

MR. CLARKE'S DEATH

ENGINEER FOR BOROUGH

WORK AT NEW PLYMOUTH

WATER AND SEWERAGE

The death of Mr. William Alfred Clarence Clarke, New Plymouth borough engineer, occurred yesterday after a brief illness, though his health had not been good for some time. Despite his comparative youth Mr. Clarke had had wide experience before taking up his New Plymouth appointment and while employed by the borough council supervised the expenditure of approximately £250,000 of loan money in addition to his ordinary duties.

Mr. Clarke had to enter hospital on Sunday for an operation, which was successfully performed. He then contracted pneumonia and sank rapidly.

Inglewood County Service.

He joined the staff of the Inglewood County Council in 1923 as engineer, the principal work that he handled being the bitumen sealing of the Mountain Road highway at a cost of £50,000. After two years with the county he was appointed borough engineer at New Plymouth in succession to Mr. W. H. Cook, who had resigned to accept a similar appointment at Mount Albert.

The most important job done by Mr. Clarke at New Plymouth was the £172,000 sewerage scheme, involving 45 miles of reticulation, the construction of a liquefaction chamber and an outfall to the sea. The water supply was another important work put in hand during his term of office. A loan of £36,400 was raised for the laying of the two main leads to the town and for general reticulation and another loan of £38,000 was expended on the construction of the Mangamahoe dam, serving both the water supply and the electricity department. It is believed that the Mangamahoe dam is the largest earth dam in the southern hemisphere. Prior to its construction water for domestic use and the generation of power was drawn from the same source as at present, the Waiwakaiho River, but the big dam provided storage capacity.

In addition to his work at New Plymouth and in the Inglewood county, Mr. Clarke acted in a consulting capacity for the Eltham, Stratford and Waitara boroughs in connection with water supply schemes.

Departmental Experience.

Mr. Clarke began his engineering experience with the Public Works Department, with which he remained for two years, assisting on location surveys, notably that in connection with the Arapuni scheme. He then entered the contracting business and did big jobs for the Devonport and One Tree Hill Borough Councils. The war intervened and on his return he joined the staff of Messrs. Gannon and Worley as chief assistant. During this appointment he was in charge of the field work.

He began his employment with local bodies with the Devonport Borough Council as assistant engineer, being principally engaged in the supervision of important sewerage and roading schemes.

Among the local bodies he was associated with in some capacity or another were the Ngaruawahia, Morrinsville, Matamata, Paeroa, Tauranga and Takapuna Borough Councils, the Mount Roskill Road Board and the Papakura and Waiuku Town Boards. While at Auckland he had considerable experience in suburban subdivisions, assisting in the preparation of plans and roading of about 3000 acres. He studied sewerage, water supplies and roading at Auckland University College.

Interest in Aviation.

One of his principal outside interests was aviation. He served on the committee of the New Plymouth Aero Club and qualified for his A license under the instruction of Flying-Officer Ian Keith. His health, however, prevented him from doing a great deal of flying. In the initial stages he was responsible for the design of the airport, continuing to watch its development closely after the Public Works Department took over the extensions.

Always a practical man, he showed the wide range of his gifts by the construction of two launches. He was an enthusiastic rifleman and a keen golfer, though the nature of his work prevented him from playing as much as he would have wished.

Shortly after his arrival at New Plymouth Mr. Clarke married Miss Delia Corcoran. He is survived by his widow and three young children, two boys and a girl.

At a meeting of the Taranaki Labourers and Allied Trades Union last night sympathy was expressed with the relatives of Mr. Clarke.

Reference to his death was also made last night at a meeting of the committee of the Taranaki Club, of which Mr. Clarke was a highly esteemed and popular member. In moving an expression of sympathy with his relatives the president, Mr. F. S. Johns, commented on Mr. Clarke's unfailing geniality and good nature. He was a man, said Mr. Johns, who had no enemies. He spoke ill of nobody, and was a companion and friend whose absence the members of the club would regret immeasurably.

DAY OF MEMORIES