

On the motion of Commissioner Hayward seconded by Commissioner Duckworth, Mr C. L. Wiggins was elected chairman of the Board; Commissioner Wheeler was elected treasurer, and a Mr Tolan was asked to become the first clerk.

A committee to draft by-laws was formed consisting of Commissioner Wiggins, Wheeler and Graham. Thus began local government in Sumner. (Mr Wiggins was the father of our respected townsman Mr H. L. Wiggins of Head Street). As will be seen from the foregoing, five Commissioners formed the Town Board. They were to hold office until the day of the next election.

Commissioner Hayward resigned in February, 1884, and Commissioner Duckworth died in March, 1884. A Mr Cambridge succeeded Mr Hayward, and Mr Appleby (who had witnessed most of the signatures to the petition praying for the establishment of the Town Board) filled the vacancy caused by the death of Mr Duckworth, and as thus constituted, the Board remained in office until September, 1884, the statutory month in each two years for the election of Town Board members. Mr Wiggins held office as chairman from March, 1883, to September, 1884, and from that date until June, 1891. Mr Wheeler occupied the chair, Mr A. Tolan was clerk from March, 1883, until November of that year. He was succeeded by a Mr Watson who resigned in December, 1888. Mr C. E. Wiggins was clerk until 30th September, 1890, when he was followed by Mr Crawford.

"BY THEIR WORKS SHALL YE KNOW THEM"

Hard to the plough their hands they put
And where so ever the soil had need
The furrows drave: and under foot
They sowed themselves as seed.

During the period the Sumner Town Board was in existence, much in the way of preliminary foundation work was accomplished, despite many real difficulties, and lack of funds with which to carry on the work.

An evidence of this may be seen in the records of the meeting held on 18th May, 1883, when the treasurer reported "That he had failed to make arrangements to form an overdraft with the manager of the Colonial Bank, but the chairman had advanced £25 with which an account had been opened with the Bank of Australasia, enabling accounts amounting to £13/10/6 to be paid."

Although the Board held its first meeting on the 20th March, 1883, requests and complaints made their appearance in a very short time.

The question of straightening and cleaning the outfall creek from the Valley area caused quite a long discussion on the 20th April, as did also the matter of sand-drifts. Owners of land abutting on the creek were invited to contribute to the cost of widening and straightening same. At the same meeting, the first written complaint was received, a Mr S. Smith complaining that a flock of geese was of great annoyance to him.

The clerk was instructed to write to the owner. Various questions in connection with the creek cropped up from time to time, such as the overflowing of same; a nuisance being created by the house drainage led into it, and the necessity for an outfall thereto.

Finally, at the last meeting but one of the Board held in May, 1891, Commissioners Tait, Kitson and Gilchrist were appointed a sub-committee to go into the matter of plans for the proposed drain at the south-east end of Nayland Street.

It is perhaps interesting to note that after a lapse of 50 years, the names "Tait" and "Kitson" are still prominent in local body work; Mr J. E. Tait being Mayor of Sumner, and Mr H. Kitson, Chairman of the Christchurch Domains Board, and a councillor of the Waimairi County Council. They are also chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the Christchurch Suburban Local Bodies' Association.

THE ESPLANADE

On the 18th May, 1883, Mr Appleby asked permission "to take clay from the Board's Reserve for the purpose of forming an esplanade in front of his sections." The request was granted and on 15th June, 1883, Mr Crawford was authorised to set out the levels. Prior to this, the Heathcote Road Board had formed a portion of the road. On the 14th of December of the same year, the Board informed Mr Appleby that it would proceed to find the balance required for the work under "The Roads and Bridges Construction Act" when he forwards a guarantee from the owners of the property abutting on the Esplanade that they would find two-thirds of the cost, subject to same not exceeding £16 per chain." The job was evidently completed on 25th September, 1885, because on that date a Mr S. L. Bell's offer of £4 per annum to keep the Esplanade and Morton Street in front of his property clear of sand was accepted.

FIRST RATE STRUCK

On the 15th of June, 1883, the first rate of 3d. in the £ was struck under the provisions of "The Rating Act 1882." The rate was for the period ending on the 31st December, 1883, and was payable in one sum on the 16th of July, 1883. At the next meeting, 29th June, it was reported that insufficient notice had been given of the intention to strike the rate, and the whole matter had to be gone over again on 16th July.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Road maintenance was evidently done by contract in those days, for at the meeting held on the 29th of June, 1883, a Mr W. Lawson's tender "to keep the roads in repair" was accepted. His son and daughter, Mr C. A. Lawson and Mrs E. T. Chitty, still reside in Sumner.