

LONG SERVICE TO NEW PLYMOUTH

DEATH OF MR. R. J. DEARE

One of New Plymouth's most prominent citizens, who had given wide service to the community on a number of local bodies, Mr. Robert James Deare died this morning at the age of 83 years.

About two years ago Mr. Deare suffered an illness from which he did not fully recover, but his passing today was quite unexpected.

A native of Greymouth, he was the last surviving member of the family of Captain William Deare, a Thames River pilot before he brought a ship to New Zealand, where he joined the inter-colonial trade as a master. At one stage, Captain Deare commanded the ill-fated inter-island ship Penguin, which was wrecked off Terawhiti.

With members of his family, the late Mr. Deare lived in boyhood at Nelson and Lyttelton, before setting out on his own at the age of 14 years with only £1 in his pocket. Landing in Wellington, he spent 12/6 on a new hat, but lost it when he boarded a tram in the wind, and was left with only 7/6.

However, he soon found employment, and in 1903 landed in New Plymouth. He first purchased a small footwear business in Egmont Street. He made the business prosper to such an extent that larger premises were needed. He then moved to the present site of the A.M.P. building on the corner of Devon and Egmont streets, and in 1914 transferred to the present site of Deare's Ltd. which he founded, and which is now conducted by two of his sons. In his early days, the business was known as Deare's Boot Arcade.

LOCAL BODY WORK

Mr. Deare was widely interested in many projects in New Plymouth during the past half century. A foundation member of the Ngamotu Beach Committee, he built the first of the beach cottages in 1914, and the building still stands.

For 20 years, from April, 1927, till his retirement in November, 1947, Mr. Deare served as a member of the Taranaki Hospital Board. There his greatest interest was in the hospital surroundings, and the present beautiful gardens were largely laid out during the time he served on the board and became its grounds superintendent.

For a number of years he represented the city ward on the Taranaki Education Board and took a noted interest in the development of education in the province.

Mr. Deare was elected to the New Plymouth Borough Council in April, 1917, and held office on the council until April, 1919.

One of the oldest justices of the peace in New Plymouth, Mr. Deare took an active interest in the work of the justices' association.

Besides gardening, which had always fascinated him, the late Mr. Deare took a keen interest in music. As a flautist he played in the Wellington City Orchestra before coming to New Plymouth, and he was connected with many musical organisations in this city. For a number of years he conducted the children's Sunday school choir for the St. Aubyn Street Methodist Church.

In later years one of his principal interests was woodwork, and he had at his home one of the city's best workshops, where he spent many hours making all types of articles.

Predeceased by his wife three years ago, Mr. Deare leaves one daughter, Mrs. Joan Gordon of Wellington, and four sons, Messrs. Roy, Kenneth and Clifford Deare of New Plymouth, and Norris Deare of Stratford. There are also a number of grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

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