MATTLAND DISTRICT

From Our Special Representatives.

*Cessnock Herald Branch Office: High-street, West Maitland.

CESSNOCK SHIRE COUNCIL.

The regular meeting of the Cessnock Shire Council was held at the shire office, here yesterday. There were present: Councillor W. Morgan (President), and Councillors Batlle, McIvor, and Edwards. An apology was received for the absence of Councillor McMenite.

The finance committee's report recommended for payment accounts amounting to £241 15s. 10d., including maintenance on roads to £36; advances on contracts, £1,945; Gehring and Cornish, £48; R. Morrison, £16 18s. 6d.; J. Murray, £25; C. Cartwright, £16.

President referred to the necessity for the appointment of a qualified sanitary inspector, and any fault found with the present officer. If they held a meeting of the Board of Health, and that officer would devote the whole of his time to sanitary work. The present officer was also a medical clerk, and spent half of his time doing clerical work in the office. Dr. Taylor had urged upon him the desirability of the appointment of a qualified officer in the interest of public health. The members deferred to the matter for consideration to a full meeting. The council clerk submitted a summary of the amount of rates collected up to December 12, 1211, as follows: Collected in 1210, £103 5s. 6d.; current rates, £202 18s. 6d.; total, £305 5s. 6d. Collected in 1211, up to December 11, £196 12s. 6d.; total, £404 8s. 6d.; total, £601 6s. 6d. At the end of December, 1211 , there was £129 19s. 6d. outstanding. The assessment on the township was assessed, but it must be borne in mind that a 1½d. rate was struck last year. Furthermore, it would be seen that out of £202 18s. 6d. that was contributed last year, they had already collected £196 12s. 6d. in this year. The President of the council stated that these rates were collected within a short period, and he saw no reason why it should not be done in Cessnock Shire. No time would now be lost in taking action against those in arrears. Council decided to leave the matter in the hands of the finance committee.

The much-discussed arrangements in connection with the collection of sanitary fees, and the keeping of accounts, were again before the meeting. Mr. Cartwright moved by resolution recommending certain alterations in the present proceeding. It was decided to defer further consideration of the matter for another month, in order to give the present system a fair trial.

A deputation from the Street Improvement Association, consisting of Messrs. A. R. Wood, J. R. P. Gough, H. Sternbach, and A. Biggers, walked on the council in reference to Cessnock Shire Council which proposed to increase the rates. Mr. Wood said the progress committee had done a good deal, and the job should be finished. Councillors might assist them by paying the rates received by the Water Board for the street watering. The condition of the streets was a credit to the town. Mr. R. P. Gough had mentioned that the council could acquire the power to expend money in the interests of the people. Messrs. Biggers suspended the collection of sanitary rates in the streets, and asked that the council should be asked to do so in the interests of the people. The President of the council stated that the council would not have to expend the large amount of money in sanitary rates, because they had already done a great deal. If they were doing all they could do, there were other towns in the shire which would claim the same right. Councillors understood the committee to acquire the powers required to strike a special rate. If the council could do all he could to assist them. Councillor Batlle explained the causes which would have to be adopted to acquire those powers. The council would not be able to expend the money. Mr. Gough pointed out that the council had passed the by-law on street watering, because the committee would very soon draw that by-law. Mr. Gough thought the council might be in some way wrong in the matter. Mr. Sternbach was in a very bad state. In dry weather they had fine days, and in wet weather there was slush which caused a great deal of trouble. There was no provision for the collection of sanitary rates, and it was their intention to petition for a special rate to be struck. If they thought the council should advance the £2 required, and repay it from money received from the sale of water.

At this stage Councillor Batlle suggested that those present should subscribe the £2, and he started with a donation. Others followed, and the greater part of the £2 was subscribed.

The discussions was continued in a conversational fashion, and it was finally arranged that the progress association should present a petition, asking for the powers necessary to strike a special rate for street watering. A high-minded and generous.

A WORTHY CITIZEN:

Councillor John McDonald, who is about to leave the Pokolbin district, to settle in the western district of New South Wales, has recently been elected a member of the Pokolbin Shire Council. Mr. McDonald has, during his term of office, displayed the highest qualities of a public servant. He has been a member of the council for several years, and his sincere desire to assist in the development of the district has been well known. He has been a strong advocate for the improvement of the district, and his efforts have been directed to the advancement of the public welfare. His integrity and fairness have been the hallmark of his conduct as a public servant. Mr. McDonald has always been ready to listen to the views of others, and his ability to reconcile differences and promote harmony has been a valuable asset to the council. He has been a strong supporter of the government, and his policy has been to work in harmony with the administration. His contributions to the council have been invaluable, and his services will be greatly missed. His departure from the district will be a loss to the Pokolbin Shire Council, but his influence will continue to be felt in the district. A loyal public servant, a man of integrity, and a worthy citizen, Mr. McDonald's contributions to the district have been truly remarkable.