

SECESSION OF MOUNT PLEASANT

On the 20th September, 1930, Messrs Harper, Pascoe and Buchanan, solicitors of Christchurch, forwarded a petition to the Minister of Internal Affairs praying for the exclusion of the Mount Pleasant area from the Sumner Borough and its inclusion in the Heathcote County as a separate Riding. Out of sixty-six ratepayers in the district fifty-four signed the petition personally, and three by their duly authorised agents.

Among the reasons given were the following:

1. "The Mount Pleasant area is immediately adjacent to the County of Heathcote and it is topographically more suitable for inclusion in that County than in the Borough of Sumner.

"It is all hill country and rises to a height of 1,600 feet. Nearly the whole of it is farming land which is shown in the fact that the acreage of it is 626 acres 2 roods 5 perches, approximately, and the number of dwelling houses on it is only twenty-one.

2. "The total area of the Borough of Sumner is 4,876 acres and the capital value of the land therein according to the Government Valuation Roll is £598,902. The unimproved value is £272,465. The capital value of Mt. Pleasant area is £51,106, and the unimproved value £30,695.

3. "The estimated population of the Borough of Sumner is 2,887 and the estimated population of Mt. Pleasant is 80."

Under warrant dated 17th December, 1920, a commission of inquiry was duly constituted, the inquiry being held in January, 1921. A Mr Harper appeared for the petitioners and Mr J. J. Dougall for the Sumner Borough Council.

Under cross-examination by Mr Dougall, a Mr H. S. E. Hobday stated "He had been connected with the Morten estate for about twenty-five years. When the Sumner Borough was formed, Mr Morten owned about two-thirds of the Borough area, and held it for some time afterwards. In 1912, on Mr Morten's death, the whole of the estate was offered for sale, the Mount Pleasant area being cut up for residential sites. The Mount Pleasant road was made, and there were preparations for a tramway to Lyttelton. Several sections were sold but then came the war. If Mt. Pleasant Road were completed he did not think that it would induce closer settlement, as the road was too steep. It was like driving straight up to heaven."

The late Hon. John Barr, M.L.C., then Mayor of Sumner, giving evidence against the proposal of the petitioners, made the following interesting statement, "When witness went to Sumner first, Clifton was a sheep run. The best illustration of the transformation of a sheep run to a residential area was to be found in the settlement of the Monck's Bay's Estate. In 1904 this was Mr Monck's sheep run. It was bought by a syndicate in that year and was cut up into building sections, varying from a quarter of an acre to from three or four acres. It was roaded by the syndicate to the satisfaction of the local authorities. The roads were completed and taken over in 1909. In spite of five years of almost stoppage of building (due to the war, 1914-1918) there were 100 houses there today."

On the 5th February, 1921, the Commissioners in their report to the Governor General recommended "That the prayer



(Douglas Jones, photo.)

Sumner by the sea—from Scarborough.

Sumner, being purely a residential area, is one of the cleanest and most healthy towns in the Dominion,—no smoke stacks, no factories pollute the air or disturb the people. Its background of hills affords space for the hiker; its fresh sea breezes exhilarate young and old, whilst its safe sandy beaches are the delight of all.