

INNISFAIL SHIRE CLERK W. E. PUNCHARD PASSES

AWAY IN HOSPITAL

THE death occurred early this morning at the Innisfail Hospital of Shire Clerk Wilfred Ernest Punchard, and with his demise a prominent public citizen of Innisfail has been removed.

The funeral cortege will leave at 11 o'clock to-morrow morning from East Innisfail Methodist Church.

The late Mr. Punchard spent his early days in Cairns, being a member of a well-known and respected family in that city. He subsequently joined the office staff of the Cairns City Council and worked his way to an important post with that local authority, serving under City Clerk, A. Wilkinson.

Fifteen years ago the Johnstone Shire Council called applications for the position of Shire Clerk at Innisfail, and that of Mr. Punchard was successful.

At that time the Shire Council headquarters were located at Innisfail Memorial School of Arts owing to the shire building and hall having been destroyed by fire. The big civic structure which now serves Innisfail was officially opened on July 1, 1938, by the then Chairman, Cr. S. K. Page.

Mr. Punchard, who had done much in the meantime towards reorganisation of staff matters, moved with the staff into the big ornate building which has since housed the Shire executive.

Improved office systems were introduced, and the staff enlarged to cope with the increasing volume of work which presented itself.

WIDE KNOWLEDGE OF AREA

Mr. Punchard soon acquired a wide and extensive knowledge of the big area over which the Johnstone Shire Council has jurisdiction, and during his term as Shire Clerk made visits to outlying parts of the Shire on official business.

The duties of his official position made severe demands on his physical frame but he gave the Council yeoman service.

Late meetings of the local authority and of committees were the rule rather than the exception for a long time, and, although Mr. Punchard often found himself going home in the early hours of the morning, he would return to the office at the customary opening

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hour that day and be at the service of ratepayers and others who called.

Some time ago internal illness overtook him and he went south for medical treatment. Subsequently he returned but later on had to go away again to see the doctors and received further attention.

He recently came back to Innisfail, but on arrival home was obliged to enter the Innisfail Hospital, where he passed away.

PLAYED BOWLS

The late Mr. Punchard, when he did find time to have a little recreation, indulged in bowls, and he entered into that game with much zest.

He will be greatly missed from the local green, also by members of other bowling clubs in the Far North which places he occasionally visited with teams from Innisfail. He was a thorough sportsman, and possessed a happy disposition whether winning or losing.

Although the call of duty did not permit his taking part in many other organisations he gave strong moral support to any move for the advancement and betterment of the town.

FOUGHT FOR AIR SERVICE

When the air service ceased calling at Innisfail some time ago, Mr. Punchard, as Shire Clerk, conducted a vigorous and forceful correspondence with those controlling plane itineraries, also with Federal Government, and presented unassailable arguments why Innisfail should be again included in the places of call so as to obviate local people having to travel elsewhere before they could board a plane.

Although the service here has so far not been resumed, the correspondence by the late Mr. Punchard remains a standard in the civic

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INTERESTED IN BOXING

The late Mr. Punchard also took

an interest in boxing, and although his physical frame did not permit his entering the ring at Innisfail he possessed a very keen knowledge of the noble art and often gave useful advice to young boxers.

For a long time deceased acted as secretary for the North Queensland Local Authorities Association, which body, after its formation, met at Innisfail quarterly.

Latterly, however, it has been meeting in other centres throughout the province. The immense file of correspondence which the Association possesses bears witness to the long and patient labors of

the late Mr. Punchard in the interest of that body, the members of which greatly appreciated his services.

HIGH STANDARD IN WORK

The Johnstone Shire Council has lost a clerk who was most capable in his work and who possessed a wide knowledge of the Local Authorities Act. He has left behind a high standard for his successor to follow.

The late Mr. Punchard, who was 47 years of age, leaves a wife, son and daughter, at Innisfail, and three sisters and a brother in Cairns to mourn a sad loss.