

DEATH OF MR. W. W. THOMSON

SERVICE TO MANY ORGANISATIONS

A well-known New Plymouth resident, Mr. William Wright Thomson, who had done valuable work as a member of local bodies and a wide variety of organisations, died in New Plymouth on Saturday after a short illness. He was in his 82nd year.

Thirty-five years ago Mr. and Mrs. Thomson came to live on a bare section in Devon Street West, New Plymouth. Its only asset was a spectacular view. To-day, by their enthusiasm and hard work, that land, once a Maori redoubt, is covered with hundreds of lovely trees where once only one tree stood.

Mr. Thomson, known affectionately as "W.W." throughout Taranaki, was born in Dundee, Scotland, and came to Dunedin in the Port Chalmers in 1880 to join his parents, who had arrived the previous year to farm in South Otago.

When the Kelso school was opened in 1883, he was the first pupil enrolled. After leaving school, he worked on a farm and then became an engine-driver.

At Lumsden he met Mrs. Thomson, then Miss Treweek, a grand-daughter of pioneers who came to New Plymouth in 1842. They were married at Wanganui on April 5, 1901, and came to New Plymouth the same day. They lived in New Plymouth for a few years and then spent some time at Mercer and Dannevirke.

COAL AND WOOD BUSINESS

More than 40 years ago they returned to New Plymouth and in 1921 Mr. Thomson established the coal and wood business which is still conducted by the family.

In 1923 he was elected to the New Plymouth Borough Council and was a member when the Mangamahoe dam was built. He served on the Taranaki Education Board for several years, but did not seek re-election in 1937.

In 1940 Mr. Thomson was president of the Taranaki Bowling Centre, chief of the New Plymouth Caledonian Society, and grand superintendent of the province for the Royal Lodge. He was a freemason for 58 years. He served as a J.P., coroner and a member of the New Plymouth Licensing Committee and was one of the most popular members of the New Plymouth Rotary Club.

He was founder and first captain of the Mercer Cricket Club in 1904, and a foundation member of the Paritutu Bowling Club, New Plymouth, which honoured his work in helping to select the site and get the club started at a special golden wedding party last year.

Mr. Thomson is survived by his wife, two sons, Messrs. J. and W. S. Thomson, and two daughters, Mesdames Nancy Jones and Rewa Campbell, all of whom live in New Plymouth. Another son, Mr. Keith Thomson, died in Italy in the Second World War.