

LOSS TO PROFESSION

AN APPRECIATION

WELL-KNOWN DOCTORS

SUDDEN SEIZURE

DEATHS AT NEW PLYMOUTH

DEATH OF DR. WALKER

DR. H. B. LEATHAM'S LONG CAREER

FORMER SUPERINTENDENT OF HOSPITAL

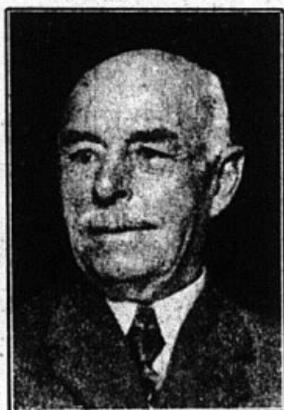
WIDE SPORTING INTERESTS

Two of Taranaki's best known doctors, Dr. H. B. Leatham and Dr. E. A. Walker, died within a few hours of each other yesterday. Dr. Leatham, who was 82 years of age, had been ill for some time, and his death was not unexpected. Dr. Walker had a seizure when doing consultation work in his surgery last evening and died almost immediately. He was 68 years of age.

Dr. Leatham was the oldest practitioner in Taranaki and gave 54 years of professional service to the district. Dr. Walker had been in practice in New Plymouth for 44 years. The death of these two prominent practitioners is a great loss to the medical profession and to the community in which they were so well known and highly esteemed.

BORN IN NEW PLYMOUTH.

Dr. Leatham was the eldest son of the late Mr. H. W. Leatham, who came to Taranaki in the ship Joseph Fletcher in 1852. Mr. Leatham took up land on Frankley Road, and it was there that Dr. Leatham was born in 1837. His mother was a daughter of John Newland.



The late Dr. H. B. Leatham.

who was one of the original settlers of the district, arriving at New Plymouth by the Amelia Thompson in 1841.

When a boy Dr. Leatham attended Mr. Crompton's school, and numbered among his schoolmates the late Sir Truby King. It was during this time that the Maori wars broke out and Dr. Leatham accompanied his mother and other early settlers to Nelson, where they remained till the wars ended.

GRADUATED IN LONDON.

In 1868 Dr. Leatham travelled to England with the late Sir Harry Atkinson and his family. After some years at schools in Yorkshire and in London he qualified in 1874 his medical course at St. Thomas' Hospital, London. He qualified five years later at the age of 22 and was appointed ship's doctor to the Wanganui, which was bringing out 250 immigrants.

On returning to New Zealand Dr. Leatham commenced practice at New Plymouth, and soon afterward married the youngest daughter of Judge C. E. Rawson, a well-known district court judge, who died when on a visit to England some years ago.

From the time he commenced practice at New Plymouth Dr. Leatham acted as consultant and honorary assistant to the late Dr. O'Carroll, the hospital surgeon and superintendent. Five years later Dr. Leatham and Mr. Murray Gibbs were officially appointed honorary surgeons on the New Plymouth hospital staff and in 1895 Dr. Leatham was appointed assistant to Dr. O'Carroll.

When Dr. O'Carroll was appointed medical superintendent of the hospital in 1896 Dr. Leatham was appointed surgeon. Two years later Dr. O'Carroll's health broke down and Dr. Leatham was appointed medical superintendent with Dr. E. A. Walker as his assistant. Dr. Leatham retained this position until 1910, when he retired and Dr. Walker succeeded him.

WORK AS RADIOLOGIST.

After resigning his position as medical superintendent Dr. Leatham continued at the hospital as radiologist—then a new study. Gradually hospital duties took more and more of his time and Dr. E. F. Fookes succeeded him in private practice. During the war Dr. Leatham stepped beyond the bounds of his department and assisted in the general routine of the hospital, in particular doing anaesthetic work. He retained his appointment as radiologist until September, 1933, when he retired after having completed 54 years of continuous service at the hospital. Since then he has lived in retirement at New Plymouth.

Dr. Leatham's retirement from the hospital staff was made the occasion of many tributes to his professional zeal and ability and to his fine character as a colleague and citizen. A former Taranaki practitioner, Dr. T. H. A. Vallentine, who was for many years professional head of the Health Department, spoke of Dr. Leatham as having been the mentor of the various younger practitioners who came to Taranaki 30 to 40 years ago. The present Director-General of Health, Dr. M. H. Watt, also paid tribute to Dr. Leatham's professional skill and his public spirit.

A FINE ATHLETE.

In his youth Dr. Leatham was a fine athlete. At his school he was in the first football and cricket teams, and at St. Thomas' Hospital he was captain of the fifteen. He was one of the founders of the New Plymouth Lawn Tennis Club and was also an early member of the New Plymouth Bowling Club. He loved a horse, and before he introduced the motor-car to New Plymouth in 1903 his horses were well known in the town and district, and many miles were covered in both day and night journeys over a wide area by means of the horse. He did a small amount of racing and owned Mutiny, which after he had been sold

Dr. Walker's death was unexpectedly sudden. He was in his normal health throughout the day and it was while he was attending to a patient in his surgery last night that he collapsed with a fatal heart attack. Dr. G. E. Walker, his only son, who was in an adjoining room, reached his father's side within seconds, but he died almost immediately.

Next to Dr. Leatham, Dr. Walker had been practising in New Plymouth longer than any other surviving surgeon. After passing second in his year with first-class honours at the Glasgow University and gaining experience at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, he came to New Plymouth about 1895 to become a partner with Dr. W. W. Christie. When Dr. Christie returned to Scotland some years later Dr. Walker took over the practice.

HOSPITAL SERVICE.

Much of the credit for the high reputation for efficiency held by the New Plymouth Hospital must go to Dr. Walker. It was in 1898 that he became officially associated with the institution as assistant to Dr. Leatham, medical superintendent. In 1910 he succeeded Dr. Leatham and, with various doctors as assistant superintendents, was the chief medical administrator of the hospital until 1926. In that year Dr. Walker and Dr. George Home, who had been appointed, assistant superintendent in 1920, both resigned. The institution had grown so large that it was decided it required the attention of a full-time medical superintendent instead of doctors who had to spare time for it from their private practices. Mr. J. Maxwell Clarke, now of Auckland, was appointed the first resident superintendent.

For a number of years until 1929 the late Dr. D. Blackley was in partnership with Dr. Walker in New Plymouth.

WAR AND EPIDEMIC WORK.

It was perhaps during the period of the Great War that Dr. Walker performed his greatest service for the town and district. With many of the doctors attached to the forces overseas there was a shortage of medical men, so that in addition to heavier calls on his time in private practice his duties at the hospital became increasingly strenuous. Although all the doctors of the town were called upon to help with hospital operative work, on Dr. Walker fell the increasingly onerous duties of administration and other tasks that came within the special sphere of the superintendent. The worries and strain of those strenuous, anxious times were probably contributing factors to a serious illness about 1917.

This was followed by an equally strenuous period of work throughout the 1918 influenza epidemic in which Dr. Walker gave outstanding service to the community. He not only organised the medical and nursing side of the emergency work, but performed professional services throughout the period of a most arduous nature. He remained at his work even



The late Dr. E. A. Walker.

though his own health was not what it should have been for such a task and there are many persons who owe much to him for his untiring efforts in connection with that scourge.

SPORTING INTERESTS.

As a student Dr. Walker was a keen athlete and when he arrived at New Plymouth he retained an active interest in several kinds of sport. As a foundation member of the New Plymouth Golf Club he was the first senior champion in 1903. For many years as president of the club he had retained a close association with the game and it was only yesterday afternoon that he confirmed the arrangement of many years' standing to present the trophies at the closing day to-day. As a mark of respect to Dr. Walker the club postponed the event.

Golf was, however, only one of many sports in which Dr. Walker was connected. Cricket and swimming were his chief summer interests and he was patron of the New Plymouth Cricket Club for many years. In winter as patron of the Tuke's Football Club he was a keen follower of Rugby, Boxing and Association football were other athletic activities

by Dr. Leatham became a great steeplechaser and won two Grand Nationals.

He was also a great lover of music and had a very sincere appreciation of all that is best in that art. In the days when gramophone music was a popular form of private entertainment he frequently entertained his personal friends and many others whose interest in music he appreciated and endeavoured to encourage. He possessed one of the finest private gramophone record libraries in the country and knew a great deal about the works recorded and their composers. He took a keen interest in the work of musical societies in New Plymouth and was a vice-president of the New Plymouth Choral Society from the time of its formation right up to his death.

Dr. Leatham is survived by his three daughters, Mrs. P. T. Pritchard (Dannevirke), Mrs. Trevor Simpson (Auckland), and Miss Constance Leatham (New Plymouth), to whom the sympathy of a very wide circle of friends all over the Dominion will be extended in their bereavement.

Two of our most highly esteemed citizens have passed into their long rest on the same day—Friday, Nov 17. Notable men, and both outstanding medical practitioners, who served New Plymouth town and surrounding districts capably, faithfully and conscientiously for very many years—Dr. Leatham since 1880, Dr. Walker since 1897. They saw New Plymouth grow from a small coastal town to its present extent of nearly four miles of sea front.

In those earlier days when distances were long and travelling hard and tedious, they carried healing and comfort into households up and down the coast and into the backblocks that were often accessible only on horseback. In the town and in the hospital they attended to the medical and surgical requirements of the people with untiring care and more than ordinary skill according to the state of medical knowledge and equipment at the time. The older generation will have grateful and affectionate memories of them.

They both took active, helpful and sometimes leading interests in the development and growth of our various sports and other activities. Dr. Leatham was especially associated with the New Plymouth Tennis Club as a one time active player and as its president from the beginning, an office which he fulfilled for upwards of 20 years, afterwards continuing as its patron. He will be remembered also as the motoring pioneer of New Plymouth. The first car to run in the town was his little Oldsmobile, steered by a tiller handle—and in it every run was an adventure.

Dr. Walker, besides being an early playing member of the tennis club, gave active and financial support to cricket and football. He was also a notable swimmer but his outstanding contribution to the games of the community was his work and influence in founding, instructing, and fathering the Ngamotu Golf Club, which he was champion in its early days. Subsequent physical disabilities gradually closed his active career as a player, but his knowledge of the game and continued interest in it in addition to the qualities of his personality established him as president of the golf club as long as he lived.

Dr. Leatham in his professional work showed a great aptitude for acquiring knowledge of recent methods, and in his less vigorous later years of medical and surgical activity he made himself intimately acquainted with the theory, technique and mechanics of radiology, being one of the pioneers of the Dominion in this newer department of medical service. His advice on technical matters was much sought after and freely given to the X-ray departments of other and larger hospitals.

As radiologist to the New Plymouth Hospital he worked with unremitting industry and skill. He kept himself abreast with all new developments and was of inestimable help to his medical colleagues whenever they sought his special assistance.

Dr. Leatham and Dr. Walker were men of instinctively kindly and helpful disposition. They fully merited the gratitude and high esteem of the community to which they devoted their life-work.

GEORGE HOME.

WORK FOR HOSPITAL

ACKNOWLEDGED BY CHAIRMAN

The severe loss to the medical profession of Taranaki through the deaths yesterday of Dr. H. B. Leatham and Dr. E. A. Walker was referred to by Mr. P. E. Stainton, chairman of the Taranaki Hospital Board. Their work at the hospital would always remain a monument to them, he said.

The passing of two such well-known personalities removed two of the best-known and most highly respected men in hospital work in Taranaki, Mr. Stainton said. The wonderful service each of them had given over a period of many years in the New Plymouth Hospital as medical superintendent, and in the case of Dr. Leatham also as radiologist, would always remain as the foundation stones on which the institution had grown and developed in the standard of the care for the sick and suffering.

"The news of their deaths will be learned with profound regret," continued Mr. Stainton, "and to their relatives the heartfelt sympathy of a grateful community will be extended. The knowledge that the lives of the doctors have greatly enriched this community particularly will, it is hoped, be a source of comfort to their relatives."

MODERATOR DESIGNATE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

REV. G. H. JUPP ELECTED

Per Press Association.

CHRISTCHURCH, This Day.

The Rev. G. H. Jupp, of Anderson's Bay, Dunedin, was unanimously elected Moderator Designate of the New Zealand Presbyterian Church at to-day's session of the General Assembly. His induction was fixed for Palmerston North on November 12, 1940.

that owed much to Dr. Walker's liberal support and advice. When a student in Glasgow he took a prominent part as a boxer, swimmer and Soccer player. He was a member of the Queen's Park Reserves, a well-known Glasgow amateur Soccer team.

EVERYDAY SWIMMER.

Dr. Walker was well-known at New Plymouth as an all-the-year-round swimmer. For more than 15 years, except when illness or absence from the province prevented him, he never missed his morning bath at Ngamotu beach in the winter and the baths in the summer. Even yesterday morning he had his swim.

Dr. Walker was not only interested in music but was a musician of no mean attainments. He was quite an efficient organist and on the occasion of the opening of Whitley Memorial Church he played the organ when a large choir gave a performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah." He encouraged all musical enterprise and was president of the New Plymouth Choral Society from its inception in 1921 up till the present time and a generous supporter of its work.

When he arrived first in New Plymouth Dr. Walker was unmarried, but he brought out his sister, the late Mrs. R. W. D. Robertson, to keep house for him. In 1904 he returned to Scotland and was married after being capped M.D. with honours. Three other visits to Great Britain were made by Dr. Walker. On the last occasion, in 1929 while his son was at Cambridge University, he broke his left leg. That leg was to make him a temporary invalid again years later, in 1937, when it was again fractured as a result of a fall while Dr. Walker was visiting Australia for the final cricket test with England.

Dr. Walker is survived by his widow, a son, Dr. G. E. Walker, who is practising at New Plymouth, and a daughter, Mrs. George Griffiths, Kenya.