

APPENDIX IV.

REPORT OF RESIDENT OFFICER, TOWN OF ROTORUA.

Sir,—

Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, Rotorua, 23rd June, 1909.

I have the honour to report on the municipal administration of the Town of Rotorua for the year ending 31st March, 1909, as follows:—

The revenue of the town for the last nine years has been:—

	£		£
1901	1,164	1906	4,107
1902	2,236	1907	3,963
1903	3,620	1908	5,150
1904	3,975	1909	4,756
1905	4,447		

The expenditure for the same period was:—

	£		£
1901	904	1906	4,500
1902	1,802	1907	4,128
1903	3,707	1908	5,833
1904	3,708	1909	4,249
1905	4,447		

The expenditure on public works during the past year shows a great reduction—namely, £2,538, as compared with £4,240 for the previous year, and an average of £3,460 for the previous five years—that is, £922 below the average. This smaller sum has been expended carefully and judiciously, in order to obtain the very best results from the funds available after providing for paying off the overdraft.

The works carried out are divisible generally into two classes—namely, permanent improvements and maintenance works. Under the former heading £1,104 has been spent, the major portion of which, in a borough with fuller powers, would probably be met by a loan raised for the purpose. These permanent improvements have all been directed towards giving increased public convenience, and at the same time reducing the future maintenance cost of the town.

PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS—STREETS AND ROADS.

Concrete kerbing has been laid in Hinemoa Street (14 chains), Fenton Street (5 chains), and Tryon Street, Whakarewarewa (3 chains), effecting marked improvements in each case.

The work of grading and metalling the Whaka Road was carried on to an important stage, and now meets all the present requirements of the traffic on this road. A considerable amount still remains to be done in order to complete this work, but the completion can now wait without inconvenience until funds are available, after other pressing improvements have been carried out. Tryon Street, from the Geyser Bridge, Whakarewarewa (12 chains), has been metalled with a heavy ballast foundation, and is now, even in midwinter, in first-class condition. The permanent formation of these two roads, over which all the tourist traffic to Whakarewarewa and Waimangu has to pass, constitutes a most important improvement, and removes what was the only serious cause of complaint as to the condition of the roads of the town.

Lower Tutanekai Street, for a length of 6 chains, forming the approach to the wharf, has been permanently metalled on a ballast foundation, and asphalted. Hinemoa Street, from Hinemaru Street to the Pavilion gates (7 chains), has been similarly treated. These two sections will now carry the traffic for several years without any expenditure for maintenance. Upper Arawa Street, which has been very rough hitherto, was formed and metalled with pumice, and is now in good condition.

For these street and road improvements the following material has been used: 582 cubic yards of Te Kuiti limestone and screenings, costing, with freight and cartage, 10s. 6d. per cubic yard; 1,008 cubic yards of local Puarenga stone, costing 4s. 9d. per cubic yard delivered; and about 4,000 cubic yards of pumice gravel, costing from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per cubic yard.

The question of storm-water drainage is a pressing one in Rotorua, owing to the flat nature of the ground and the consequent flooding of the side channels after any considerable downpour. Owing to the absence of any powers to raise a loan for the purpose, the matter cannot be dwelt with in any comprehensive manner at present; but the culverts at the heaviest points of flooding have been enlarged and improved during the year in such a way that no serious inconvenience is now suffered.

The swamp-area between Ranolf Street and the railway-line has been further improved during the year by the excavation of a drain through its centre on the line of Hinemoa Street. This drain has an average depth of 6 ft. for a length of 32 chains, and will constitute a main drain for the whole area as the drainage scheme is developed. It has already dried the swamp so far that building operations can now be carried out in any portion of the area.

Tree-planting was pushed on energetically during the winter, and the following were planted, namely: 250 willows, 180 acacias, 130 Oriental planes, and 50 oaks, elms, &c. These were distributed largely in the outer suburban areas, and will constitute a pleasing improvement in the appearance of the streets. Eighty tree-guards have been made and fixed, but, as they are comparatively expensive, only the most valuable trees can be protected in this way. Unfortunately many drivers are very careless, and the destruction of a considerable number of trees has resulted from their vehicles being driven over them.