

TOWN ROTUNDA IN JEOPARDY

A New Plymouth "clock tower" crisis could develop in Manaia over the memorial band rotunda in the middle of the town's main street.

The crisis was nearly sparked off after a suggestion by the Manaia Town Council that the roof and supporting pillars be removed from the rotunda.

Differences of opinion throughout the Manaia district have been voiced at some stage regarding the rotunda's future.

Sentiment — sways the favour of many; as a war memorial it should be left as it is, but with maintenance work carried out.

Impracticable — in the opinion of many; a receptacle for the discarding of fish and chip wrappers or for the carving of initials.

Undecided — A traffic control, but a traffic menace.

The rotunda was built by the public of Manaia and district, assisted by the Manaia Town Board, Waikato West County Council and the Patriotic Society about 1920 in memory of those who served and also gave their lives overseas during World War I. It carries thus a sentimental value to many of the Manaia public.

CORROSION

A recent inspection revealed that concrete was dropping from four of the supporting pillars because of corrosion of the reinforcements.

The Manaia town clerk, Mr D. M. Martin, said the estimated cost to repair the structure was \$1000 minimum, which he said would probably only patch it up — "I do not think this would be satisfactory," he said.

The president of the Manaia Returned Services Association, Mr M. E. Row, was reluctant to comment on the issue because the RSA is to meet tonight to discuss it.

However, Mr Row said his own personal view was that it should be left as it is with maintenance carried out on it.

He said the rotunda was one of only two in New Zealand situated in the middle of a town's main street, the

Manaia

other being in Blenheim.

Mr Row said he thought a district public meeting should be held before anything was done. The general public had subscribed to the building of the rotunda as a war memorial.

NOT USED MUCH

Constable A. C. Hobbs said the rotunda was not used much now, serving mainly as a place for children to sit and throw their fish and chip paper when finished.

"It is a pity, as the band used to play there quite often, quite an attraction for a small community such as Manaia. Now they only play there on Christmas Eve," Constable Hobbs said.

Constable Hobbs said the building was a valuable traffic control, helping to keep speeds down.

"Although it is a traffic control, since I have been at Manaia I have attended about five accidents where a vehicle had collided with the rotunda, mainly through carelessness and speed," he said.

Mr Martin said from the public point of view the matter was a problem, because whatever happened would cost money.

"There has been a lot of criticism that it is a traffic hazard but it is a memorial containing the names of those who served overseas and also those who gave their lives from the Manaia district. If it was to be removed then it would have to be re-built somewhere else," Mr Martin said.

FINANCE

"The Manaia Town Council would like to see it made into a proper round-about but this is over to the Transport Department. The problem here would be that a lot of money would be involved," he said.

An architect had suggested the existing columns be replaced by galvanised steel ones or be reconstructed.

Mr Martin said the chairman of the Manaia Town Council, Mr W. P. Howard, would meet officers of the Department of Internal Affairs and find if there was money in reserve for the repair of war memorials.

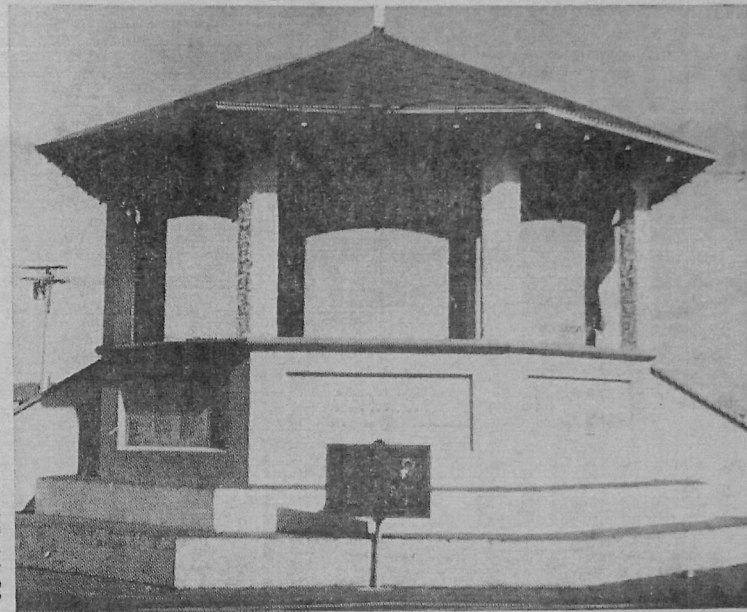
"I do not think the maintenance of the rotunda should be borne by ratepayers of Manaia," Mr Martin said.

Mr Martin said his own personal view was that the rotunda would still stand — but with or without a roof would be another story.

CLOCK?

He suggested that a clock or flag pole could be mounted in the centre of the rotunda if the roof was removed.

A returned serviceman of



Manaia's band rotunda—one of only two in a New Zealand main street.

Manaia who attended some of the original meetings before the building of the rotunda, said the possibility of removing the roof was not without merit.

"If no-one is prepared to maintain it then why not half-pie wreck it?" he said.

He said he could not remember how the original money was raised but thought both councils took the money out of funds along with the Patriotic Society.

He said all the returned soldiers had to do with the building of the rotunda was to make suggestions. Their suggestions were that it be erected either where it stands today or in the park, and that the names on the rotunda be in alphabetical order without ranks or length of service.

APPRECIATION

As a mark of appreciation to the New Plymouth Old Folks' Association for the use of its hall and facilities, the New Plymouth Savage Club will on May 1 present a two-hour concert. There will be no charge for the evening's entertainment.

"I myself do not give a 'continental' what happens. I am not sentimental towards it.

"I think memorials are a waste of money and I would rather see the money go towards something more beneficial like the hospital board or something similar," he suggested.

"I do not think the average soldier would regard the rotunda sentimentally," he concluded.

OAU Fails To Make Peace

(NZPA-Reuters—Copyright)

Monrovia, April 21.

The Organisation of African Unity consultative committee on Nigeria has again failed to secure a ceasefire in the bitter 22-month civil war, which has cost over a million lives.

Observers felt today that in the light of statements yesterday by both the Nigerians and the Biafrans, it was probably the last time the two sides would meet under OAU auspices.

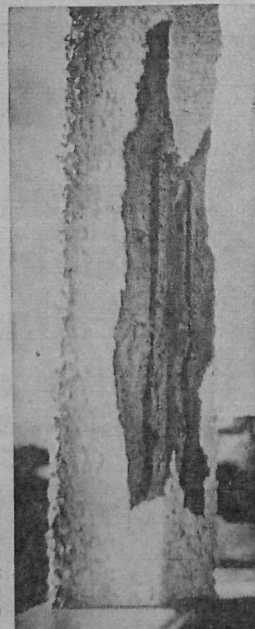
Department Under Fire

A resolution supporting the Hawke's Bay Electric Power Board in opposing the New Zealand Electricity Department's intention to heat its new headquarters, Rutherford House, with a fuel other than electricity, was passed at a meeting of the Egmont Electric Power Board in Hawera yesterday.

The resolution expressed concern over the fact that the department did not have faith in its own product.

"Opposition to electricity as a heating fuel stemmed back to adverse and half-truth publicity advertising by the opposing fuels," the chief engineer, Mr A. E. Davis, said in reply to a question from Mr A. B. Muggerridge.

Mr Muggerridge asked what was wrong with electricity as a heating fuel. "If there is anything wrong with it as heating fuel it should be brought out into the open," he said.



Corrosion has eaten into this supporting column on the rotunda.

5c
11c
4c
9c
7c
1b
5c
5c
19c