

# Stratford District Centenary

1878 — 1978

1878  
1978



AT YOUR SERVICE  
THROUGHOUT TARANAKI

# congratulations

The F.C.O.S. are proud to have assisted in the growth and development of the

## STRATFORD DISTRICT

With our 63 years of experience we will be happy to offer you our service in the exciting FUTURE . . .

LIVESTOCK, WOOL, SHIPPING N.Z.M.C.  
VEHICLES, LAND, INSURANCE AND  
GENERAL MERCHANDISE . . .



At Your Service Throughout Taranaki

# Stratford District Centenary

*Published by the  
Stratford District Centennial Committee  
of the  
Stratford Borough Council*

## Centennial Committee Members

Cr. B. M. Kitchingman (Stratford Borough Council) Chairman  
Mrs D. Aldridge, Messrs H. C. B. Scott,  
and L. G. McInnes (Stratford Progressive Association)  
Cr. D. H. Tempero, Messrs B. R. Smith and H. A. L. Hann (Stratford County Council)  
Mr D. E. Goldsmith (Stratford Borough Council)  
Mr J. Preo Co-ordinator  
Mrs O. Sawyers Publicity Officer  
Secretarial and Finance, Mr P. A. Tourell (Town Clerk) and Borough Office Staff

## Centennial Booklet:

Programme Section, Mr D. E. Goldsmith  
History Section, Mr R. G. Habershon  
Design, Mr L. Bunyan

## Sub Committees:

Waitangi Day Celebrations  
Centennial Parade  
Church Service  
Civic Garden Party  
County Fair  
Centennial Ball

Combined Maori Cultural Groups  
Combined Jaycee and Roundtable Service Clubs  
Stratford Ministers Association  
Stratford Borough Council and Stratford Rotaract Club  
Stratford Lions Club  
Stratford Rotary Club

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*Collinson Studios*

## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Left to right standing: Messrs D. E. Goldsmith, H. A. L. Hann, D. H. Tempero, B. R. Smith, P. A. Tourell and J. Preo.*

*Left to right seated: Mr H. C. B. Scott, Mrs D. Aldridge, Mr B. M. Kitchingman, Mrs O. Sawyers and Mr L. G. McInnes.*

## Stratford Borough Council

Undisturbed for countless ages, the mighty forest grew unhindered surrounding its mountain towering majestically over all. A sentinel ever watchful, sometimes erupting, creating new shape, and spewing life-giving sustenance upon which the forest flourished.

Beneath the undergrowth and among the leafy canopy overhead, bird life, much of which long since extinct, provided nature's symphony amid a beauty man can but admire for with all his skills he can neither duplicate nor excel.

Mountain streams, fed by snow and rain, formed rivers murmuring - sometimes raging their way to the sea, sparkling in sunshine, filthy and cruel in flood, providing life within their influence.

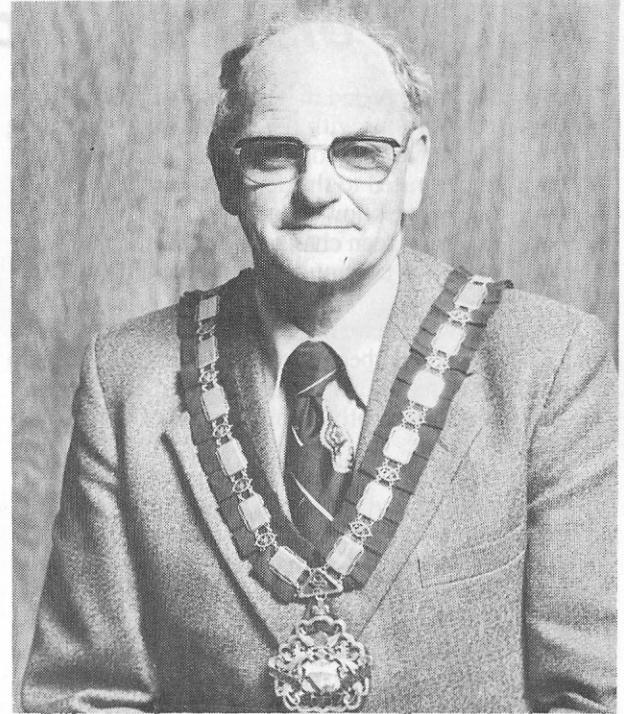
Came the migration of sturdy proud brown-skinned people who settled and spread to establish a new life far from the Pacific Islands from whence they came. If they settled in this area, no evidence now exists.

So it grew this land of ours, relatively undisturbed, unaware of passing ships upon whose decks men of knowledge observed and recorded. These men saw magnificence and plenty and in the name of their sovereign King claimed it as their own. Less than a century later ships returned bearing the descendants of those seafaring men to lay permanent claim upon this land so glowingly described.

First settling and creating towns and villages on or near the coasts, the tentacles of progress spread through tracks and roads to south, east and west until they came to this site, upon which we will meet, and laid out the town to be named Stratford.

When all was in readiness, the settlers followed gazing in wonder and apprehension at this wilderness which was to be home.

With the ideals and ambitions which brought them from the security of their homes half a world away, they set about converting the almost impenetrable jungle of undergrowth and giants of the forest into a settlement which would develop to become the centre of a thriving agricultural community. Through conditions almost impossible to contemplate, with equipment capable of operation only through Herculean effort, they laboured. Their thoughts must



have occasionally been of desperation, frustration and depression - "why and for what are we doing this thing" - may have been the cry. Despite the privations, disappointments and disillusionment, the pioneer spirit which impelled them to leave the land of their birth prevailed, providing a heritage to which we are proud to belong.

With foresight and ingenuity, the planners of the day endowed the town with wide streets and spacious parks within an area large enough that generations of families may live in comfort and enjoyment.

Civic minded citizens since that time have established their many contributions which we of this day have endeavoured to emulate, so that we too may pass on to those yet to accept the task, a town worthy of those early pioneers.

We are proud of our association with the past and trust that large numbers of past residents will join with us to acknowledge the growth and progress of one hundred years.

Many visitors will, in a sense, be making a pilgrimage to join in the festivities, meet old friends and to seek the homes of the past. We look forward with anticipation to your time among us with the assurance that the welcome you will receive will be friendly and sincere. I have no doubt that not only will old friendships be re-established but also that new ones will be made, and your presence among us will ensure a memorable occasion.

L. G. Carrington  
MAYOR.

# County of Stratford

I am sure we feel proud in being part of the centenary celebrations with the chance it gives to bring together people with the common bond of having in some way contributed to the development of the Stratford district we know today.

Each decade has seen changes both in the development of the communities and the lifestyle of the people.

Possibly nowhere else in the world within a century has a dark rain forest been turned into productive farm lands surrounding a bustling service town as in Stratford, and indeed other similar areas of New Zealand.

There is no doubt the very interdependence of the town of Stratford and the surrounding farming districts has meant much to our history and progress.

Those of us living in the many rural communities around Stratford rely and depend on the town for farming goods and services, commerce, recreation, entertainment and so on. If anything this reliance may be increasing as small villages die out and oil prices restrict travelling further afield.

Conversely the export products of well over a thousand farms bring to our area a wealth and stability sufficient to support our total rural and urban population of over ten thousand with a way of life countless millions would envy.

Just over a century ago the settlement of inland Taranaki moved southwards from Inglewood, through to Midhurst and then Stratford, bringing the pioneers and their families to hew out an existence our generation can barely comprehend.

Tracks and roads gradually webbed outwards as the bush was cleared. Villages sprouted, families grew, schools opened, businesses mushroomed and farms slowly took shape.

In many ways the decades either side of the turn of the century saw the most significant development in the rural districts around Stratford; the total population of the county, including the town district more than doubled.

Early settlers worked on the roads and in sawmills as well as clearing their land. The heyday of the timber mills was between 1890 and 1910, by which time most of the occupied land in the eastern part of the county was cleared of stumps.

The settlement of the eastern hill country area was fraught with difficulties of communications and isolation, and despite the construction of the railway line that reached Whangamomona in 1914, this part of the district suffered more than others through the years from economic and social problems.

Thousands of acres that came under the axe to support families and communities have since reverted back to scrub, testimony to the vagaries of both man and nature.

Despite fluctuations of fortune, overseas markets and other influences today the farmlands of the Stratford county carry almost half a million sheep.



100,000 dairy cattle and 50,000 beef cattle with potential for many more.

Stretching from the peak of Mt Egmont in the west to Tangarakau Gorge and the Wanganui River in the north and east, the county of Stratford covers over one quarter of the Taranaki land area.

The county council was actually constituted in the year 1890.

Prior to this affiliations were split north and south with the Manganui Roads Board formed in 1877 based on Midhurst and the Ngaere Roads Board formed in 1881 having emanated from the Patea and then Hawera County Councils. Both Roads Boards were absorbed by the Stratford County Council after it was formed.

Originally part of the Stratford County, the Whangamomona area formed its own county between 1908 and 1955, while the Matau district belonged to the Clifton County until 1929.

Several keys to progress have shaped our lives today, each in turn a milestone to reflect on - the bush track, the bullock train, the metal road, the railway, the car, electricity, the telephone, tractors, aerial topdressing, tanker collection of milk, the farm bike, and so on.

Over the past twenty-five years the rural areas have altered in structure, perhaps the main change being the disappearance of the many village settlements as the advent of milk tanker collection began to close the small dairy factories.

Improved communications and modern hygiene demands brought competitive difficulties to close many of the country stores, while farm amalgamations continued to depress the population as technology lessened labour needs and 'viability' and 'economic unit' became meaningful terms.

The hundred years to follow will be a challenge equal to those we salute just completed. The task may be more a sociological than physical one as we combat the problems of urbanisation and centralisation.

Meantime may we all find companionship amongst those gathered to celebrate the first hundred years of our district and continue to work for the betterment of the society of which we are all an integral part.

H. H. P. Cook,  
CHAIRMAN, COUNTY OF STRATFORD

## The Honourable David S. Thomson

M.C., E.D., M.P.

I have great pleasure in being able to contribute to the centennial celebrations of the district of Stratford.

It is now 100 years since a block of 300 acres on the banks of the Patea river was surveyed and sections offered for sale to settler families at the place which the Taranaki Land Board named "Stratford". Since then the town and its surrounding district has earned an enviable position as a key centre in the Taranaki Province, which is the traditional home of the New Zealand dairy industry.

For the people of Stratford and the lands around the town there is a wealth of pride and affection in the simple words - "this is our town".

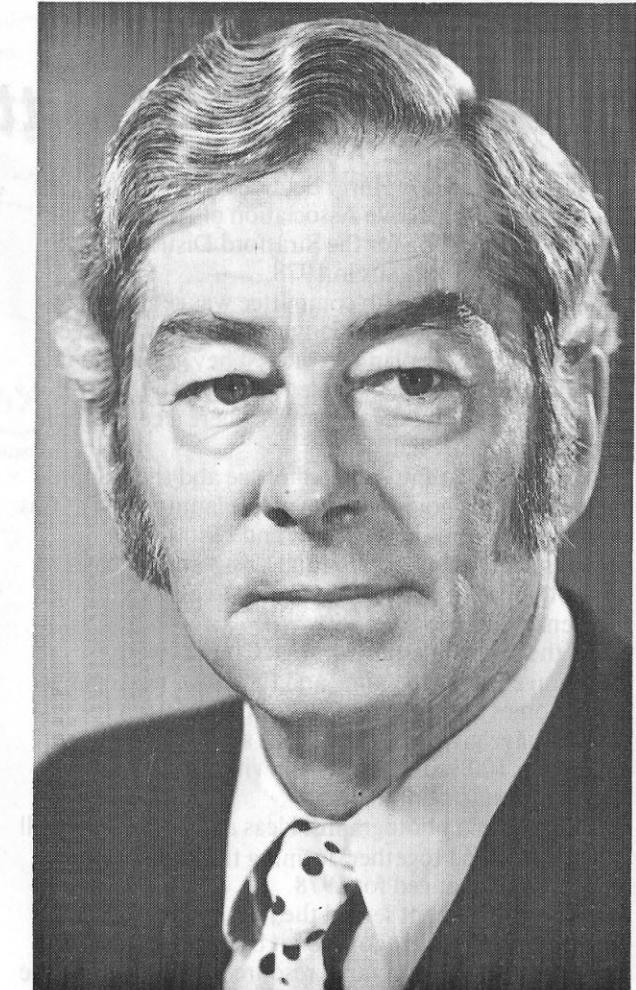
This pride and affection is not measured in terms of numbers of people per square mile, nor by monolithic office blocks, nor by industrial acres of machine filled factories.

Our pride is simple and unaffected: our affection community-wide.

We are glad to be what we are - a country town and district, because we know that we represent the real wealth and heritage of New Zealand.

The drive and energy, confidence and faith of the pioneers is still evident in the people of the district and I am sure that, as we progress into our second century, the young people of 1978 will meet the challenges of the future with the same courage and tenacity that the first settlers met the challenges that faced them.

David Thomson,  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE.  
M.P. STRATFORD ELECTORATE.



# Stratford District Centennial Committee

Ten years ago, Mr Harry Scott alerted the Stratford and District Progressive Association of the need to commence planning for the Stratford District Centennial Celebrations in 1978.

To do this a small sub-committee was set up and its members worked away quietly noting various aspects that would require planning later. They got in touch with organisations and people to ensure a successful centenary, and investigated areas where a celebration had been recently held.

Five years ago this sub-committee and the co-opted members really got into stride with planning and at this stage encouraged the Stratford and District Progressive Association to fund on an annual basis so that a lump sum would be available to assist with the Centenary.

At the same time the Borough Council were encouraged to do the same and these two nest eggs with monies contributed on a grant basis from the county have given the committee sufficient funds to organise a 100 year celebration, without the major worry of insufficient finance.

Bullocks and photographs, ideas and people, were all slowly moulded together, forming the basis of the programme arranged for 1978.

This arrangement served the requirement of the time until two years ago when it became obvious that the financial and secretarial resources of the committee would be outstripped by the job on hand and the Stratford Borough Council were approached to take over the organising.

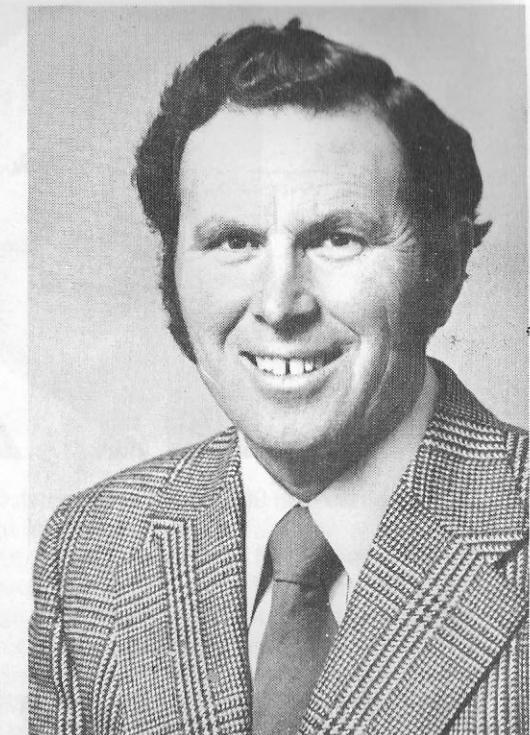
At this juncture the Stratford District Centennial Committee was formed as a standing committee of the Stratford Borough Council and consisted of the following:

Mr H. C. B. Scott, L. G. McInnes and Mrs D. Aldridge representing Stratford and District Progressive Association, Mr H. A. L. Hann and Mr B. R. Smith appointed by the Stratford County Council, and Mr D. E. Goldsmith appointed by the Stratford Borough Council with myself being asked to act as Chairman of the Committee.

Gradually at first, and then at a quickening pace we found our workload had increased and fifteen months ago Mr J. Preo was appointed as co-ordinator and a little later Mrs O. Sawyers agreed to act as Publicity Officer for the committee.

After the local body elections, Mr D. H. Tempero was appointed by the Stratford County Council to give direct liaison from that body as Mr Smith and Mr Hann were not re-elected but were asked to stay on the committee.

To single out people for special mention is normally very difficult and often a dangerous thing to do as someone is always left out, but I feel a special mention must be made of the tremendous effort of Mr Harry (H. C. B.) Scott who was the prime mover in making



sure that the centenary was a certainty through his early foresight and continuing efforts right up until the final arrangements.

This lead encouraged the committee all the way and gave the initial spark to set the programme and planning alight.

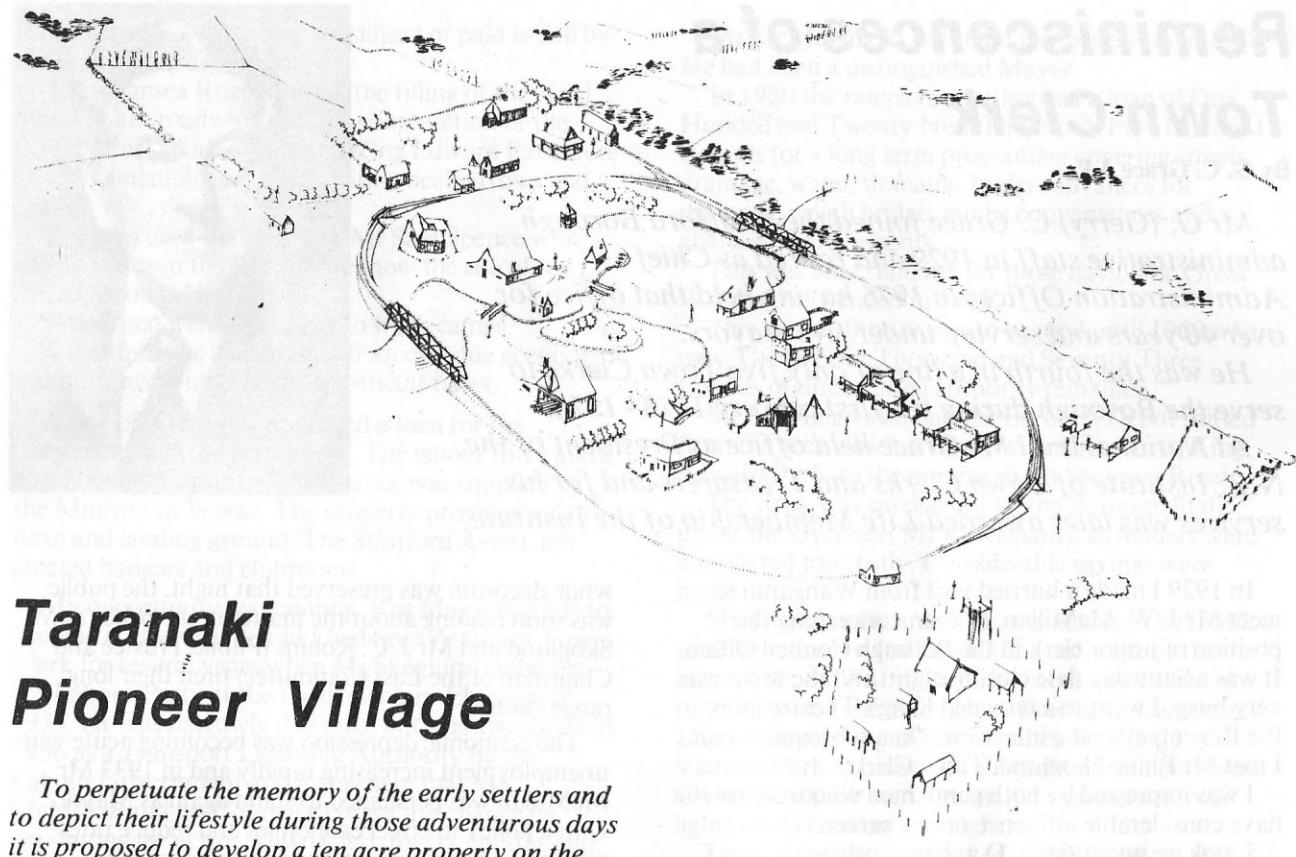
As the committee's programme and organising increased it became necessary for the major functions as envisaged, to be taken over by sub-committees. Various clubs and people in Stratford have accepted this and I am sure the final results will be activities we can all be proud of.

The way this district's centenary will be celebrated and organised will be unique in many aspects as already mentioned, but the main feature is that town and country organisations, county and borough councils together with service clubs and individuals have all combined energies and skills for this historic year and occasion.

At this juncture I must thank all those who have assisted in any way, both in the smallest measure and the largest, for their tremendous effort both in time and money towards ensuring that 1978 will be a year to remember.

Finally, to all visitors from many parts of New Zealand, I wish you a happy sojourn in Stratford and hope that you will enjoy our hospitality and the opportunity to visit the people and places of past association.

May all who have worked toward this centenary and its celebration derive satisfaction and enjoyment from the many hours of work and planning that should give pleasure to organisers and participants alike.  
Bruce Kitchingman,  
CHAIRMAN,  
Stratford District Centennial Committee.



## Taranaki Pioneer Village

*To perpetuate the memory of the early settlers and to depict their lifestyle during those adventurous days it is proposed to develop a ten acre property on the main highway just south of Stratford.*

The Taranaki Pioneer Village Society has been formed with the objects:—

1. To promote the collection, preservation and display of buildings and articles of historical and pioneering interest to Taranaki origin.
2. To promote and provide facilities for education and cultural activities.
3. To construct amenities associated with Tourism.

### History

The first move on this type of memorial was made by the Stratford Antique and Collectors Society when they leased the old Ngaere Gardens in 1972.

The Tariki Railway Station, a gift from the N.Z.R. was set up as a museum and clubroom and much of the original 'Garden layout' was renovated. Barbecue facilities were added and two boats placed on the lake.

In 1973 the Society found the project too large for their limited finances and handed the idea over to the Ngaere Gardens Village Society, a newly formed group. The collection of antiques held at that time was donated to the new society together with about \$255 in cash.

In November 1976 a project to involve the whole province was promoted and the Taranaki Pioneer Village Society was formed.

A property on the main highway south of the Stratford Borough Boundary was purchased and a plan prepared to develop the ten acre site into a Taranaki Pioneer Village in two stages.

The frontage to the main highway will be developed

first using some of the genuine pioneer buildings that have been donated and incorporating the old Douglas Bridge, one of the last of its particular structures in New Zealand.

### Education And Recreation

It is not proposed to make the village a collection of historic buildings but rather a picnic and recreation area.

There will be formal gardens as well as bush walks.

A lake is to be formed for boating and as a setting for wildlife.

It is expected the quietness plus the educational and play aspects will add up to a must for every family in Taranaki and a stopping place for each of the quarter million visitors who visit the province annually.

The committee is confident of raising \$40,000 to complete Stage One of the development.

The cost of the land has now been covered and all monies raised will be used for development purposes.

Funds are now being sought from:—

1. Founder donations \$50 which entitle donors to certain privileges of access to the Village.
2. Debentures in multiples of \$50 to be repaid in 1982 and bearing 6% interest.

**Further information will be available at the Centennial Centre during the Centennial Celebrations.**

Include the Taranaki Pioneer Village in your visit to the district in 1978.

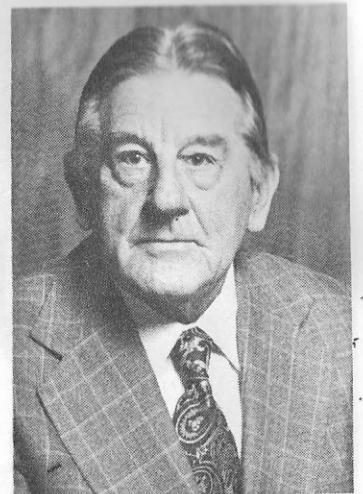
# Reminiscences of a Town Clerk

By G. C. Grace J.P.

*Mr G. (Gerry) C. Grace joined the Stratford Borough administrative staff in 1929 and retired as Chief Administration Officer in 1976 having held that office for over 40 years and serving under five mayors.*

*He was the fourth in a line of only five Town Clerks to serve the Borough during its first century 1878 - 1978.*

*At National level Mr Grace held office as President of the N.Z. Institute of Town Clerks and Treasurers and for his services was later awarded Life Membership of the Institute.*



In 1929 I made a hurried visit from Wanganui to meet Mr J. W. McMillan, Mayor, concerning the position of junior clerk in the Borough Council Office. It was a Saturday (late closing night) and the town was very busy. I went to a crowded King's Theatre (now the Regent) after the interview. On a subsequent visit, I met Mr Philip Skoglund, Town Clerk.

I was impressed by both gentlemen who were to have considerable influence on my career.

I took up my duties in October.

Mr R. C. Major had recently been appointed Assistant Town Clerk.

Mr McMillan, who had been Mayor since 1917, retired shortly after I took up my position, and he was given a public farewell in the Town Hall and presented with a grandfather clock. Mr Percy Thomson was the new Mayor from 1929.

About this time an incident happened in the office which could have had serious results for me. I had just left the office when there was a loud noise, a hole appeared in the window and something ricocheted around the room. Mr Skoglund ("The boss" to us) rushed out. It turned out that the Manager of the Bank of New South Wales was practising golf and had hit a ball against the County Hotel and it had rebounded to go through the Borough Office window. I had been working in front of that window all day and the ball would have hit me on the forehead.

In 1932 the final link of the railway out east was completed. The Rt Hon. G. W. Forbes, Prime Minister and Mr H. Holland, Leader of the Opposition, were in Stratford for the occasion. A special train went out to Tahora for the ceremony.

The programme included a visit to the Stratford Plateau on Mount Egmont by the Official Party on their return from Tahora. In the meantime, the Town Clerk was completing arrangements at the Stratford Racecourse for the celebration dinner.

Guests were on time, but where was the Official Party?

I forgot how late they were, but the delay up the mountain caused considerable embarrassment.

The dinner must have started over an hour late and

while decorum was preserved that night, the public was soon reading about the matter in the paper as Mr Skoglund and Mr J. C. Robins (Public Trustee and Chairman of the East Committee) fired their long range shots.

The economic depression was becoming acute with unemployment increasing rapidly and in 1933 Mr McMillan was persuaded to stand again as Mayor, with a policy to effect economies and reduce rates which was becoming a trend throughout New Zealand.

The election resulted in a tie and legally had to be decided by lot; in this case the toss of a coin was agreed and Mr McMillan was the winner.

This was accepted by Mr Thomson, but not by his supporters who claimed there had been irregularities during the election.

A magisterial inquiry was held and a new election ordered.

There was great interest in the second election which was clearly won by Mr McMillan and a large crowd assembled in the Town Hall for the announcement, and the proceedings started with an allegation that the candidates had met outside the hall and refused to shake hands.

There was great concern by the staff after the first policy meeting of the new council. I was not worried because Mr W. Ewing, Manager of the "Taranaki Daily News" had offered me a job as a reporter if I happened to lose my job at the Council.

The office staff regularly worked at night (there were no awards or overtime), and it so happened Reg Major and I were there on the night of the meeting.

Heavy cuts were made in salaries and wages, and several members of the staff were dispensed with.

Mr N. H. Moss, who was later to become Mayor, was very concerned about the fate of his father, the Electrical Engineer, Mr A. E. Moss, and was walking up and down the lawn outside the office.

We were glad to assure him that his father's position was secure.

There were many townspeople suffering hardship.

Relief schemes were being subsidised or paid in full by the Government.

The Swansea Road cutting, the filling of the Ariel Street South roadway, and the construction of the Portia Street sportsgrounds in King Edward Park were done by unemployed labour with wheelbarrows and drays.

The men used to be paid by Mr Sam Spence who had an office in the Post Office (now the site of the Lo-Price Discount House).

Single men were sent away to work camps.

A five shillings instalment off an overdue account was quite acceptable in those difficult times.

A poll of ratepayers approved a loan for the construction of the aerodrome. The labour force and a considerable amount of the finance was supplied by the Ministry of Works. The property provided a dairy farm and landing ground. The Stratford Aero Club erected hangars and clubrooms.

My opportunity was coming. Reg Major had left to become a Town Clerk and I had been Assistant Town Clerk for several years when Mr Skoglund stood for the Labour Party at the Parliamentary Elections in 1935. He was narrowly defeated, but was appointed in 1936 as a Transport Licensing Authority by the Labour Government and it was here that Mr McMillan and his Council gave me my chance by appointing me acting Town Clerk for six months and Town Clerk at the end of this period.

Mr Skoglund had been Town Clerk since 1911 and had given outstanding service to Stratford. Prior to that he had been employed by the Stratford Branch of the National Bank. He was the first President of the New Zealand Institute of Town Clerks, which later became the New Zealand Institute of Town Clerks and Municipal Treasurers.

There was a pressing need in the borough for swimming baths, and a competition was held and the winning design was entered by Mr S. G. Chaplin, Architect of Hastings.

The baths were completed in 1937 with loan finance. The original plans were quite elaborate, but because of the economics of the times, they had to be considerably modified. Even so, they were considered the most modern in New Zealand at the time.

Older residents will recall the Sunday excursion trains to New Plymouth during the summer for visits to the beach (cost 2/6d return).

There were not many cars in those days and outings such as this were a real treat for young families.

The social life revolved around the balls which used to be held in the Town Hall. Three well-known balls were the Stratford Golf Club, The Stratford Football Club and the Celtic Football Club.

Great pains were taken with the decorations of the hall and the provision of elaborate suppers. Mr Bert Vinsen and his Ambassadors of Stratford was the most popular orchestra. Dinner jackets and elaborate gowns were the required dress.

Sometimes one would meet a well-known bandsman, Mr Ned Kelly, practising his cornet on his way home.

Mr McMillan did not stand for re-election in 1938. He had been a distinguished Mayor.

In 1920 the ratepayers authorised a loan of One Hundred and Twenty-Nine Thousand, Five Hundred Pounds for a long term programme covering streets, drainage, water, domains, bridge, advances for drainage, weigh bridge, public conveniences and abattoir improvements.

This was bold thinking for those days. The Great War had only ended in 1918.

This loan authority was to be used until 1960 when only Thirty-Four Thousand and Seventy-Three Pounds of unexercised authority remained.

Mr McMillan also had the Borough Depot shifted from the area which is now the netball courts, King Edward Park, to the present site at Swansea Road.

The work was carried out by the Borough Staff under the Overseer, Mr R. Richards, as tenders were considered too costly. Considerable savings were made.

Mr Thomson became Mayor and was to hold office until he retired in 1947. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, he became involved in patriotic work, the Emergency Precaution Scheme, and the Home Guard. Slit trenches were dug in Victoria Park in case of an air raid and residents were advised to dig slit trenches on their properties. No lights could be shown at night.

Those were also the days of petrol rationing and shortages.

My first experience in organising a Vice-Regal visit came in February 1942, when the Governor General, Sir Cyril Newall, former Marshall of the Royal Air Force and Lady Newall paid an official visit to Stratford.

An elaborate programme was organised with a Civic Reception at the Plaza Theatre (now Farmers' Co-op), a visit to the Stratford Hospital, afternoon tea at the Town Hall, a dinner at the Stratford Hotel (the Governor General honoured the loyal toast with a glass of water) and a parade of the Home Guard at Victoria Park in the evening.

The Vice-Regal party stayed in a railcar on the Toko train siding near the old Post Office (now the Lo-Price Discount House). They were the subject of great interest and it was said that Her Excellency, after returning from one function in the rather tight schedule, kicked off her shoes, took off her hat, and collapsed on the sofa for a much needed rest before the next engagement.

I am reminded that one of Stratford's distinguished citizens, the Hon. Robert Masters, M.L.C., Minister of Education, sometimes paid weekend visits to his home in Stratford in a railcar which parked at the same siding.

On 20 August, 1942, I was amongst a group at the Railway Station waiting to board a troop train for Waiouru, where on arrival late at night we were met with the well known greeting - "You'll be sorry", as we marched in.

Mr E. B. Lothiam, Town Clerk of Balclutha, was appointed acting Town Clerk and later was succeeded

by my former secretary, Miss Doris Aubrey, who had continued with Mr Lothiam.

In 1945, the Council successfully obtained my temporary release from the R.N.Z.A.F. As it turned out, the War finished within three months.

Mr Thomson was intensely interested in the development of the parks and reserves. In those days there was a separate Domain Board comprising the Council and two co-opted members. Mr H. C. North and Mr H. C. Johnson served as co-opted members for many years.

Mr E. P. Blanchard who was Park Superintendent from 1930 until his retirement in 1962, made an outstanding contribution to the development of the parks and reserves.

The King George V Memorial Avenue of trees in Broadway South were planted.

When a belt of pine trees was removed to make room for what is now a beautiful area of native trees near Brecon Road, Mr H. E. Lawrence, a member of the Council, used to refer to it as "Desolation Triangle."

At the time of the New Zealand Centennial in 1940, Mr Thomson was a strong advocate of recognising the contribution of the women of the town and district and the Centennial Rest Room was erected as a memorial.

The Centennial Learners' Pool was provided and that area of King Edward Park was re-named Centennial Park.

The Council started a policy of sealing half-width footpaths and improving the sewer and water amenities and managed to seal quite a lot of streets.

Mr Thomson retired in 1947, having had to contend with the difficult war years from 1939/45, despite which considerable progress was achieved.

Mr N. H. Moss was elected Mayor in 1947. His era was one of further progress and he was able to initiate many new proposals.

One of the first things the Council did was to discontinue the negotiations for the sale of the electrical undertaking to the Taranaki Electric-Power Board for Fifteen Thousand Pounds, which was going to be used for sewerage improvement.

The undertaking had become run down during the War years.

It was to be gradually restored to a profit making asset.

#### MEMORIALS AND METERS

Major planning successfully accomplished was the shifting of the saleyards from Miranda Street to Esk Road, water reservoir at Cardiff and reticulation (designed by the Borough Engineer, Mr C. F. Marshall-Smith), sealing of Miranda Street full width from Fenton Street to Seyton Street, the siting of a new Post Office, a new Fire Station, and the erection by the Council of the War Memorial Hall in Miranda Street.

Mr M. B. Patience of Wellington was the architect for these three projects.

The funds for the War Memorial Hall were obtained from a Queen Carnival, a donation of Ten Thousand

Pounds by the Council, and Government subsidy.

The first parking meters were installed. The Stevens Bequest basketball courts were constructed.

Another major project was the shifting of the railway yards to the present site at Broadway South, the closing of Lear, Celia, Romeo Streets and Warwick Road over the railway lines, a bridge over the Patea River at Juliet Street and a new railway station.

I have always felt it was a mistake to close all the streets south of the Patea River. If Lear Street had been left open, the traffic bottleneck we see at the Fenton Street roundabout would have been alleviated.

The site for the Primary School in Fenton Street was exchanged for the present site in Regan Street and buildings at the old school were used to establish Prestige (N.Z.) Ltd which gave Stratford a new and valuable industry and the Community Centre.

The Winter Show building in Miranda Street, later the Drill Hall (remember Mr Oliphant Rowe) where so many from the district had their medical examinations for the 1939/45 War was shifted to its present site in Fenton Street.

#### ROYAL VISIT

A highlight during this period was the Royal Visit on 8 January 1954. A dais was set up in Broadway opposite the old Post Office. It was planned to have tiered seating along both sides of Broadway as the Stratford visit was to be the first occasion on which the Queen would walk along the Street in New Zealand and we were anxious for as many people as possible, to see the Royal couple. Seats were pre-booked. The seating contractor was late in reaching Stratford and the construction work had to proceed throughout the night.

It was an anxious time trying to ensure that the seating complied with the bookings which had already been made.

I had a disagreement concerning the presentation list which I felt should have included the Councillors and their wives.

I had carefully timed the whole procedure and was satisfied that there was ample time, and it would have kept the Royal Party in Broadway for the full period of the visit.

As it turned out, the Queen and Prince Philip had considerable waiting time before boarding the train at Regan Street, and some of the Councillors and their wives who had taken a short cut from the dais to the departure point were belatedly presented. Snake gully at its best!

The Official presentation was a photographic album of previous Royal visits. As we moved from the dais, I noticed that the Queen had left the bouquet on the table where she had signed the Visitors' Book, so I picked it up with the intention of giving it to the Lady-in-Waiting and as I walked towards her on the street she snatched it out of my hands without a thank you, no doubt embarrassed by her oversight.

An ex-naval officer, in full uniform, who later claimed to have served with Prince Philip, joined the official procession on Broadway.

The Prime Minister and the Chief of Police were

present. No-one questioned the presence of the naval officer. He was quite conspicuous in many of the photographs.

A movie film of the visit was taken by Messrs D. E. White (former Councillor), R. White, W. Kleeman and B. Moss, who also recorded a commentary.

The commentary and three copies of the film are held by the Council.

An interesting point of protocol which had to be considered was that if the Mayor was indisposed the Deputy Mayor and his wife were to take over, and the Mayoress was to be given an honoured place on the dais, the reason being that the Mayoress has no rights of her own and obtains her status by virtue of the office of the mayor.

On the morning of 25 August 1951, I received an urgent telephone request from the Mayor who was on the way back to Stratford, to prepare a reception that afternoon for a visit by the Lord Mayor of London and the Lady Mayoress, Sir Denys and Lady Lawson, and party, which included two Sheriffs of the City of London, and the Sword Bearer and 1st Esquire. It was a Saturday, but somehow we managed to provide refreshments and to make it a success.

The Visitors' Book which was started in 1921 when the Prince of Wales visited Stratford, is a fascinating record of Royal, Vice-Regal and other distinguished people who visited Stratford and recorded their signatures.

Mr Moss resigned in 1957 upon his appointment to the Local Government Commission and Mr G. J. W. Boon became Mayor.

The Council embarked on a policy of one concrete footpath in every street, upgraded the Town Hall, filtered and chlorinated the Swimming Baths.

The first Town Plan for Stratford was produced by Mr M. B. Patience. I remember an ex-Councillor saying to me that the Town Plan was a waste of time because it was 20 years too late and I remember replying that in another 20 years it would be 40 years too late. The first review also took place in Mr Boon's time.

A financial policy was adopted whereby the Council set out to save for projects by setting aside cash reserves to avoid where possible the need for loan moneys which had the effect of making projects cost considerably more in the long run, whereas cash reserves accumulated with interest.

A property was purchased at Victoria Road which provided oxidation ponds, designed by the Borough Engineer, Mr W. E. Leatham, a new rubbish dump and supply of metal, free of debt.

By special legislation, streets in Victoria Park were closed, the Celia Street rubbish dump closed and vested as "Domain", streets were closed between Romeo Street and Warwick Road so that the area bounded by Orlando-Romeo-Cordelia Streets and Warwick Road could be consolidated in Council ownership and made available for industry.

A new clock tower (designed by Mr J. Boon) and the water purification, filtration and fluoridation plant (designed by Ian Macallan & Co.), the latter with

Government subsidy, were also constructed free of debt.

Another project was to acquire land in the Stratford Extension and to close the paper roads and create that very fine subdivision comprising Oberon, Tybalt, Adrian, Ulysses, Caesar and Cassandra Streets to provide low cost sections for our citizens and the housing development to be seen today is a cause of great satisfaction.

A lot of the land was obtained from the W. Sharrock Estate, the Tocker Estate (the haunted house), and many individuals.

This again was done from reserves and the object was also to provide funds on a continuing basis to keep on providing reasonably priced sections.

There was much co-operation from Mr Arthur Lilley and the Stratford Racing Club.

Service lanes were provided on the east and west sides of Broadway from Fenton Street to Regan Street and land acquired for a service lane on the east side of Broadway from Seyton Street to Regan Street.

Development of the Civic Zone was continued with the co-operation of Mr Percy Thomson, Mr Harry Childs (site of the old Doss house) and Newton King Ltd (site of Horse Bazaar).

Prospero Place was completed. Here again Mr Patience was the designer.

In view of the activities of the Electrical Distribution Commission, the electrical undertaking was sold to the Taranaki electric-Power Board with effect 3 February 1970.

With the assets retained by the Council, this was a half-million dollar transaction and the capital funds were used to set up an endowment fund by special legislation to give the town substantial income in perpetuity to take the place of the loss of electricity profits.

If the undertaking had been retained, capital works at inflated prices, increased cost of bulk power and limitation of consumer charges could have resulted in great difficulty in making a profit.

Here mention must be made of the great contribution made to the electricity undertaking by Mr W. E. (Wilf) Burgess who spent 24 years on the Council, 22 years as Chairman of the Electricity Committee, up to the sale of the undertaking.

Mr Burgess is the grandson of Mr E. Burgess who was the last Chairman of the Town Board and who initiated and successfully obtained the change to Borough status in 1898 and who was one of the prime movers in the establishing of the Stratford Electrical Company (the third in New Zealand) and which was purchased by the Council in 1916.

Mr N. S. Macdonald was associated with Mr W. E. Burgess, as Electrical Engineer, for 20 years of this time.

Mr E. W. McCullough was Chairman of the Parks and Reserves Committee when the Council established the beautiful McCullough Dell in King Edward Park and developed the Broadway Railway reserves for the beautification of the approaches to the town, and the

walkway from Broadway to Juliet Street under the railway bridge.

Mr R. A. Bray, Park Superintendent and the staff carried out the work.

The abattoir was upgraded during these years, the first investigations made for the use of natural gas and additional land bought for the aerodrome.

The Council Receptions which are given each December to pay tribute to organisations contributing to the welfare of the Borough were commenced.

A Mayoral Report at each Ordinary Meeting of the Council was instituted to inform the Council and the public, and to record history.

The 75th Jubilee celebrations were held in 1954 and a large part of the responsibility for the organising was in the hands of Mr H. Bishop. Mr Bishop helped the town in many ways with the use of his premises for winter shows, indoor sports and patriotic purposes. He gave outstanding service on the East Committee and was Chairman for many years.

Mr L. G. Carrington became Mayor in 1971 on the retirement of Mr Boon. I served my last three and a half years with him as Mayor and many years with him as a Councillor.

He and his Council have worked hard with a progressive outlook in the interest of Stratford and have had to contend with the inflationary cycle which makes the financing of maintenance and capital works so difficult these days.

A reserve was set up for two bridges at Brecon Road over the Patea and Paetih Rivers. I consider these bridges are essential for the future development of the town.

Mr Carrington has been quite outstanding in public relations and keeping the citizens informed through 'Council Comment' in the "Stratford Press" and it would be superfluous for me to comment further.

Perhaps what is not so well known is the great social work he has been doing. Nothing is too much trouble for him and he has been unsparing in his time and services helping citizens.

I wish him and his Council every success.

I consider it a privilege to have been associated with the Borough for 46 years of the 100 years. The planning and achieving and the tangible results are a cause of much satisfaction. I was early fascinated by the Jubilee Booklet of 1928 and acquired a sense of history and this probably imbued me with the enthusiasm I have always had for the town and its people.

#### A TRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATES

I received the utmost co-operation and loyalty from all the Borough staff and was well served by my Assistant Town Clerks, Secretaries and Office staff.

Messrs B. M. Wilmshurst, G. Richardson, V. D. Moorhead, L. H. Oliver and P. G. Field were Assistant Town Clerks who left to become Town Clerks.

Another was Mr W. G. McCullough who left to go farming and I completed my service with Miss G. C. Fabish.

Other key staff included:

Borough Engineers: L. B. Davis, C. F. Marshall, Smith, W. E. Leatham, T. J. Brown, D. May.

Borough Overseers: R. Richards, C. Gatton, W. E. Charleton.

Waterworks Officers, D. McWhirter, R. Potts, F. E. Fuller.

Sextons: A. Bone, W. Sheriff, R. Parkinson, H. W. Morgan, F. K. Duffy.

Electrical Engineers: A. E. Moss, A. E. Pollock, L. Percival, N. S. Macdonald, T. Orr.

Borough Inspectors: A. E. Sayers, J. W. Richards.

Park Superintendents: E. P. Blanchard, J. Adams, R. A. Bray.

Abattoir Managers, R. Jenkins.

Swimming Baths Caretaker: A. S. Robson (First Caretaker).

Librarians: Mr Martin, Mr C. Kelly (formerly of the Stratford Evening Post), Mrs H. S. Langdon, Mrs N. S. Macdonald, Mrs N. O. Turnbull, Mrs G. E. Hutchings.

I pay tribute to all the staff. They played their essential parts as members of the Borough team.

Stratford has been very fortunate in its Mayoresses. I greatly appreciated the co-operation of Mrs Hilda Thomson, Mrs Rita Moss, Mrs Barbara Boon and Mrs Yvonne Carrington.

They contributed much to Stratford and it was a privilege to be associated with them.

One remembers too, the ladies who year after year prepared the floral tributes for the Rolls of Honour in the Hall of Remembrance for Anzac Day and the wonderful contribution of the late Dr Doris Gordon who initiated and led the development of that beautiful area which is now Windsor Park.

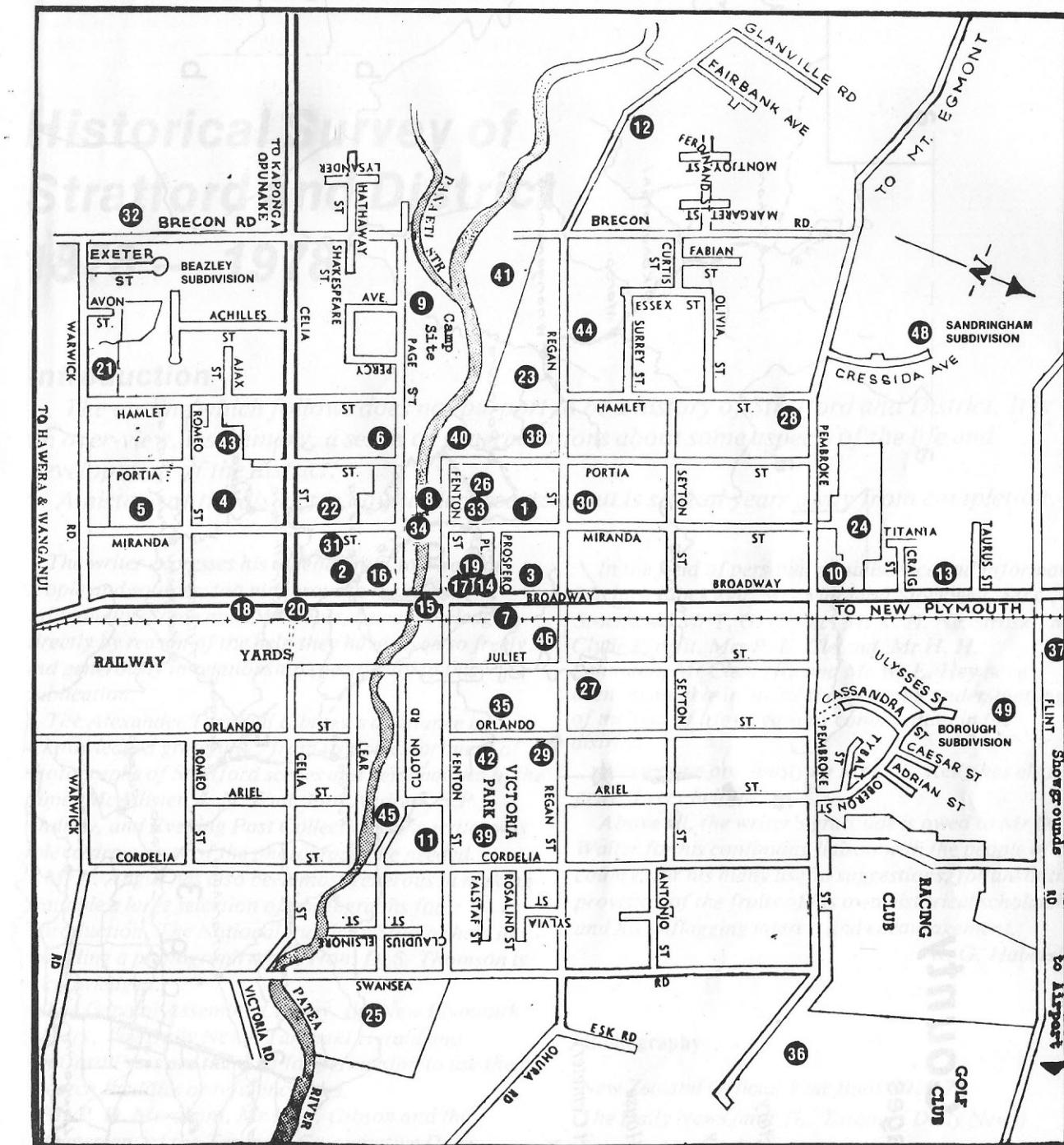
I recall happy relations with the Chairman, members and officers of the Stratford County Council, the Stratford Hospital Board, the Taranaki Electric-Power Board and other local bodies.

I look forward to the Centennial Celebrations with pride in the town and district and people.

In the spirit of our motto *Kia Pipiri* "let us cling together" and embark on the second 100 years with the same spirit and progressive outlook as was exemplified in the courage and achievements of the pioneers in 1878 and those who followed.

G. C. Grace

## Stratford Borough



#### Reference

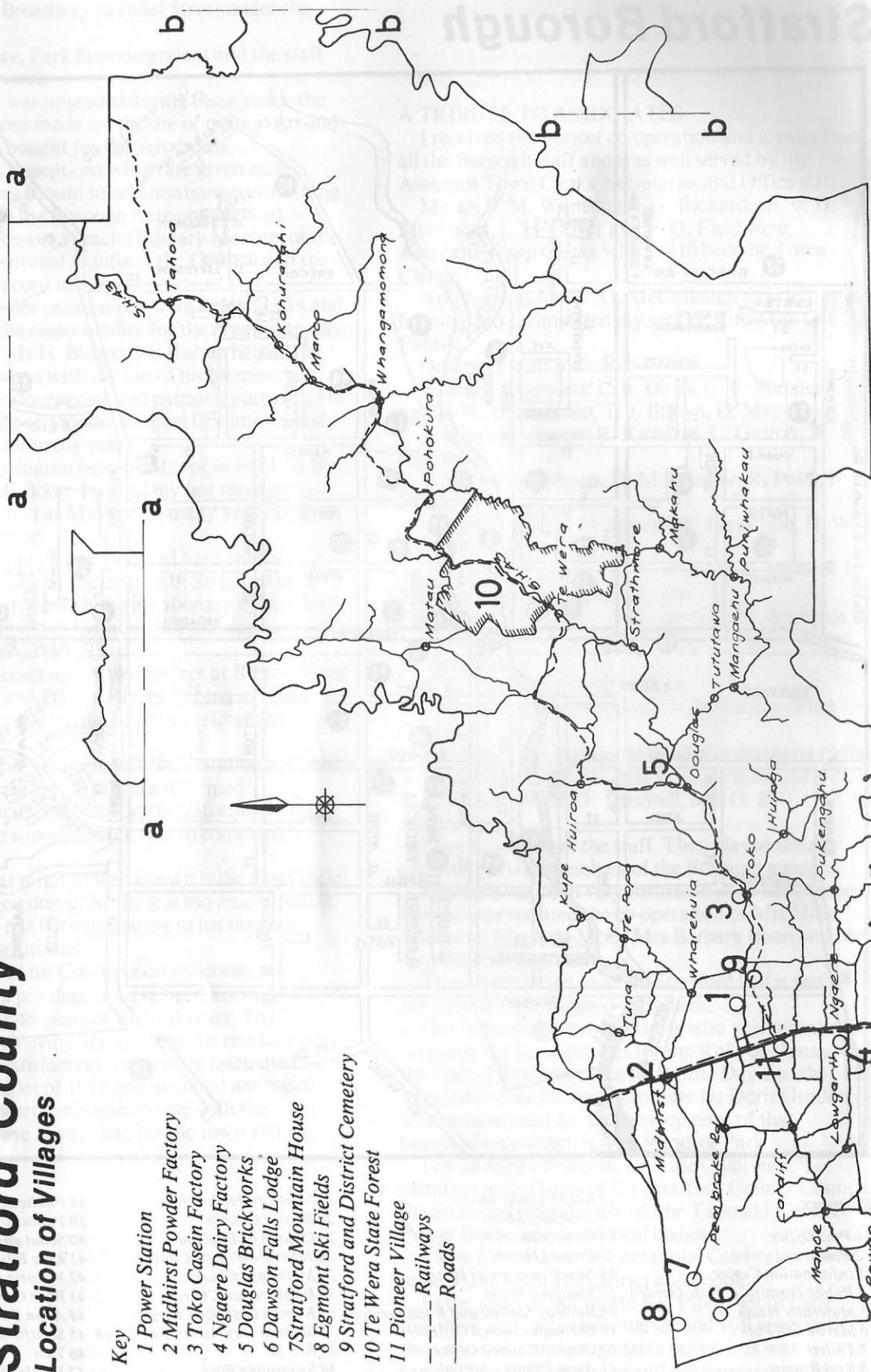
- 1 Post Office
- 2 Police
- 3 Information Centre
- 4 Public Hospital & Rose Garden
- 5 Maternity Hospital
- 6 Marire Old Folks
- 7 Toilets
- 8 Rest Rooms
- 9 Caravan and Campsite
- 10 Broadway Motel
- 11 Carlton Motel
- 12 Regan Lodge Motel
- 13 Stratford Motel
- 14 County Hotel
- 15 Empire Hotel
- 16 New Commercial Hotel
- 17 Stratford Hotel
- 18 Railway Station and Road Services
- 19 Borough Council Office
- 20 County Council Office
- 21 Avon Primary School
- 22 Convent Primary School
- 23 Stratford Primary School
- 24 St Mary's Secondary School
- 25 Stratford High School
- 26 Baptist Church
- 27 Church of England
- 28 Jehovah Witness Church
- 29 Methodist Church
- 30 Presbyterian Church
- 31 Roman Catholic Church
- 32 Seventh Day Adventist Church
- 33 R.S.A.
- 34 Swimming Pool
- 35 Squash
- 36 Golf
- 37 Showgrounds
- 38 Public Sports Grounds
- 39 Public Sports Grounds
- 40 Scout and Guide Den
- 41 King Edward Park and Dell
- 42 Victoria Park
- 43 Rose Garden
- 44 Avon Bowling Club
- 45 Stratford Bowling Club
- 46 Taxi
- 47 Beazley Subdivision
- 48 Sandringham Subdivision
- 49 Borough Subdivision

## **Stratford County**

*Location of Villages*

**Key**

- 1 Power Station
- 2 Midhurst Powder Factory
- 3 Toko Casein Factory
- 4 Ngaere Dairy Factory
- 5 Douglas Brickworks
- 6 Dawson Falls Lodge
- 7 Stratford Mountain House
- 8 Egmont Ski Fields
- 9 Stratford and District Cemetery
- 10 Te Wera State Forest
- 11 Pioneer Village
- — — Railways



# *Historical Survey of Stratford and District*

## **1878 — 1978**

## ***Introduction***

*The outline which follows does not purport to be a history of Stratford and District. It is an over-view, a summary, a series of generalisations about some aspects of the life and development of the district.*

*A history of the district is now under research, but is several years away from completion.*

*The writer expresses his indebtedness to a host of people and sources, too numerous to mention individually. Some must, however, be acknowledged directly by reason of the help they have given so freely and generously in relationship specifically to this publication.*

The Alexander Turnbull Library's assistance is acknowledged gratefully: from its rich assortment of photographs of Stratford scenes and personalities in the James McAllister, J. R. Wall, Earl Andrew, S.P. Andrew, and Evening Post Collections, the writer was able to draw most of the photographs he needed.

*Mr L. Angus has also been most generous in making available a large selection of photographs for reproduction. The National Publicity Studios help in providing a photograph of the Hon. D. S. Thomson is acknowledged.*

*The General Assembly Library, the New Plymouth Library, The Daily News, Taranaki Herald and Stratford Press are thanked for permission to use their research facilities or reference files.*

*Mr P. D. Marchant, Mr M. J. Gibson and the management of the Taranaki Co-operative Dairy Company Limited were most helpful in providing publications recording the history of local dairy companies. The permission of the latter company to quote from these publications is much appreciated.*

*Mr N. S. Smillie, Mr A. J. Jury, Miss M. J. Hutchinson, Mr D. I. West, Mr R. J. Goodall, Rev. D. G. Tonkin, Mrs Alison Robinson, Mrs Jessie Scanlon, Mr Hugh Thomson, Mrs D. W. Davis, Miss Zoe Masters and Mrs Anita Walter have very kindly made available published and written material of various kinds.*

*In the field of personal reminiscence and information Mr Jack Stockwell, Mrs Margaret Stockwell, Mr G. E. Stockwell, Mr T. G. O'Dea, Mr K. H. Neustroski, Mr Clyde Proffit, Mrs P. E. Cleland, Mr H. H. Lehmann, Mr Clem Hill and Mr W. E. Hey have been invaluable in giving the writer an understanding of the way of life of various communities in the district.*

*Work done previously by Mr C. S. Kelly has also proved very helpful.*

*Above all, the writer's gratitude is owed to Mr D. E. Walter for his continuing liaison with the people of the county, for his many useful suggestions, for unstinting provision of the fruits of his own historical scholarship, and his unflagging interest and encouragement.*

*R. G. Habershon.*

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## The First Decade 1878-1888

The development of the Stratford district was an outcome of Vogelism - the policy enunciated by Julius (later Sir Julius) Vogel, first as Colonial Treasurer in 1870 and later as Premier of New Zealand in 1873-75 and 1876. Essentially, Vogelism was a policy of vigorous land settlement, fuelled by assisted immigration and stimulated by, and stimulating, road and railroad building - and financed by overseas loans.

Development moved southwards from New Plymouth, land being surveyed ahead of the railway and blocks laid out for sale to immigrants along each side of the route that the railway would follow. The Taranaki immigrants of the 1870's came largely from the British Isles and from Germany, some of the 'German' immigrants being Poles whose country had been partitioned among Russia, Austria and Prussia in the 18th century and who had become restless under the continued indignities of alien Prussian or German rule.

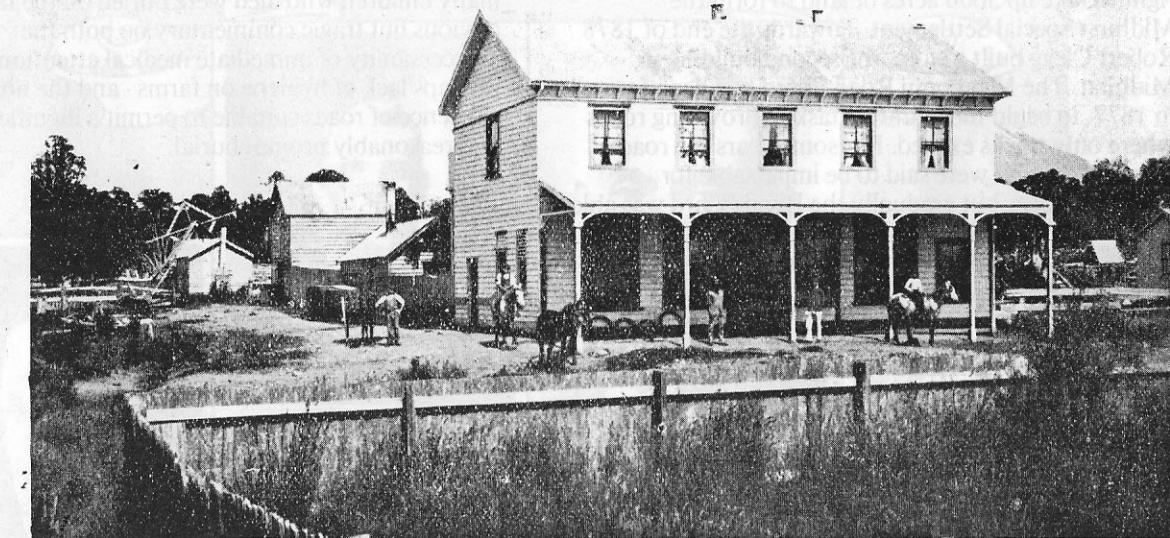
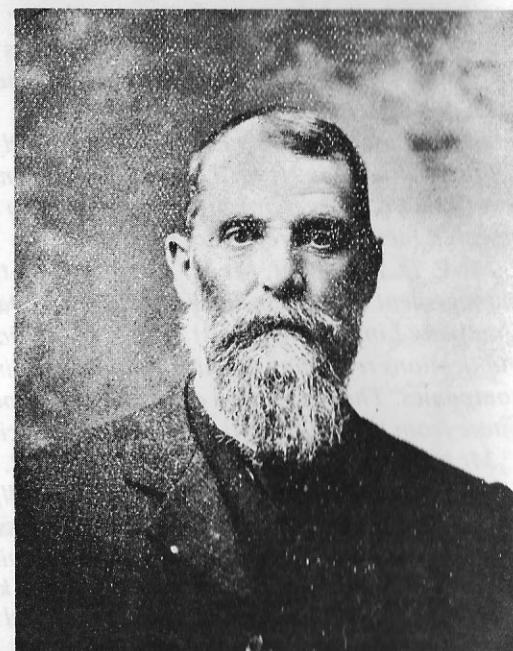
Inglewood was established in 1875. In June 1877, the Taranaki Land Board decided to survey and to subdivide for sale a block of 300 acres adjacent to the Patea River on the site of what is now the Borough of Stratford. The first sale of Stratford sections took place on 31st August 1878 : 455 sections were offered for sale by auction in New Plymouth; 40 were sold.

The process of evolution of the Stratford settlement is captured uniquely in the laconic prose of one of the pioneers of 1878, Mr Harry Woodward : "I was there before there was any Houses of any kind built in the Township (.) I went up there in June (1878) with a surveyor bye the name Mr Bird and we had to walk from Inglewood up to Stratford, I suppose some of the old identities can remember what the old Mountain Road was like in those days it use to take old Tom Partington (Partington) 4 days some times to do the trip from Inglewood to Stratford with Half a Ton and 6 Bullocks so you can imagine what it was like in those days, the two tish (Tisch) Brothers Bill and Guss had a Road side licence in a small shanty along side the Road

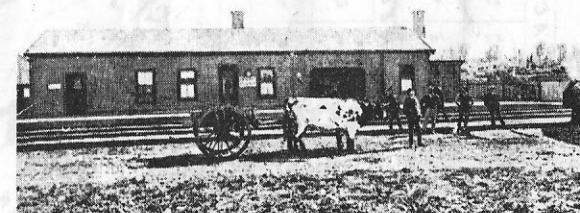
C. S. Curtis —  
one of Stratford's early  
stalwarts — member, and  
subsequent Chairman of the  
Stratford Town Board.

Just before you get to the Town site that had just had the First (300) acres Fallen and Burnt off. The Curtis Brothers (,) Charles and Hebert had a bit of Make shift Place that they put up on their own and they run a store and a Bakery also a Butchery Business and they done well and they Deserve great credit for the way they worked and the Hardships that they had to put up with (.) they Built a home made oven and turned out some good Bread and sold it at one shilling a 4 pound Loaf and done well . . ."

Mr Woodward left Stratford in January 1879, to help survey the Waimate Plains inland from Oeo, but returned later in the same year "with a Mr Claynie and we had to make a Checck Survey of the town again as the fires going through the fallen Timber made it impossible to find the pegs, in the meantime Mrsers Bill & Guss tish had Built a new Hotel not very far from partier River That runs through the Township a single storey place and Merses Charles and Hubert Curtis had Built a Two storey shop a good oven and Bake house and they had a young man Baking for them and he meet with an accident out shooting pigeons and the Gun went off accidentally and shot him in the Leg, so Mr Hebert Curtis came to me knowing that I had served my time to the trade with My father in Queen Street Auckland and he ask me to work for him so I went untill they could get a man from Auckland as there was not a man to be got in Taranaki at the time. I put in about 3 months with them and found them Grand men and good Bosses to work for. I could of stayed on with them as they did not want me to Leave. but I Like the outside work the best so they got a man and then I Left them and then I went in with a man named Jack Julian a Taranaki native he got the first contract to split (500) Sleepers for the new Railway station at Stratford and a man named Charley ford got the contract to clear the ground for it . . ."



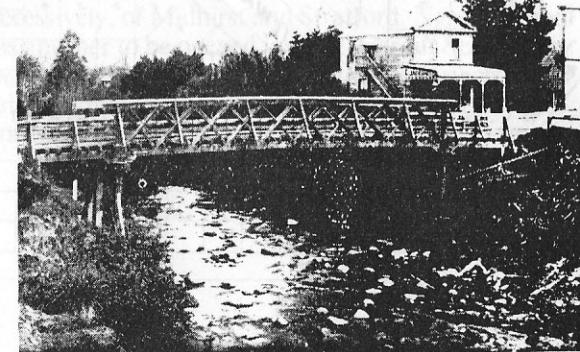
Stratford's First Store (and temporary Post Office) — built by Curtis Bros in 1878.



The Stratford Railway Station  
and Post Office 1884.

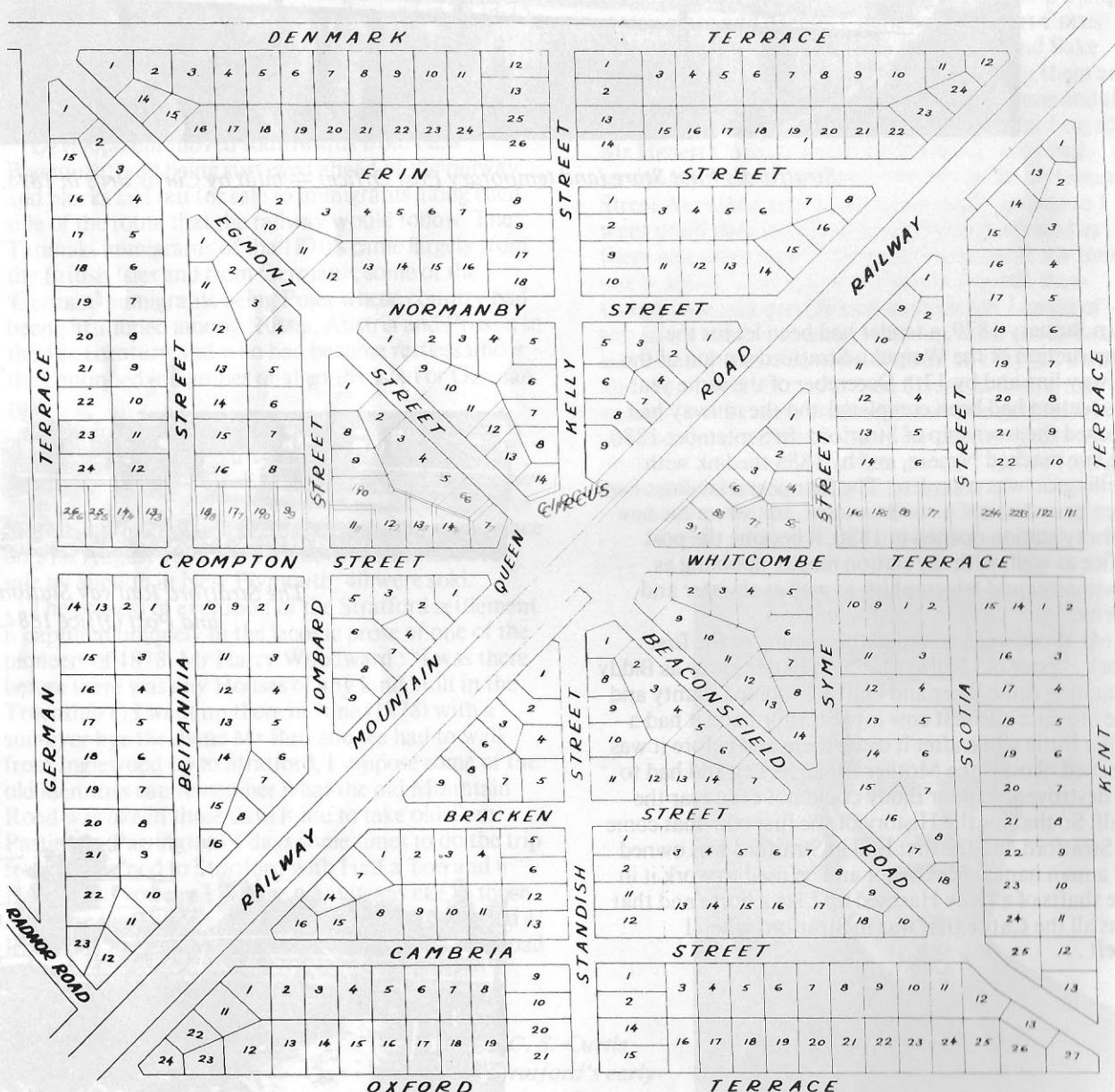
In January 1879, a tender had been let for the construction of the Waiuku-Stratford section of the railway line and by 17th December of the same year this section had been completed and the railway had reached the township of Stratford. In September 1880, the line reached Ngaere, and by 1885 the link with Wellington was complete. The first postal facilities had been provided in Curtis Bros store, but when the new railway station opened in 1880, it became the post office as well, with the station master doubling as postmaster and telegraphist, as well as shunter and porter.

Mr Woodward recorded the coming of the first stock : "poor old Nurse Manning Better know as Biddy Manning came there and built a 2 roomed shanty and she introduce the first cow into Stratford and it had a calf a Little while after it came there and before it was weened (Rosey) the Mother Broke its Leg and had to be destroyed, so poor Biddy could not even rear the Calf. So that his the History of the first cow that come to Stratford and the first Bull in Stratford was owned by a man named McGregor and he used to work it in the shafts of a Dray Harnsed up Like a horse and that was all the Cattle that was in Stratford when I Left . . ."



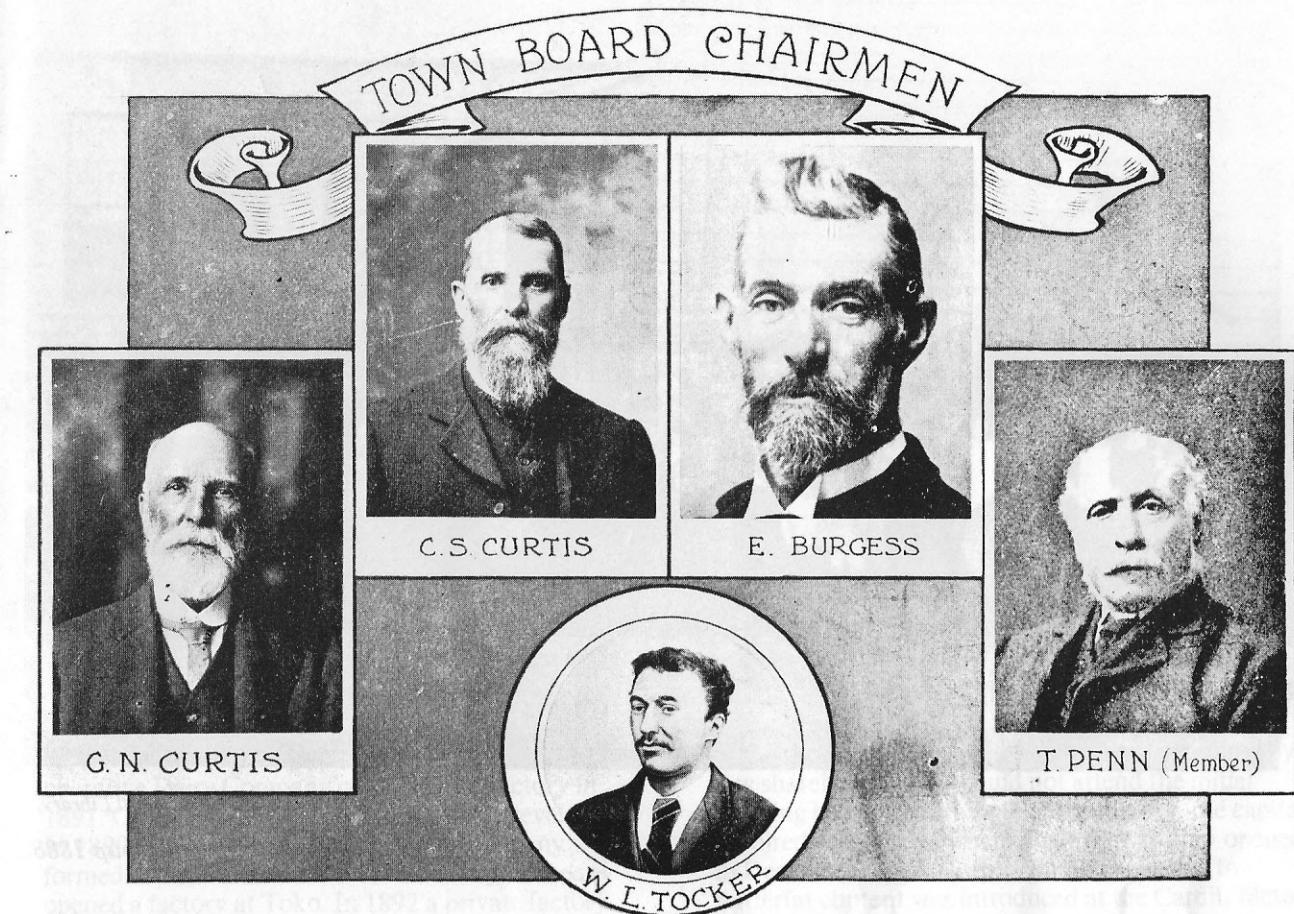
The First Bridge  
over the Patea River.

Midhirst, which was to complement Stratford for so many years, was probably the senior of the two townships - by a few months. In 1877 Mr Arthur Cracraft Fookes of New Plymouth was granted the right to take up 5000 acres of land to form the Midhirst Special Settlement. Towards the end of 1878 Robert Clegg built a store, the second building in Midhirst. The Mangonui Road Board had been formed in 1877, to begin the daunting task of providing roads where only tracks existed. For some years the roads around Midhirst were said to be impassable for wheeled traffic, but gradually the Road Board was able to raise sufficient loan money to clear, grade, drain, gravel or metal the roads around the township and northwards to the boundary of the Moa Road district.



The original Midhirst town plan.

For some years, from 1880, Midhirst provided the only cemetery in the district, the dead being brought from Waipuku in the north and Stratford and Ngaere in the south. One pioneer made the terse observation that many children who died were buried on the farms, an obvious but tragic commentary on both the inaccessibility of immediate medical attention - and perhaps lack of hygiene on farms - and the non-existence of roads suitable to permit a dignified cortège and reasonably prompt burial.



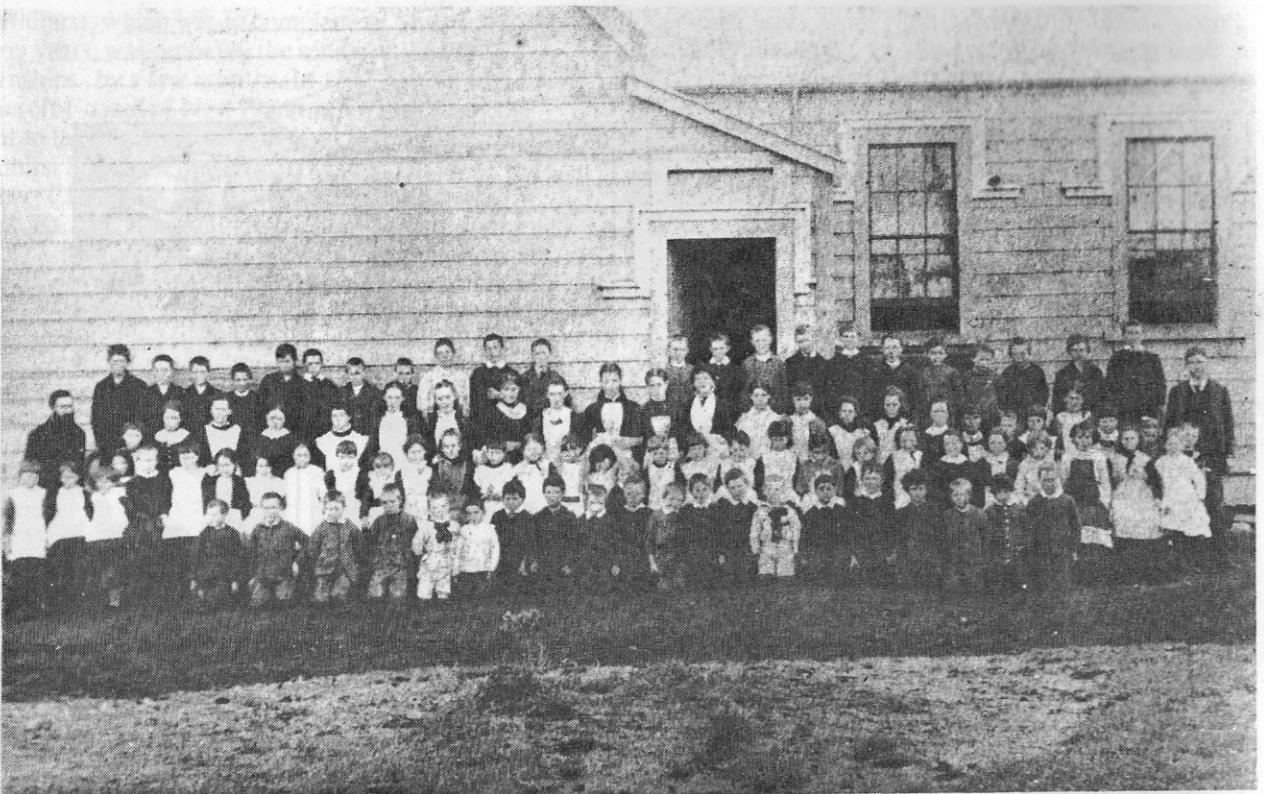
## Town Board Chairmen 1883 — 1898

(The Town Board was formally constituted on 11th January, 1883 by a proclamation issued by the Administrator, Sir James Prendergast.)

By 1882 Stratford township, with a population of about 100 and some two dozen houses had reached a size which warranted some form of local administration. A six-man Town Board was formed with G. N. Curtis as chairman, secretary and treasurer. Probably the most dramatic - and damaging - event of the 1880's was the disastrous bush fire of 1886 which swept much of the district, including the township - levelling the two-year-old Town Hall and other buildings. The fire burnt the farm-houses and out-buildings of some settlers and destroyed much of their arduously hand-sown new grass, forcing the sale - at a considerable loss - of stock which could no longer be pastured. A wry foot-note may be added that for some five successive years previously the settlers of Cardiff had not been able to get a good burn because of persistently wet weather.

The development of primary schools reflected both the growth and the family-unit nature of the pioneering population. Midhirst and Stratford soon had half-time schools operating at first in private

houses. The parents in both townships were quickly petitioning the Education Board for state schools to be built. Lack of funds was given as the reason for the Board's failure to act immediately, but the two areas received schools relatively quickly. Midhirst School was opened in 1882, Stratford in April 1882; both were controlled by the same school committee until 1886. That grey eminence among early Central Taranaki educationists, F. A. Tyrer, was head teacher, successively, of Midhirst and Stratford. Ngaere School was another to be opened in 1882. Cardiff School was opened in 1886, thus shortening the often rigorous walk to school of the then horse-less children west of Stratford.



Alexander Turnbull Library.  
Ngaere school group 1888.



*The first Factory of the Cardiff Co-operative Dairy Factory Co. Ltd., 1891.*

capital advanced by a trading bank, the Cardiff Co-operative Dairy Company completed its factory in 1891. Other co-operative companies soon developed. In 1890 a co-operative butter packing company was formed in Stratford and the Crown Dairy Company opened a factory at Toko. In 1892 a private factory was built at Midhurst - with creameries at Beaconsfield Road, Salisbury Road, Waipuku, Rugby Road, Pembroke Road and York Road. The Ngaere (Ngaere) Co-operative Dairy Company was formed in 1893. Like Cardiff, the Ngaere company was begun virtually

on borrowed capital : apart from cash contributed by a few shareholders who could not attend the initial working bee to clear the site of the factory, the capital required was raised by bank loan. The factory opened in December, 1893. In 1894 the Babcock test for butterfat content was introduced at the Cardiff factory and was soon used generally, one effect being to encourage farmers to discriminate among their cows, to cull the poorer producer and to breed from the better. When two pioneer dairy factory men, Robins and Pierard, established what was described as a

as best they could while their husbands and fathers were away earning the cash required to meet their overhead expenses. In the 1880's most Stratford farmers ran a few cows and 'milled' some butter, but the local market was limited and frequently the storekeepers would not pay cash for butter - or for grass-seed or fungus - and insisted upon a form of barter whereby goods were exchanged for farm products. The growth of refrigerated shipping and cold stores in the 1880's made possible the development of an export market for butter and cheese; the co-operative dairy company enabled small farmers whose cash capital was small, or non-existent, to combine and to pool their scanty resources to take advantage of the expanding market provided by the United Kingdom.

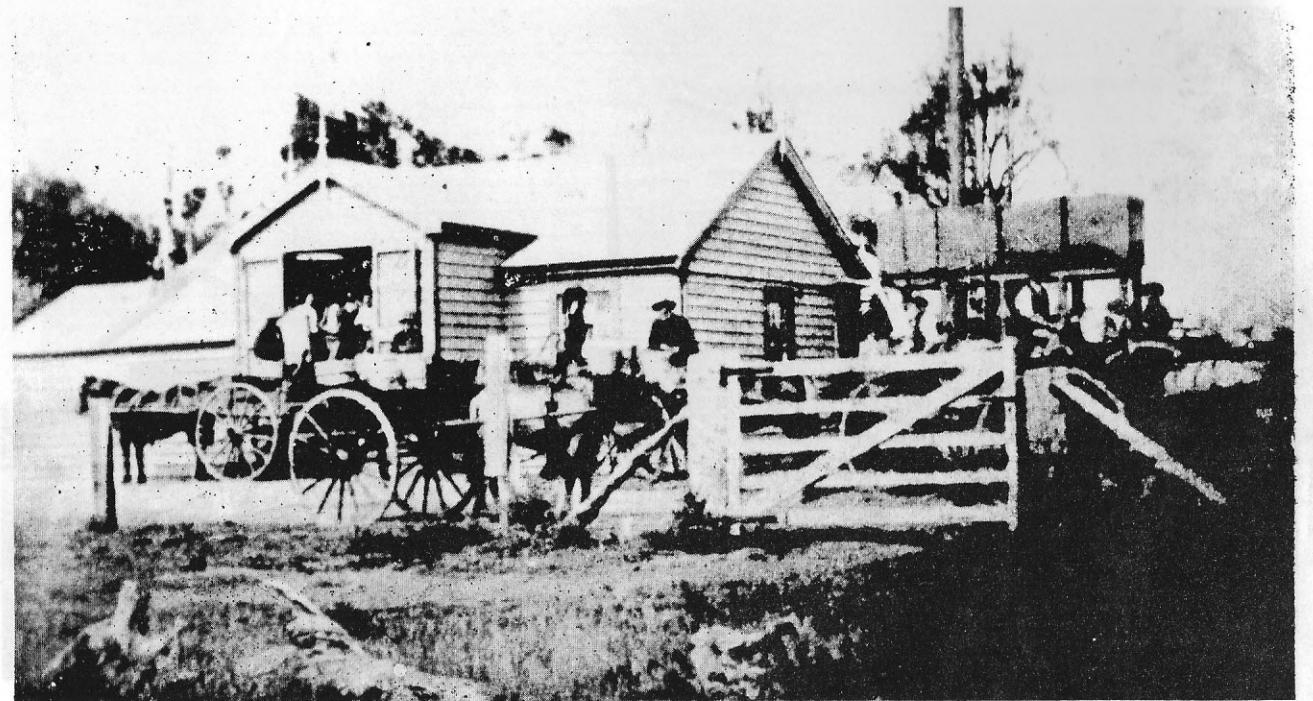
## **The Second Decade 1888-1898**

This decade was marked by the burgeoning of the dairy industry. The early settlers in most cases lacked capital. They bought their sections - usually on deferred payment - for sums like One Pound to Two Pounds per acre. To win scarce cash during the period of burning-off the bush and sowing grass, the men worked at such tasks as bush-felling, road-making, gravel-digging, and harvesting cocks-foot grass and fungus, the latter being sold to Chinese merchants, the best known of whom was the remarkable Chew Chong. The women and children worked on the land

In 1887 Chew Chong had opened the Jubilee dairy factory in Eltham and manufactured factory butter soon proved more easily marketable than 'milled' farm butter. From 1888, the Crown Dairy Company (in which Newton King was a principal figure) either took over co-operative companies in difficulties or built its own factories and thus encouraged the growth of dairy farming. The first co-operative company to be founded by Stratford district settlers appears to have developed from the Cardiff Butter Packing Company (1888). Butter was delivered to the factory in an unsalted, granular state, processed into more marketable form, packed into kegs and exported. From packing butter, the Cardiff farmers turned to cheese. On borrowed



*An early  
factory at Ngaere, 1892.  
This factory closed  
after the opening of  
the Ngaere Co-operative  
Dairy Factory.  
McAllister Collection  
Alexander Turnbull Library.*



*The original factory of the Ngaire Co-operative Dairy Factory Company Limited, 1893.*

'modern' factory in Cloton Road in 1894, the Stratford butter packing company went out of existence. In late 1894 the Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association took over from Robbins and Pierard - and re-built the factory after it was burned down in 1898. In 1895 the Midhirst Co-operative Dairy Company took over the Honnor and Crockett factory and creameries in Midhirst and district. Creameries were opened subsequently at Te Popo, Waingongoro and Tariki Road. The Lowgarth Co-operative Dairy Company was formed in 1897 and the Crown Dairy Company opened a factory at Huiakama in 1898.

Milking was done by hand and tended to involve from an early age - every able-bodied member of the

family. The creamery or the factory was the daily social centre of the dairy farmer : milk was transported in cans carried on a horse-drawn dray.

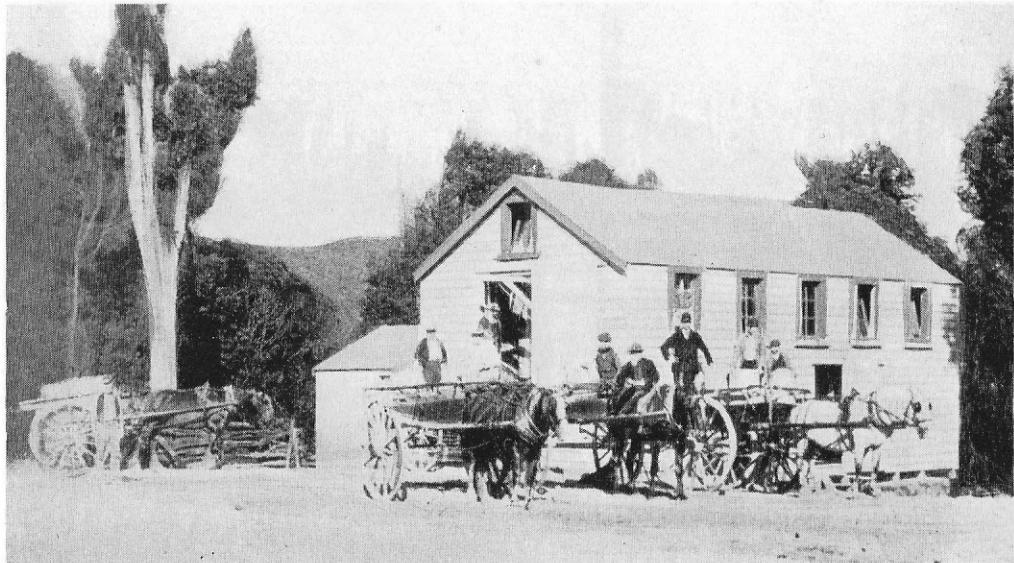
The proliferation of creameries or branch factories on so many roads in the Stratford district was necessary to avoid undue journeys by farmers. While waiting in line to unload, the farmers exchanged news, views and gossip.

In 1890 the total value of dairy produce exported from New Zealand was Two Hundred and Eight Thousand Pounds; in 1900 it was almost One Million Pounds - and the Stratford district took part in this surge of production for export.

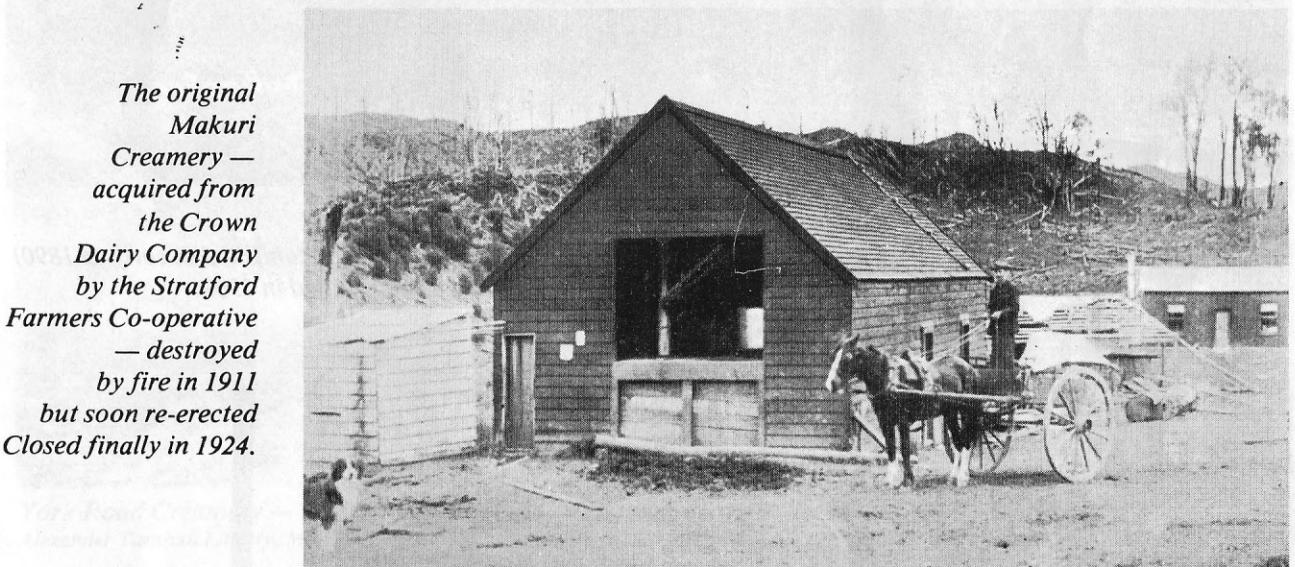


*The Crown Dairy Company's Douglas Creamery c. 1900 — acquired by the Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association Limited in 1902 — later replaced by the Douglas Branch cheese factory on the present site near the railway line. This factory was itself closed in 1958.*

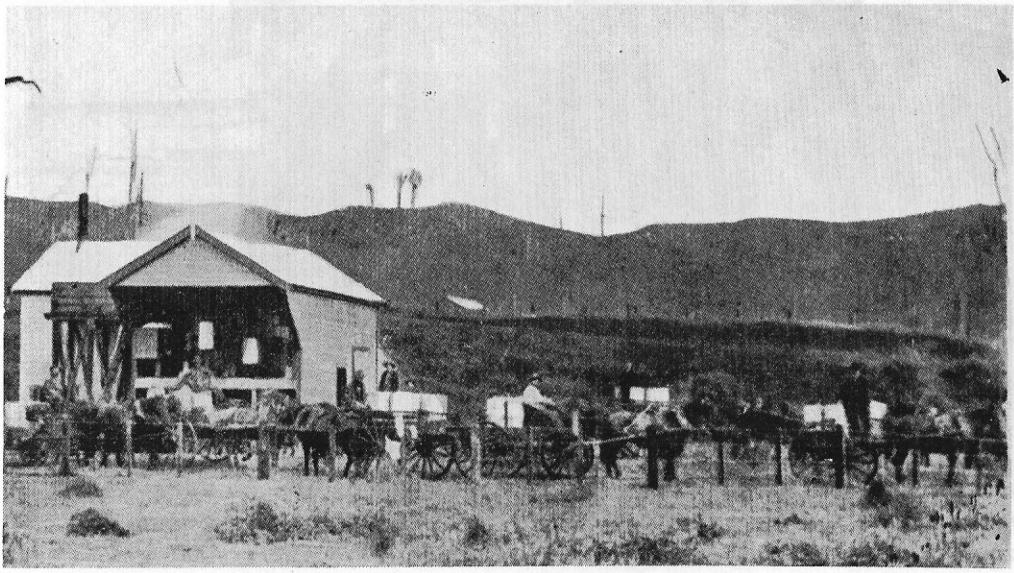
*Alexander Turnbull Library  
McAllister Collection.*



*The Huiakama Creamery — acquired from the Crown Dairy Company by the Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association in 1911 and sold to Mr H. B. Kidd in 1919.*



*The original Makuri Creamery — acquired from the Crown Dairy Company by the Stratford Farmers Co-operative — destroyed by fire in 1911 but soon re-erected Closed finally in 1924.*

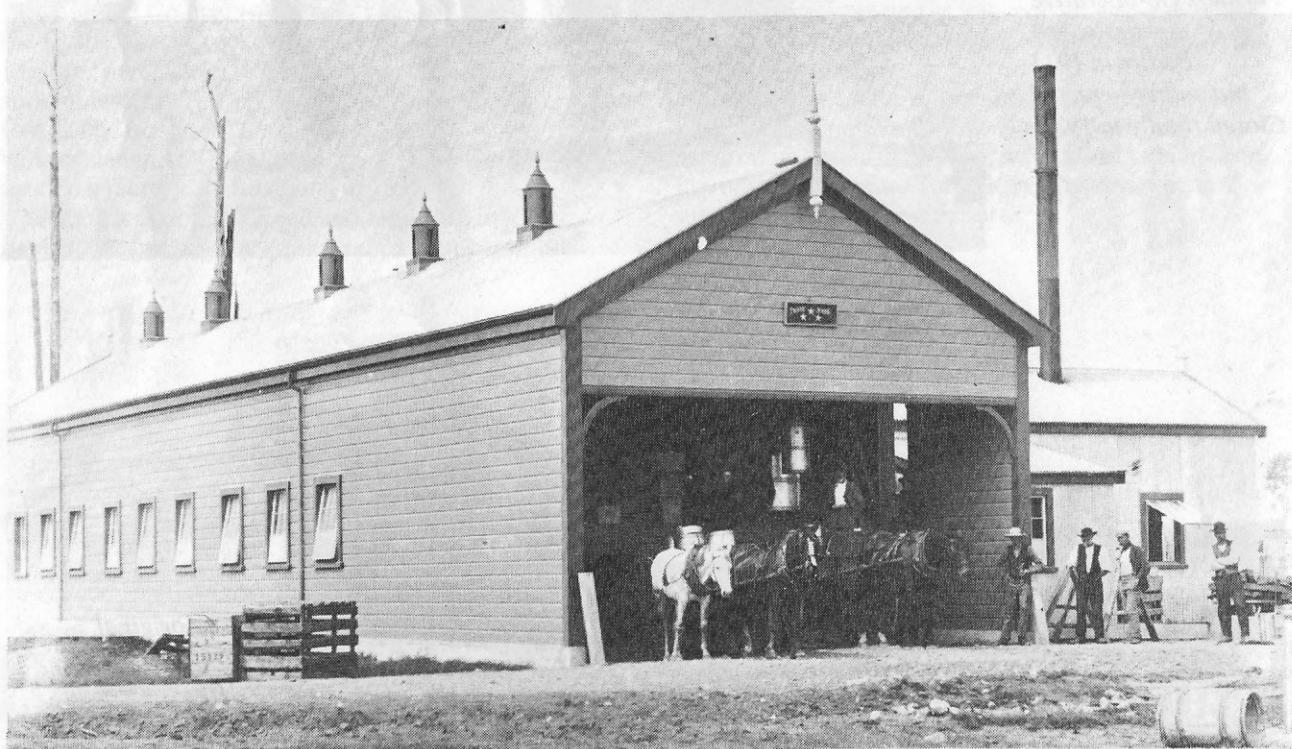


*The original Huinga Creamery — also acquired from the Crown Dairy Company by the Stratford Co-operative.*



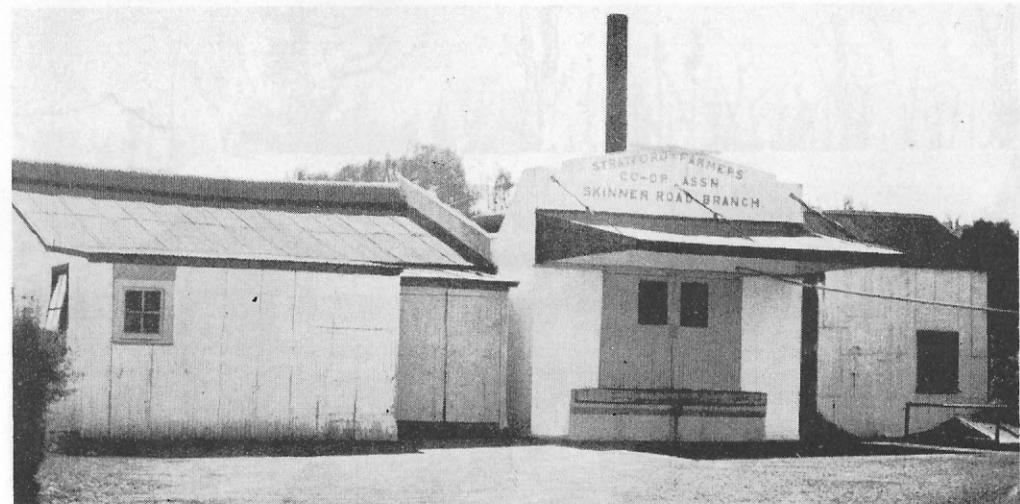
Alexander Turnbull Library, McAllister Collection.

*The Toko Butter Factory of the Crown Dairy Company c. 1902 (said to have been established as early as 1890) — taken over by Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association Limited in 1902.*



Alexander Turnbull Library, McAllister Collection.

*The Cloton Road Dairy Factory (c. 1904) which replaced the original Robbins and Pierard factory, taken over by the Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association in 1894 but destroyed by fire in 1898. This factory, added to subsequently, was damaged by fire in 1929 and replaced by a new factory in 1930.*



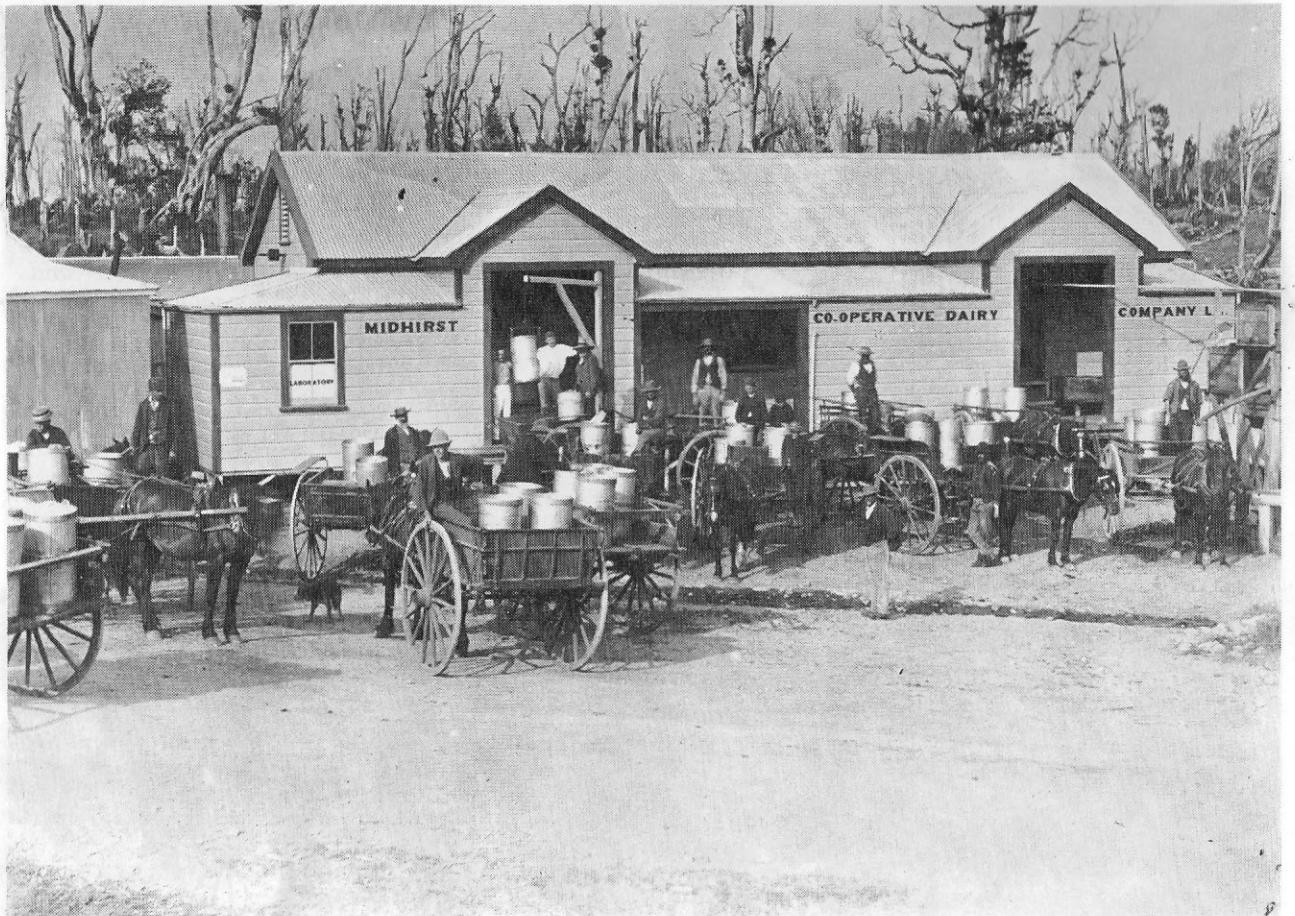
*Skinner Road Branch of Stratford Farmers Co-operative Association Original creamery building constructed in 1899 but destroyed by fire in 1902 — and replaced by structure shown.*



*York Road Creamery — one of the early Midhirst Co-operative Dairy Company creameries.*  
Alexander Turnbull Library, McAllister Collection.



*Salisbury Road Creamery — another of the early Midhirst Co-operative Dairy Company creameries.*  
Alexander Turnbull Library, McAllister Collection.



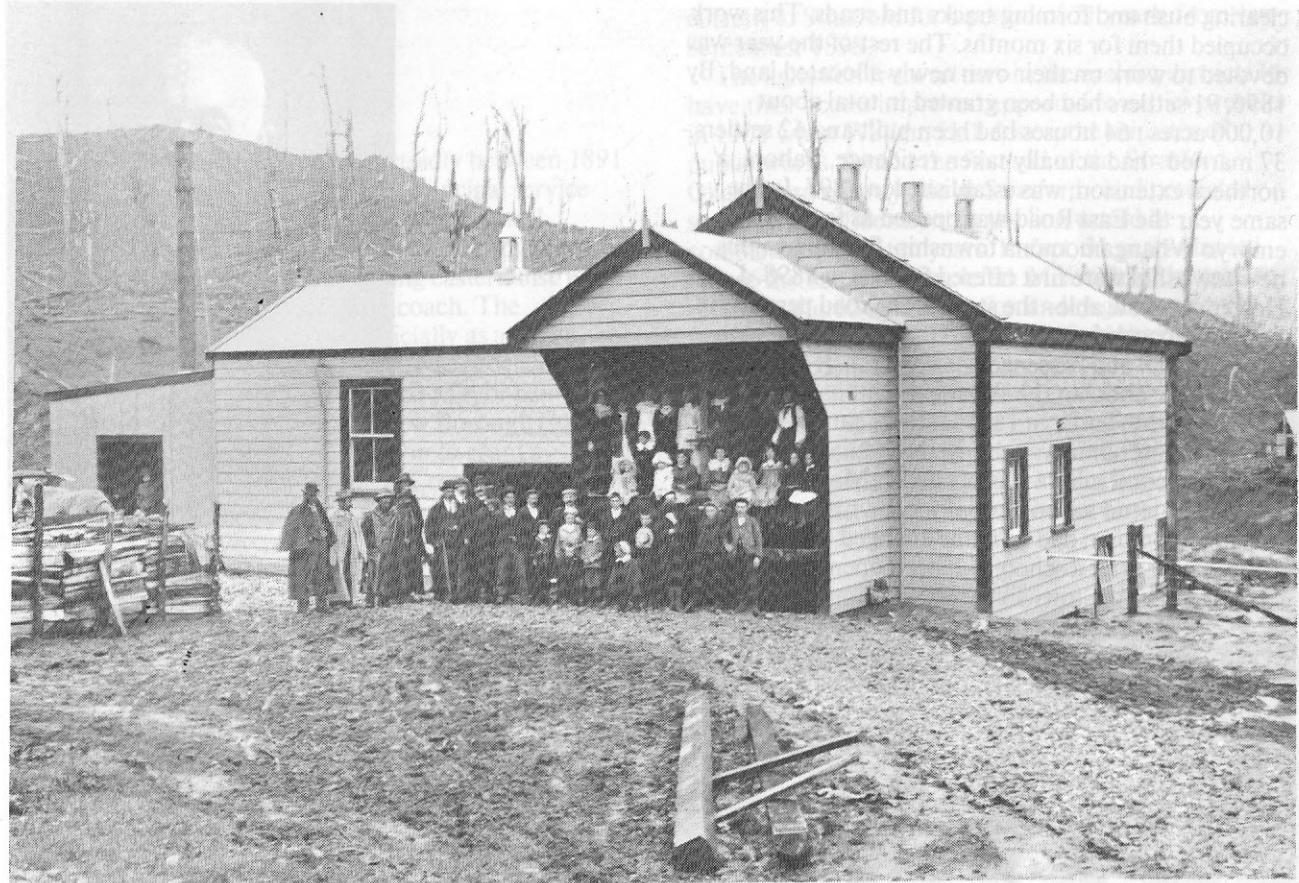
Alexander  
Turnbull  
Library —  
McAllister  
Collection.

*The Butter Factory of the Midhirst Co-operative Dairy Factory Company Limited as it looked in 1900 — then situated south of the Te Popo stream.*



*The Stanley Road  
Creamery of the  
Midhirst Co-operative  
Dairy Company c. 1908.*

Alexander Turnbull Library,  
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Alexander Turnbull Library, McAllister Collection.

*The Tututawa Co-operative Dairy Factory (c. 1908).*

The spread of settlement outward from the townships soon demanded some form of rural administration to co-ordinate roading and bridging in response to the needs and agitation of settlers. In 1890 the Stratford County Council was formed, with W. Monkhouse as chairman. The new Council absorbed the Ngaere Road Board in 1892, and part of the area of the Mangonui Road Board in 1895.

In the early 1880's the rolling plain area bounded by Waipuku, Cardiff, Ngaere and the hills to the east had been the land most easily burnt off and developed. In the late 1880's the thrust of surveying and land development was turned towards the progressively more difficult country east of the Kahouri Stream. Captain Charles Finnerty for a time had five parties under his direction surveying the eastern districts. By 1890 the Toko area had been sufficiently settled and developed to warrant the Crown Dairy Company opening its branch at Toko and in 1892-93 following the formation of the East Road through the township-to-be, a store and the Toko School were opened. The surveyors came first, and settlement soon followed. The East Road tended to lag behind. By 1894, Finnerty and L. C. Sladden had progressed to a point at the foot of the Whangamomona Saddle.

The Liberal governments of John Ballance, 1891-93, and R. J. Seddon, 1893-1906, had resuscitated land settlement as a remedy for the malaise of economic

depression which had hung over New Zealand during the 1880's and whose blighting effects had been a principal reason for the defeat of the government of Sir Harry Atkinson in 1891. John Mackenzie, as the Liberal minister of lands, became closely identified with this policy of land settlement, whose first fruits in Taranaki were the Milsom and Tanner Special Settlements begun in the Matau Valley in 1891. The Makahu district was balloted for as early as 1892 under a settlement scheme - sometimes called the Gatton Settlement - begun by the Ballance government among landless would-be settlers of the Palmerston North district. The first settlers under this scheme arrived in the district in 1896.

The Pohokura or Ross Settlement was begun in 1894, the same year as the road was formed to the top of the Pohokura Saddle. Strathmore, a private venture begun in 1895 was the first township to be opened in the Whangamomona district. It became the first stop for a change of horses on the coach service between Stratford and the east.

As part of the Seddon-Mackenzie extension of land settlement - hopefully as a means of diminishing unemployment, the Whangamomona Improved Farm Settlement scheme was established in 1894. The first settlers, most without capital, arrived in the district in 1895. To enable them to earn money, the settlers were employed on state-financed projects : felling and