

# Stratford Man Dies in 102nd Year

A resident of Stratford for 60 years, Mr. John Petrie senior, of Pembroke Road, died this morning. He was in his 102nd year.

Thrift, hard work, abstention from liquor and gambling had been his formula for a long life and business success. Up to the time of his death Mr. Petrie took a keen interest in current events, enjoyed his meals and good health.

A watchmaker by trade, Mr. Petrie came to New Zealand with his wife and four sons in 1895 after selling the business in New Deer, Aberdeenshire, established by his grandfather in 1800. After spending four months at Dunedin, he moved to Stratford, arriving there on April 1, 1896.

In Stratford he opened the watchmaking and jewellery business which bears his name today, and he left his landmark on the business area of Broadway by erecting Petrie's Buildings, a block of shops and offices on the corner of Broadway and Regan Street.

## 80 YEARS' WORK

On the occasion of his 100th birthday in 1954, Mr. Petrie looked back on a span of life that had included five major wars. He said that after 80 years at his trade of watchmaker, which he had given up several years ago, he still liked to potter with a clock.

In 1896, he recalled, there were 200 children at the Stratford School and he supplied four of them and later another two. The streets were full of stumps, mud in winter and dust, in summer, but it was better than New Deer where they were under snow for four months of the year.

His early apprenticeship days in the shop at New Deer, which had been operated by his grandfather and father in succession, coincided with the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, which was a time of prosperity for England but he said things went "flat" after that.

For the newly arrived immigrant times were hard when he arrived but he worked long hours and saved his money. Those were the days when bush was being felled at Toko and bushmen coming to Stratford to spend their money made Saturday nights so wild that shopkeepers were glad to close their doors at 10 o'clock.

Mr. Petrie had been back to



**THE LATE MR. JOHN PETRIE senior, sitting beside the last grandfather clock he built entirely by himself in 1894.**

Scotland only once, in 1931, when he spent 18 months there and saw more of the country than he had ever seen before. "We did'na hae the money before we left, ye know," he explained.

On his 100th birthday, December 29, 1954, Mr. Petrie received congratulations from the Queen, the Governor-General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and Lady Norrie, the Prime Minister, Mr. Holland, and Mrs. Holland, the Stratford Borough Council and other organisations, including one from the

Congregational Church in New Deer, Aberdeenshire.

It was believed that no other resident of Stratford had reached the age of 100 before while living in the town, but Mr. Petrie could not confirm this point.

Mr. Petrie was predeceased by his wife and is survived by three sons and three daughters: Mesdames A. Pinhey (Auckland), F. Preo (Hawera), and C. Marshall (Marton), and Messrs. John, William and Alfred George Petrie, all of Stratford.