

we didn't know that when the sexton goes to dig a grave he takes another man with him—just in case the grave is prematurely occupied. There is a chance that he might strike a well of gas that contains a fair portion of carbon monoxide. A whiff or two will put you out, to come round wondering what has happened. One after-effect (from too much) is temporary blindness. It can, of course, kill.

The Mayor told us a story from his own experience. He was doing some excavating, and the chap who was carting the spoil away in a barrow didn't come back from one trip. The Mayor found him quietly asleep beside a load. "And he was neither tired nor tiddley."

Despite these dangers lurking underneath the potato crop some of the citizens have braved the depths and the taps in their bathrooms read "Hot, Cold, Mineral."

Originally Rotorua was indeed a tourist town. It was controlled by the Tourist Department until 1923 when the local Borough Council was formed. The Department still has two nominees on the Council. The late start has been a headache for the Councillors, who say that they had to give the town a complete set of civic amenities in twenty years. No small job, when you've got the difficulties of a thermal area to handle. Rates are consequently high.

"Why," they complain, "hasn't Rotorua as a community cashed in on the tourist traffic?" Everyone else has. One of the town's most successful business men was on his "beam ends" when he arrived. He is now retired. But, with easy money for civic improvements within reach, the town has so far missed its chance. Scenic resorts in other parts of the world charge tourists a toll and put the money back into the town to the ultimate benefit of the tourists. "It's not our fault," they say. "We have suggested a 10 per cent. levy on all hotel bills as an amusement tax, but official approval has been lacking. And yet we are authorized to levy our own citizens to pay for the amusement of tourists."

Their case sounds well—for Rotorua. Half a million people a year spend a lot of money, and a small levy would mean an

adequate income for new accommodation houses and public works. Apart from the Government Gardens, Rotorua is not so well off scenically. The lakes are Nature's work. The town itself, though pleasant enough, is not a beauty spot.

"Why," the citizens ask, "do they cut down and prune the trees?"

"Because," the Council replies, "they grow too fast and interfere with the overhead wires."

A pity. Rotorua, boiling hot in the summer, needs the shade as well as the beauty of trees.

And what would this somewhat non-descript little town depend on for its existence if it were not for the thermal areas beauty spots, and sporting facilities so plentiful and so handy? It wouldn't starve. In the last twenty years farming has been developed on lands around Rotorua to such an extent that the town could probably now exist as the centre of a farming community without the income from tourist traffic. This swing to dependence on primary industry has been assisted by the work of the Native Department in bringing into production thousands of acres of undeveloped Native land in the vicinity. So well have these Native land development schemes worked out that, in one product alone—family meat—they have been Rotorua's sole suppliers for the last few years. They were able, also, to supply sufficient for thousands of soldiers in nearby camps.

And though the Borough Council is disturbed by the rapid growth of trees in Rotorua, the State Forest Service is not. An area of about 10,000 acres of exotics, mostly *Pinus insignis*, was planted behind Whaka some thirty years ago. Now milling has begun. As these are perpetual forests, the benefit of the new industry will be a lasting one for Rotorua and the 500 people employed in this area and at the Waipa Mill, a couple of miles out on the Taupo Road. The mill is the most modern in New Zealand and supplies large quantities of box-wood and crating. But when the forests at Waioapu are opened up, as they soon will be, a mill three times the size of that at Waipa will be needed.