

fire department, for local offices of the sheriff, the welfare department, the health department, and the agricultural representative, and a community hall and kitchen. Such county-furnished facilities are as elaborate as the local electorate could furnish for itself, and reduce the incentive to incorporate.

Incorporation has advantages and disadvantages. It is argued that the large corporations and absentee landholders do not favor it because their taxes are increased while they receive little or no direct benefit, that local merchants and professional people usually are in favor of having city government because they get needed services—such as a local police force—which save them money. It also is said to “promote” the community, thereby increasing the value of their business. Other citizens probably weigh these benefits against the cost with varying results. Social considerations favor incorporation, provided the city government does not become corrupt. This is because an incorporated city can perform needed services to local people over which they have direct control, and because it encourages a spirit of community solidarity which will otherwise have no means of developing. These generalizations are substantiated by the situation in Arvin and Dinuba.

Though the county has furnished some things to Arvin, it has not provided it with others. Not until 1940 was there a sewage-disposal plant. Water and garbage service is provided by private enterprisers, with no direct popular control over their activities. Certain congested areas in Arvin are only now getting an adequate water supply from a central system. Street paving, the building of sidewalks, street lighting, parks, and such matters are supplied by the county.

Decisions as to the expenditure of money for such civic improvements and the general welfare are remote from the people who are to be affected by them. One important county official addressed the Booster Club of Arvin somewhat as follows: “You will have to let me know about your community problems, for you know more about the needs of your town than I do. I don’t know what you need. You have to let me know how you want the law administered, because I don’t want to run your labor off to some other town.” This club is composed largely of farm operators. This is not an isolated case. When the community wants a park, a school, or lights, it must form a committee to wait on the county officials, or the county commissioners ask the leading clubs what their pleasure is with respect to certain decisions. In thus arriving at decisions, only a small segment of the community is formally consulted. However just and equitable the decisions are, they are participated in by only a small section of the community.

Without a civic entity, and with limited participation in community decisions, there is a serious lack of spirit and solidarity. Lack of unity even among the merchants along the main street was so great that one of them described it as follows:

Prior to 2 years ago, when some Bakersfield men organized a chapter of the Lions Club, the merchants didn’t even know each other. At the first meeting we had a sort of contest to see who could call each other by their first name, and found that none of us knew many of them. We worked here during the day and went home at night and never gave a thought about the other man on the street. * * *

I am rarely on the other side of the street, and still know only one of the merchants over there.