemouth, running its municipal buses through Christchurch, would soon see that our roads were put in order. We should in time get decent lights, a public library and a fire engine.

Christchurch rateable value of £55,000 would, on a rate of 7s. yield nearly £20,000, against

which we were now paying Winchester nearly £25,000, while if Christchurch undertook to pay off its own loan charges in addition, our total rate would be under 9s., and be a decreasing figure year by year. Nine shillings would yield, on the present rateable value, £24,000. Kinson with 12,000 population had a rateable value of £32,000, while Christchurch with 10,000 population had a rateable value of £55,000. And yet Bournemouth had Kinson.

Would not Bournemouth give Christchurch a better public service for that amount than we got from the County Council and have a handsome margin left over? Wasn't it worth striving for to get our rates stabilised and to get something done for the money? There would also be a big saving in officials. Three of them were now getting on in years—wasn't it wise to amalgamate before a new set of officials were appointed? Remember this—under the Local Government Act, when the present Medical Officer retires, Christchurch County District was liable to maintain a full time Medical Officer of Health at a cost of £750 to £1,000 a year. Further, if amalgamation was the remedy, wasn't it wise to see about it before the County rates and assessments further increased, because the longer it was put off, the more compensation the County would demand.

Just as the Town Council would not move in the matter unless requested by the burgesses, so Bournemouth could not be expected to consider amalgamation unless Christchurch asked.

Highcliffe had a referendum as to whether it should be included in Christchurch, and a referendum of all the ratepayers of Christchurch would bind nobody to anything, but it might open the way to the financial salvation of the property owners and ratepayers and even of the town itself.

Coun. Russell Oakley.

THINKS SUPPLEMENTARY RATE MUST BE MADE.

Councillor Russell Oakley said that he was present as a ratepayer, and emphasised the fact that he had no mandate from the Borough Council, and was not there to offer any apology for the Council. He agreed that the County Council was not altogether to blame, and that ratepayers must recognise that the present state of affairs had come about by successive Acts of Parliament, passed by the late Government, and starting with the Rating and Valuation Act of 1925. "You are in the position of having made a whip with which to flog yourselves," he declared.

Continuing, he said that this was the first step towards a protest the ratepayers would have to make against the extension of the Borough boundaries, as laid down in the County Council's scheme for the re-arrangement of county districts. Already there were negotiations for the inclusion of Highcliffe, and there was talk of extending to include Burton and nearly as far as Bransgore. Negotiations were progressing with the Lord of the Manor (Major Sir George Meyrick, Bart.) by the Council to acquire the foreshore rights at Mudeford, and that, he maintained, was as far as they desired to go.

When the Town Council was faced with a demand from the County amounting to £24,860, Councillor Oakley remarked that they were faced with a very grave responsibility. The rate of 12s. 2d. was based on an expected grant of £6,000, but there was no certainty as to the actual sum, and it was subject to certain conditions. The Council were aware that there were desirable improvements which were long overdue; and they had either to forego making these improvements or go forward with a rate of 14s. or 15s. in the £.

"Whether we have chosen the wisest course, time will prove, but I think myself it is a very unwise course to adopt," he continued. I say candidly that looking at the needs of this Borough that neglect will simply pile up future expenditure, and I believe it would have been far better for certain things to have been done and the rate at 15s. In the near future, the question of the disposal of house refuse will have to be faced, as in three months time Quomps will be filled up."

"Talking about the 12s. 2d. rate, I think that before the year is out a supplementary rate will have to be made. That is a very serious position indeed."

Speaking as Chairman, of the Roads Committee, Coun. Oakley said that the Council had hoped to go forward with a comprehensive scheme for the permanent construction of district roads and to secure a loan for five or six years, but it was impossible to do so with a rate of 9s. 5d.

imposed by the County Council coupled with the "struggling conditions in Christchurch."

"I speak advisedly of the struggling conditions here," he continued. "Do you know that within half-a-mile of this Town Hall there are over 20 blocks of business premises standing empty, and those empty premises mean increased rates for the rest of us. And in this Borough a large number of houses are being purchased on the instalment plan—a very worthy way of a man getting a house for himself—but in every case the purchaser of the house is bound to meet his instalments, plus any rates. So how could we make the rates what they should really be. If we sent a protest to Winchester, it would reach the waste paper basket before the Council re-assembled.

"What I should like to see is a Christchurch and New Forest Ratepayers' Protest League formed," he said. "I should like to see the members of that League bind themselves together with a promise that they will not pay the demands of the County Council until the whole financial position has been better understood and reviewed."

Voice: And the rates would go up. There would be prosecutions!

"I think that the business of collecting the rate would be so colossal that the requirements of the County Council would be reviewed," Coun. Oakley replied, adding, "a protest on paper will take you nowhere. It is action that is wanted, and drastic action, too." (Applause.)

Speaking of the suggested amalgamation of the two boroughs, Coun. Oakley said: "In the light of the figures put before this public meeting—official figures from the Hants County Council Budget—it appears that there is absolutely no relief to be expected from Winchester. There are matters of tradition and affection for this town by those who were born here, but none of these matters outweigh the necessity of seeking some way of escape from this penalisation in perpetuity in the name of rates." (Loud applause.)

He thought that Christchurch with its harbour, its fine rivers and valleys, its historical monuments would be a great asset to Bournemouth, and, he said, "if the question of amalgamation is properly explored I think that Bournemouth would realise that the advantages would not be all on one side. It would help us and it would help Bournemouth. You have to be up and doing. There are only 12 months to take certain steps in, and if they are not taken in 12 months you may all go to Winchester."

Mr. W. Waller, President of the Jumpers Ratepayers' Association, in moving the resolution, declared that that organisation had been all along prepared to hold a protest meeting and to "fight to the last ditch," and still were.

Mr. Tom Budden seconded the resolution amid loud applause, stating that he did so "as an old resident and inhabitant." "On a question like this the opinion of the ratepayers should be ascertained, because all the amount of sentiment will not provide bread and cheese," he remarked.

There was some discussion, but the Chairman announced that no amendments would be accepted, and that a straight vote would be taken on the issue.

Mr. F. D. Lane said that Christchurch had been asking Highcliffe to join them for the past 20 years, Church Hatch had been saved, the Council had now adopted Town Planning and amalgamation would result in "the negation of the Borough's policy."

Coun. Gelsthorpe remarked that he would like to make an observation in two words from Scriptural texts. After listening to the speeches, he had come to the conclusion that for Christchurch to remain under Winchester was "Damnation," and to amalgamate with Bournemouth was its "Salvation."

13 MEMBERS OF COUNCIL OPPOSE 800 RATEPAYERS.

The Solid "Red Line" Of Aldermanic Robes.

Vote Of 13 To 7 Against Referendum.

C.T. April 19, 1930

Christchurch Town Council on Wednesday night refused the request of a mass meeting of

burgesses, backed by a petition of 803 burgesses (obtained in less than a week) to hold a referendum on the question of whether the Christchurch Town Council should approach the Bournemouth Corporation as to whether the latter would agree to amalgamation of the two Boroughs, and, if so, to ascertain the terms and conditions.

The "line-up" was as follows: —

Against the Referendum: The Mayor (Mr. F. E. Abbott, County Councillor), Aldermen Lane, Barnes, Martin, Clarke, Councillors Tiller, Mrs. Bellamy, Spickernell, Wyatt, Martin, Saunders, Reeves, Bellairs—13.

For the Referendum: The Deputy Mayor (Coun. Miss Robinson), Councillors Emerson, Oakley, Gelsthorpe, Galton, Tucker, Shave—7.

The meeting was attended by a large number of ratepayers, whom the Mayor on four or five occasions called to order because they approved remarks of speakers in favour of the referendum.

The first thing that took place was the reading of the Town's Meeting's resolution.

The Town Clerk (Mr. W. D. Platt, LL.B.) read a letter accompanying the resolution signed by Messrs. C. B. Hudson and C. T. Curry (chairman and organiser of the meeting respectively), slating that it was realised that the Town Council had made no provision in the estimates for the year for the cost of the referendum, and that as it was possible, that the Town Council had no power to put the cost on the rates, it would be met by other means in order to prevent members of the Council from being surcharged by the Government Auditor.

The Mayor said that he had carefully looked into the resolution and he asked the members to speak on the question of a referendum generally. He could not accept a general discussion on amalgamation. That might come on at a later time.

COUNCIL'S POSITION.

The Town Clerk said that he had received a petition in the wording of the referendum resolution. The signatures had been checked and totalled 803.

Coun. Russell Oakley asked for a statement by the Town Clerk as to whether the Council could bear the cost of a referendum.

The Town Clerk: There is no provision for charging the cost of a referendum on the rates.

Coun. Oakley: That simplifies matters. Would the Mayor allow a resolution with regard to a referendum providing the cost is met elsewhere?

The Mayor: Yes. —I will accept that for discussion.

Coun. Oakley: I will move that this Council approve of the principle of holding a referendum with regard to the question raised, and that the cost be paid by those who organise it. It is evident that if the Council cannot legally bear the cost it can only semi-officially bless the scheme by giving their sanction to it.

The Town Clerk: I presume that the referendum is to be in the wording set out?

Coun. Oakley: Yes.

Ald. Martin declared that it was out of order and that notice of motion should be given. The resolution asked the Town Council to hold the referendum and how could they do that, if the organisers paying for it held it.

Coun. Douglas Galton agreed with the point raised, but said that he was disappointed at the resolution of Coun. Oakley. "If Coun. Oakley sees fit to propose a definite resolution that a referendum should be held in accordance with the request of the public meeting, I will second it. If he won't, then I shall have very great pleasure in making that proposition," he said.

Coun. Oakley: Yes, I have no objection to the wording, so that the Council can come to a decision one way or the other. What I want to get clear, if possible, would be some expression of opinion as to whether a referendum shall be held or not. I do not mind what the wording is.

The Mayor intimated that the referendum might be taken outside the Council.

Coun. Oakley: That is my point. We want to be quite clear about this. It might just as well be taken outside, and I take it that it will have to be. At the same time, I want to get at it here if we can.

THE POINT.

Coun. John Tucker: Cannot the Council undertake the referendum if the expenses are met outside?

The Mayor: Yes.

Coun. Tucker: That, it seems to me, is what should be done.

Ald. Lane said that his view was that if the referendum were taken the cost should come out of the rates, as a question of public policy was involved. They could discuss the resolution as it stood and if it were carried they could ask the Town Clerk to write to the Ministry of Health for permission for the expenditure to be passed by the Council. (Applause from the audience.)

The Mayor: I should be glad if the public would not applaud.

The Town Clerk explained that a Parish Council had more power than a Town Council in holding a referendum. There was no provision for a Town Council to hold a referendum on the same subject as a Parish Council. The Ministry could grant powers, but they seldom did.

Coun. Galton: Do you advise that the Town Council have no power to conduct a referendum?

The Town Clerk: The Town Council have no power to charge the cost of a referendum on the rates.

Coun. Galton: It does not prevent them from conducting one?

The Town Clerk: So long as the cost is guaranteed from an outside source. (Applause.)

Ald. Lane said that a letter had been read guaranteeing the cost. The Council might fall back on that if the Ministry refused to sanction the cost. It would not hurt the Council if they paid it out of their own pockets, as the cost would only be about £20. He thought that the question ought to be discussed and not shelved by side issues.

The Mayor: If the Council vote for it, it does not commit us to anything. There is no resolution before us at present.

COUN. OAKLEY.

Coun. Oakley: I move that the Council hold a referendum on the question as set out on the agenda. A matter of great and perhaps vital interest to the well-being of this town has arisen during the last three or four weeks, and it seems to me desirable for the guidance of the Council that some method should be adopted whereby they can ascertain the feelings of the ratepayers on a particular course of action which may or may not be adopted in the future. The holding of this referendum—which is a foreign institution—seems to be the happiest and most satisfactory way of finding out what the people of Christchurch think regarding the proposal in the resolution. I am one of those misguided individuals who, when they are elected to the Town Council, think they are there for the purpose of carrying out to the best of their ability the administration of the town without running about the town to find out the views of other people. I look with suspicion on a concensus of opinion by means of a referendum, because it is a foreign institution. I was reading in the "Sunday Pictorial," in which it was pointed out that Mr. Baldwin was wrong in holding a referendum. Then I turn to a much more important paper—"The Christchurch Times"—and I find in that paper that the referendum is the only means of salvation of any public body in existence. I take not the slightest notice of the "Sunday Pictorial" or the "Christchurch Times." I am quite confident in my own mind and that the other members of the Council are quite capable of looking after themselves without the help of newspaper editorials which are badly informed.

In this case I think great interest has been taken in the question, which has been discussed from one end of the town to the other, and I think it would be advisable for this Council to take the steps in the way indicated in holding a referendum to obtain an expression of opinion from the ratepayers.

COUN. GALTON.

Coun. Galton, in seconding, said: I do not see that we as a Council can shut our eyes to the almost unanimous request made to us by that crowded meeting held in this hall a short time ago. Coun. Oakley said that he did not agree with members of the Council running about to ascertain the views of their constituents, but where such an important matter has arisen. I think it is only right that every member of the Council should take the view of the ratepayers. (Applause.) Unfortunately, some members of the Council were not at that meeting, but if they had been I am sure that they would have been impressed as I was with the enthusiasm that was displayed there. It was one of the most crowded meetings of ratepayers that we have ever had in this town, and when the resolution was put there were only three dissentients, and that being the case I venture to say that we should do what they ask us to do. (Applause.)

COUN. SHAVE.

Coun. Shave, in supporting, said: It would be far more dignified for this Council to conduct a referendum than for one to be held outside. As a native of the Borough I have given the matter grave consideration. We have arrived at a stage in the history of the town that may be described as a red letter day, because great issues are at stake. As one who was elected by a great body of ratepayers, I feel that the responsibility is too great for me to decide the issue. We are placed here to study the ratepayers' interests in every day and ordinary matters, but on this issue I hold that the ratepayers themselves must decide. I am strongly in favour of the referendum. I began to shake in my shoes at the manoeuvring that might go on to shelve the issue, but the fact remains that the feeling so far has been unanimous to take the referendum, If I could, I would hold up both hands and both feet for the referendum. It is the only way that we can get to know the feelings of the ratepayers.

ALD. MARTIN LEADS OPPOSITION.

Coun. Martin said: I am not going to shirk the responsibility that lies upon my shoulders in the form of this resolution, I do not want anybody to think that I am not seized with the gravity of the situation that has arisen in the last two months, simply because I refuse to vote with the editor of the "Christchurch Times" at the "wailing of the wall."

"This is not a time for hysteria, but a time when we want to sit down and think out clearly as to what is going to be our path in the future. As regards the referendum, I say quite definitely that it is too responsible a thing altogether to place the responsibility of such a big question upon the shoulder of the burgesses of Christchurch, who are probably not informed on the question."

Referring to the town's meeting, he said that had he not been out of town he would have attended it. He was told that a large majority voted in favour of the referendum. "I would like to point out that only one side of the question was laid before the meeting," he commented, "and when feeling is running high for a man to get on the platform and get up a good case he can swing any meeting if he has the platform to himself. Neither was any amendment allowed to the resolution. Therefore I am not at all surprised that the resolution was passed by a large majority. I attach no importance to a petition because the easiest way to get rid of anybody with one is to sign it. (Cries of "No, no.")

"I have heard a great deal about the referendum, both for and against. What I say is that you must have a very definite question to put before your electors. This resolution is altogether too ambiguous to get a definite yes or no. Where a referendum may come in useful is after certain preliminary negotiations having been gone through by two bodies and then certain petitions may be got to enhance amalgamation. If you go to your supporters as a last resort and not as a first resort

something might be said in favour of a referendum. There is nothing whatsoever in favour of a referendum at this early stage before anything has been done by this Council or any other Council.

"Look at its dangers. If people vote in favour of the referendum, are they entitled to know the answer to the request? If the request was in favour, would it be beneficial to the Borough? Would the people want to know the conditions? I say they would. And would there be another referendum and petitions? Where are you going to finish if you start a referendum, so early? I say without fear of contradiction, that one of the worst and most fatal steps this governing body could take would be to accept this resolution to-night. We are sent here by the burgesses of the Borough to run their business for them. There is plenty of opportunity for their opinion to come to this Council through the proper channel. If you are going to take away from this Council anything in the nature of autonomy, you are going to say that all these big questions must first or last be submitted to a referendum, willy-nilly as to what the Council might do. I shall refuse to sit as a member of the governing body and to waste my time if you are going to have a referendum on every question that arises. This is the first time that any demand has been made for a referendum. It is one of the easiest steps to take, but once you get there you are on a slippery road. You are asked to create a precedent. I think that any colleagues of mine who have the best interests of the town at heart will turn this down with as big a majority as there ever was. (Cries of "No, no.")

COUN. GELSTHORPE.

Coun. Gelsthorpe, in supporting the resolution: Ald. Martin says this is the first time that the question of a referendum has ever arisen in the history of the town. (Applause.)

The Mayor: This is not a public meeting in the nature of a political or ratepayers' meeting, and I must ask the public not to applaud.

Coun. Gelsthorpe said that when he was elected there was no question of a referendum before the electors. The question had arisen suddenly and had to be dealt with quickly. He pointed out that following a favourable vote on the referendum, the Town Council could honestly and fearlessly deal with it, go into all the details and the burgesses would be quite satisfied to leave it in their hands. He continued:

"Some of the old residents are very jealous of the history of their town, and I admire them for it, but it is ridiculous that any claim should be made for them that they should rule the town. They don't decide the place of their birth. It was simply an accident which they had nothing to do with. I came to live here because I thought it was a beautiful place, and although I have not been here very long I claim as much as any old resident to have the interests of the town at heart. A referendum does not pledge us to anything. If the terms of our friends on the other side of the river are fair and reasonable amalgamation will go through. The referendum ties nobody to anything and I hope the Council, will carry it with a big majority.

ADMIRAL REEVES.

Coun. Admiral Reeves said he hoped that the resolution would not be carried. He declared that the public meeting was not a very representative one. The referendum was simply a rush policy, and he could not support it. Before it took place each member of the Council should go to their respective parts of the town and find out the views of those he represented.

COUN. SPICKERNELL.

Coun. Spickernell said that he was jealous of what they had and was in entire opposition to the referendum. He felt with Ald. Martin that it would be a fatal mistake. "We have a trust and we cannot betray that trust without considering it from every point of view. We are a body of men who are quite capable of considering this matter and can deal with it in a straight-forward manner without any referendum. My main reason for opposing it is because it would tie our hands. Our

Town Council would lose dignity if a referendum were held, and people voted in favour. It would mean that we should have to go to that body and say, "Here we are with an order to come to you and ask you to take us over." It would be a fatal mistake. It would be ten times better to talk the matter over privately if it is found necessary to take such steps.

COUN. TUCKER.

Coun. John Tucker: As a very old resident, whose family has been in business here in direct descent for 130 years, I feel that this is too serious a matter for this Council to decide by itself without a mandate from the ratepayers of the town. It would be far better to have an expression of opinion from the people before we go forward with any details. If we get from the ratepayers a wish that we shall open negotiations with the adjacent Borough, the matter is left in the Town Council's hands. They will do the negotiating—not the ratepayers. I say quite confidently that if the details and arrangements are not satisfactory to the Town Council, we would not agree to amalgamation—(hear, hear) and we should carry on as we are, and we should have to make the best of a bad job. I support it because I think it is the right thing to take the view of the ratepayers and not deal with it individually by ourselves. (Applause.)

ALD. LANE.

Ad. Lane said that he was glad discussion had taken place, and that the matter had not been shelved on a side issue. He thought that the Council ought not to do anything which they might regret afterwards. He thought that the Council might be asked to take it into consideration. A certain amount of details came before the Council only in committee and with all due respect to new members it took them a year or two to get into the work of the Council before they got absolute information. The main business of the Council was done in committee.

Continuing, Ald. Lane said: "Having heard the discussion I feel it is my duty at this juncture to vote against the resolution. I do not think it is an opportune time to have a referendum, but my mind is certainly open. I want it to be thoroughly discussed. If the resolution is lost I hope that the Council will not lose sight of what has been brought before it, but take it into careful consideration."

In conclusion, he said that Bournemouth had held three referendums and each time the result had been proved to be wrong in the light of after events. One referendum turned down the purchase by the Corporation of the Gas and Water Co., another referendum turned down a proposal for a big central station with the result that Bournemouth now had two stations five miles apart; the decision on a third referendum by the people resulted in Bournemouth paying £250,000 more than they need have done for the trams. Public opinion was not, therefore, always right.

COUN. MISS ROBINSON.

The Deputy Mayor said that she had a perfectly open mind. The Council should approach the question with the utmost caution. They did not want to make themselves a laughing stock. "It is a very vital question to decide," she continued. "As we are going on now we are making no progress. Without progress there is no life I meet so many women in the town who work hard and I know what a struggle they have to meet their rates. Something must be done to help them."

Coun. Miss Robinson then moved that a small committee of the Town Council should be appointed to approach Bournemouth as to the possibilities of amalgamation and to report to the next meeting. She said that she wanted more information before finally deciding for or against the union of Christchurch with Bournemouth.

The Mayor was understood to rule that the vote should be on the original resolution only, which therefore vetoed Miss Robinson's motion.

Ald. Clarke opposed, stating that his family had lived here since 1734 and what they wanted was a little common sense.

Coun. Oakley, replying to the discussion said that he was not at all impressed by the objections raised—(hear, hear)—including "grave dangers," "loss of dignity." "panic"—but, he said, "what I do know is this—the position of the Borough of Christchurch since recent legislation is more precarious than it has ever been in its whole history. The Council would suffer no loss of dignity by a referendum, but would simply be empowered by the burgesses to explore the possibilities of amalgamation. I see no harm in it at all. It will cost the Council and ratepayers nothing.

The vote was then taken with the resolution given.

FUTURE OF BOROUGH.
TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER IT.
THE MAYOR'S PROMISE REGARDING BOURNEMOUTH.

C.T. 17th May, 1930

At their meeting on Thursday, the Christchurch Town Council adopted the following notice of motion by the Mayor (Mr. F. E. Abbott, C.C.): —

- (1) That a committee be appointed to investigate and consider the position with regard to the future of the Borough and to report to a future meeting of the Council;
- (2) That the committee consist of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, and the Chairmen Lane and Martin, and Councillors Lane and Martin, and Councillors Oakley, Major Saunders and Tiller.

The motion was taken in clauses, and in introducing the first one,

The Mayor said that he did not want to say very much about the matter, because a committee was to be appointed to deal with it. "You all know," he said, "that a considerable demand has been made by a considerable number of ratepayers who are interested in the future possibilities of the Borough. There has been an insistent demand for some time and there is considerable ignorance on the whole matter, and in order to dissipate what is considered that ignorance, I thought it best to put down that motion because the only persons who can deal with the whole question is the Council.

There is an enormous amount of information to be obtained. There are very great difficulties in settling the whole question, and the Council themselves are the only people who can possibly go carefully into the whole matter. There is the question of amalgamation with the adjoining Borough, or the question which has cropped up of amalgamating with outside areas. All these things will have to be carefully considered. The only thing that we can do is first to appoint a committee to deliberate, which will take some time. We must not hurry the matter. I think that will more or less satisfy all parties. That committee will draw up a report."

Ald. Lane seconded the motion.

"BELATED"?

Coun. Gelsthorpe said that the estimates of the County Council were known many months ago by those who were on it, including the Mayor, who represented the Borough. There was a considerable increase in the cost of administration which caused the rates to go up. Nothing was said about it. The Mayor said that he had brought forward his motion because of the "demands of a considerable number of people." "Why," he asked, "was not this resolution brought forward when it was known, by those in the inner circle—the County Council— that there was going to be this considerable rise in the rates? Why was it not done then? If it had been done then I would have supported it."

The Mayor: The rates are not known until the estimates are published, and you do not know beforehand unless you are on the Finance Committee, which I am not. I did not know.

Coun. Gelsthorpe: That is the Mayor's explanation, but it was known a long time ago. If this

resolution had come forward sooner I would have supported it. Nothing was done until in the words of the Mayor "a demand was made by a considerable number," and that demand was thrown back into their faces by this Council.

The Mayor rose to a point of order, but Coun. Gelsthorpe continued: The Mayor says that a number of people are ignorant. If that is so I take it that those who took action to bring this matter forward want educating, and I shall suggest a very different committee from that proposed in the resolution. I shall not support the present resolution because I think it is belated. The Mayor says that we "must not hurry." Let us deal with the matter seriously and without hurry, but let us start at the proper time! If anybody else brings something forward it is thrown back into their faces.

The Mayor: It was not thrown back. What was thrown back?

Coun. Gelsthorpe: At our last meeting—

The Mayor: That was the referendum. That has nothing to do with this.

Coun. Shave: You are appointing a committee to investigate. I should like to ask whether those five words can be stretched a bit. Does it mean approaching our neighbouring Borough to find out terms of amalgamation?

The Mayor: That will have to be decided by the committee.

Coun. Shave: Some of us are very nervous about the future of the Borough, and wonder what this committee are going to find out about it. We are suffering from want of foresight by past Councils. Don't make a mistake this time. Appoint a committee of live men who can look ahead.

AN AMENDMENT.

Coun. Douglas Galton: This resolution is much too vague. I shall move an amendment that the committee appointed shall also take into consideration the question of approaching the County Borough of Bournemouth to ascertain from them terms regarding amalgamation.

The Mayor: You may take it that any committee that sits will go into the question.

Coun. Galton: I have not had time to draw up the exact words, but the objection I have is that this resolution is much too vague.

The Mayor: There are other things to consider.

Coun. Galton: Your resolution says the committee is to consider "the future of the Borough." You may talk about it for 12 months and get no further.

Coun. John Tucker, in seconding the amendment, said: Let us have some idea of the lines on which this committee is going to work. Various channels of investigation should be accepted and embodied in this resolution, such as approaching Bournemouth. We ought to know where we are and what is going to be done in some general way.

Coun. Galton: I am only asking that the committee shall be instructed to consider the advisability or otherwise of approaching Bournemouth.

The Mayor: I will give you a promise of that. I will give you an undertaking that it will be considered. We shall consider the whole question—the amalgamation with Bournemouth or Highcliffe.

Ald. Lane: At the last Council meeting the question of a referendum arose, and now at the very next meeting, because it is suggested that something else should be considered, we are criticised because it is said it is too late. If we have made a mistake we are taking the earliest opportunity of correcting it. Why it should be objected to passes my comprehension. I think it is wise to draw up the resolution vaguely. There are other questions to consider besides Bournemouth. A resolution has been passed that Highcliffe should be amalgamated with this Borough. We cannot pass a resolution one time and throw it over for another because of a petition sent under excitement.

Coun. Gelsthorpe said that in view of the Mayor's undertaking he would support the resolution.

The Deputy Mayor (Coun. Miss Robinson) inquired whether the committee would have time to consider the matter fully in view of the County Conference to be held shortly.

The Mayor replied that the conference would discuss informally the question of the proposed new County district.

The Town Clerk said that a scheme had to be prepared and an order made by April 1, 1932.

Ald. Barnes expressed surprise that the amendment should be persisted in in view of the Mayor's personal undertaking.

The Mayor (to Coun. Galton): Do you press your amendment?

Coun. Galton: I don't want in any way to be disrespectful. You have given your undertaking that this will be one of the matters to be considered, and I will withdraw my amendment if my seconder agrees.

Coun. Tucker: I don't want to show the slightest disrespect to the Chair, but I am insistent that this matter should be taken up at the earliest possible moment. It is vital to the whole issue. The amalgamation with Highcliffe hinges on this, and I think it will have to be settled very quickly.

The Mayor: The committee will get on with it as quickly as possible.

The amendment was then withdrawn and the first part of the Mayor's motion was carried.

THE COMMITTEE.

In putting the second part of the motion, the Mayor said that this matter would affect every committee, hence he suggested the inclusion of the Chairmen of each main committee.

Coun. Gelsthorpe: I suggest that all your names be left out and the seven who voted for the referendum be substituted, as those who voted for the referendum know what the feeling in the Borough is, and they would form a better committee than you suggest. (Laughter.)

The Mayor: I will accept that as an amendment.

Coun. Gelsthorpe: I move that those who supported the referendum and stuck up for the ratepayers form the committee and not the seven you have indicated. This would include the Deputy Mayor and Coun. Oakley. I think they would be the right people to go into this question.

The Mayor: In other words, you would like it all on one side?

Coun. Gelsthorpe: No. You want it on the other side.

Coun. Shave, in seconding, said: I don't want to be in opposition altogether to your wishes, but it is certainly very noticeable that the members you have mentioned here—five out of the seven

—
The Mayor (interrupting): I cannot allow that. You must discuss the question whether the Chairmen are the proper people.

Coun. Gelsthorpe's amendment was then put that the Deputy Mayor, Couns. Emerson, Galton, Gelsthorpe, Oakley, Shave and Tucker form the committee, with the Mayor ex officio, but only two voted in favour of it, after which the Council approved the committee suggested by the Mayor.

WHAT COUNCIL DID. SPEED BOATS BANNED.

Decided to play Lymington Town Council at bowls, if local green available.

Agreed to committee and trust for the Town Band.

Banned political meetings on Quay.

Refused to licence speed boats and banned them from using the Quay.

Allotted motor park for 26 cars at Quay.

Ordered five seats for Quomps.

Granted £100 for new road giving access to Burnetts Mead.

Accepted £105 a year from County to do scavenging.

Approved County's proposal for Isolation Hospital.

Accepted resignation of Dr. Legate as Medical Officer.

Agreed to use Gascoyne Meadow (off Bridge Street) as a "dump."
