

"Look at Iceland," he said. "They've tapped their hot springs and given Reykjavik central heating—on tap." His idea isn't just hot air, either. The new civic buildings—Council rooms, offices, library, concert chamber, and theatre—are all heated in this way. The Mayor showed us the bore they had sunk, steaming hot pool attached. It provides hot mineral water at something over boiling-point to heat natural water which is pumped throughout the building.

This, the Mayor argued, was possible for the rest of Rotorua. The deeper you go the hotter the water and the greater the pressure. In Rotorua the bores are 350 ft. deep. In parts of Italy they go down many hundred feet. But here it's something of a gamble. Rotorua is the one place in the world where alkaline and acid springs are found together, and it's just the luck of the toss which you strike. If you strike acid, then you can buy a new section for your drill. It's strong enough to eat through almost anything. Even the alkaline water needs special pipes. Zinc is used. In the early days some one tried to solve the problem with wooden pipes, but illogically bound them with steel wire. When the water corroded the wire you didn't have to go down to Whaka to see geysers—they played in the main street.

And if you want to watch that newly painted roof stay green you've got to use a zinc-based paint. A lead paint turns black in no time. If, in the early days of motor-cars, the steam passed over your white bus during the night, you'd find it piebald in the morning.

The housewife who wants to save a lot of elbow grease has her silver chromium-plated. The tiles in the bath-houses now have a leadless glaze. The minerals in the water soon eat into enamel.

And talking of bathhouses, Rotorua is well equipped with opportunities to take the waters. Varieties of aches and pains bring thousands to the spas that have been built in the Government Gardens beside the lake. Here the gouty can stew in a soup of acids and chlorides and nitrates and then hobble out to watch with envy more fortunate (or wiser) men

splashing about in the Blue Bath, rolling them up on the bowling green, galloping about the tennis courts, or correcting that slice on the nearby golf links. The idea is to encourage the invalid to slip the surly bonds of arthritis by reminding him of what he is missing. It seems a little like rubbing salt in the wound.

But sometimes it works. Physical wrecks have been playing tennis after a week's immersions. On the other hand, one man soaked in the brew for eighteen years and then gave up. Perhaps for him a vital element was missing from the list of analysed contents outside each bath.

One of the most famous rheumatism baths—the Priest's Bath—got its name from an old Irish priest who during last century, set out to walk from Tauranga to Auckland to get treatment for rheumatism. At Rotorua he became so crippled that he could go no farther, but he discovered this hot spring and cured himself in a couple of days by bathing in it. And the cures have been going on ever since.

The Mayor has other suggestions for using the supposedly limitless supplies of hot water beneath his feet. "What about kiln drying timber? We have thousands of acres of urgently needed exotics at our back door. And our own electricity supply? We have the power in our back gardens if we like to dig for it." It sounded like a rate-payers' dream. But most interesting was a rehabilitation suggestion. "Let's use the hot water to heat glass houses and grow tomatoes and grapes and other luxury fruits out of season. The frosts won't trouble us then. There's a man in the town doing it already." When you think of the work and expense that goes into heating glasshouses for early tomatoes in places like frosty Blenheim, and the good prices the fruit bring, you agree that the idea has something to it. That's if there isn't a catch somewhere.

"But," said the Mayor, "indiscriminate digging is not to be encouraged." We agreed. We had seen a Maori blocking off a road at Ohinemutu that morning and the steam rose from the post-holes when they were only 6 in. deep. But