

Hennepin County, Minn., which contains the city of Minneapolis, this proposal was made mainly by suburban officials who resented the suburbs' underrepresentation on the county board of commissioners and also feared that the incumbent county board would transfer the responsibility for poor relief from the towns and municipalities to the county. The poor relief shift would have caused a substantial property tax increase in the suburbs, and a substantial decrease in the city of Minneapolis.

The principal advantage of city-county separation is increased efficiency and economy through the avoidance of duplication of services and governmental processes. This results in savings in manpower, equipment, and facilities through better planning and coordination of otherwise duplicated functions, such as roads and bridges, revenue administration, and judicial administration. Elimination of a layer of government also simplifies the voter's task.

City-county separation is most advantageous in situations similar to those confronting the four cities that separated in the 19th century: when an urban area is part of a predominantly rural county or part of several such counties. If there is an opportunity for simultaneous annexation of considerable fringe land at the time of the separation, the approach is more likely to be appealing. However, the experience of the four major cities that used this approach in the past, and the more rapid pace of urbanization today, suggests that any new city-counties will not have very many years to go before they run up against the territorial restrictions of the county boundary.

Another principal weakness of the city-county separation as an approach to reorganization of local governments in metropolitan areas is that it is an "act of withdrawal."³⁰ In the long run, the central city will make it more difficult to achieve integrated control of areawide problems by separating from an influential local unit of government to which other municipalities and towns also belong. Moreover, the difficulties of expanding boundaries in the future are heightened by the fact that constitutional restrictions on changing county boundaries are much greater than statutory restrictions on moving boundaries of cities. In short, city-county separation moves in the direction of greater rigidity of governmental boundaries, rather than greater flexibility, and nullifies the urban county's effect of broadening jurisdiction.

From the feasibility standpoint, city-county separation has many handicaps. It usually requires new constitutional provisions; it threatens the status and prestige of county officials (although it probably enhances the status and prestige of the city officials who would take on county functions); and, if there is resistance from the citizens and officials of neighboring communities in the county, it usually necessitates a referendum requiring separate majorities for approval.

9. CITY-COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

City-county consolidation takes three forms: (1) the merger of a county and the cities within it into a single government, which is the most complete form of consolidation; (2) substantial merger of the county and the cities, but the retention of the county as a separate unit

³⁰ Council of State Governments, *The States and the Metropolitan Problem*, op. cit., p. 85.