

BRITISH MARKET IS STILL VITAL

By RICHARD HARMAN, Agricultural Reporter, The Dominion, who recently toured New Zealand's meat export markets on the Dalgety Agricultural Scholarship.

Britain remains New Zealand's largest lamb market.

In spite of the creditable programme of diversification away from the U.K. that has been pursued by the industry and the Meat Board, over 60 per cent of New Zealand's lamb exports still head in the same direction they have been taking for the past 94 years.

It is New Zealand's continuing absolute dominance of the imported lamb trade there that first strikes a visitor looking at the British meat industry.

And it is that dominance, I believe, which tempts observers and those in the trade into a feeling of complacency about the trade.

There are challenges to the lamb trade at present coming from several different directions.

First from political quarters is the quite definite fact that sooner or later lamb imports into Britain will be controlled by a European Economic Community Common Sheepmeats' Regulation.

I spent a day with the Meat Board's advertising consultants viewing television advertisements, trying out test recipes, talking to marketing officers who seemed to know more about British shopping habits than I had imagined anybody would want to know.

The message that came through from this visit was that our promotion at present is geared to improving the "quality" image of lamb.

In the jargon of the advertising men they were trying to move it up the market.

But to move lamb up the market will require some changes at this end.

We will have to ensure that we supply a quality product.

That means farmers and the industry might have to adopt some new methods, whether they be breeding programmes or packaging systems.

But above all, what is going to count, is that New Zealand farmers and processors get the right feed back from the market place.

The Vestey group has a vital role to play here.

They are uniquely placed as an "in depth" meat company to follow their product through from the farm to the housewife.

I spent a considerable amount of time with

Vestey executives and staff actually out in the field selling meat.

There was no doubt, in my mind, that that feedback was coming through.

At the group's Sidcup depot I spoke to the salesmen who deal with a large number of suburban London butchers.

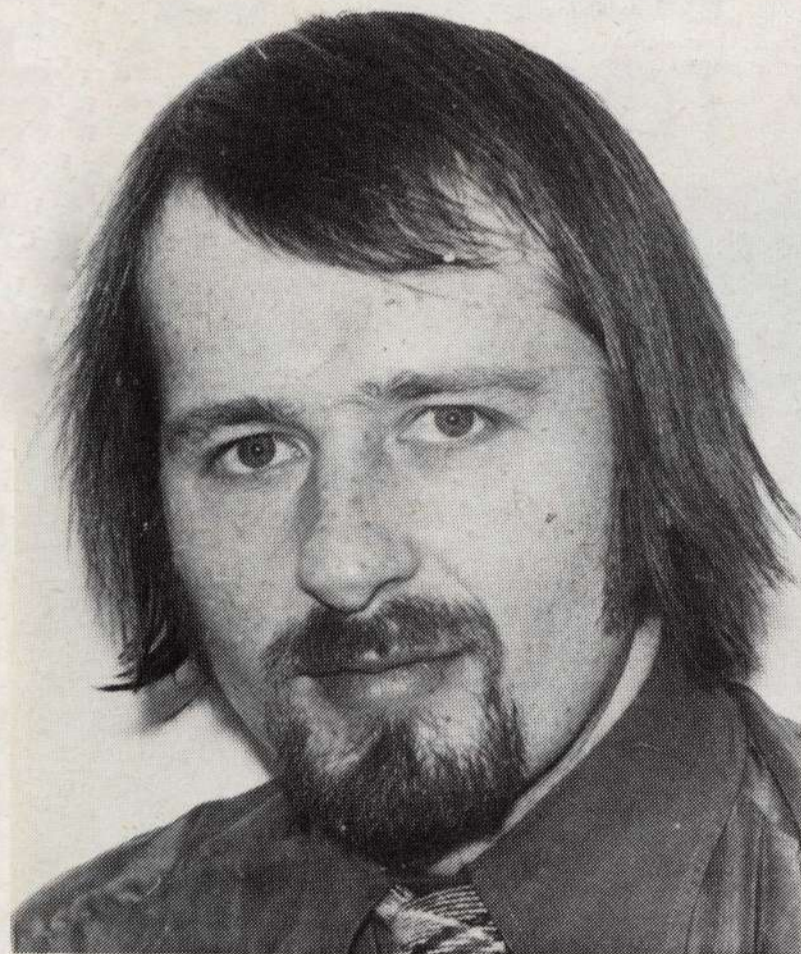
This was meat marketing at its most basic.

The salesmen were in a position to pick up every slightest change in the attitude of housewives as they made their meat purchases.

I am convinced that New Zealand must do all it can to ensure its meat is handled by people who know what their customers want.

Our lamb trade with Britain is too vital to be left in the hands of companies which just want to trade meat like stock exchange shares or in the hands of centralised organisations which must always keep one eye cocked to political attitudes.

By ensuring our meat is handled by companies with the capacity to understand what is happening in the marketplace and to translate that into action back here we should be able to cope with the considerable political and commercial forces stacked against us.



Since that regulation must somehow harmonise the British lamb market with that on the continent, lamb prices in Britain will artificially rise.

That price rise must be coupled with another important change taking place among British consumers - they are eating less and less lamb each year.

The British Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has estimated that mutton and lamb consumption has declined from 20.2 pounds a head a year in 1971 to 15.7 lbs a head a year in 1974.

Should prices rise too high or too fast it would only be reasonable to expect that decline to accelerate.

New Zealand, then, faces a much tougher challenge in the market place than it has in the past.



The laying of the sea outlet pipe for the Gisborne Refrigerating Company's new effluent disposal system (story page 3).

PACIFIC MEAT PROMOTIONS

W. & R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Ltd recently took part in a valuable promotion for New Zealand meat in two increasingly important export markets, Fiji and Tahiti.

Dennis Frederickson of the export sales staff who is in constant contact with importers in both these areas attended the two one-day promotions staged in liaison with the Meat Producers Board, Air New Zealand and two other meat exporting companies.

Both functions were attended by about 60 local meat importers for the working session and later a large crowd of people attended a buffet style dinner featuring New Zealand meat cuts.

The Meat Board representative, Gordon Dryden, gave a speech on the background of the New Zealand meat industry, Mr Eric Cammell represented the New Zealand Meat Exporters Council and Mr Derek King of Air New Zealand outlined the advantages of air-freighting meat and spoke of the future of the air-freighting business. The speeches were followed by question and answer sessions.

Mr Frederickson said that importers at both functions stressed the value of the promotions, the second staged by the New Zealand meat industry in Fiji.

In the past year Fiji has doubled its imports of New Zealand meat taking mainly lamb cuts for the retail trade and chilled quarter beef and beef cuts for the retail, hotel and restaurant trade.

Tahiti also has significantly increased its imports taking nearly two thousand tonnes of airfreighted beef this year in addition to large quantities of frozen beef shipped to importers.

W. & R. Fletcher's Tahiti agent, Miss Mathilda Bambridge, of Satec, recently visited head office for talks with the sales staff on the progress of sales to the area.

Other recent Pacific visitors were Fletcher's agents for Western and American Samoa, Angus and Richard McDonald of A.M. McDonald Agencies.

P.M. PRAISES VESTHEY OPERATIONS

The Prime Minister, Mr R.D. Muldoon, also spoke recently of the continued importance of Britain as the major market for New Zealand lamb.

Mr Muldoon told the British Trade Association in Wellington that New Zealand meat exporters had made significant progress in their diversification of markets and there were real opportunities in Japan, South Korea and the Middle East.

But he warned exporters not to look on any of their developing markets as being capable of taking the place of Britain in the foreseeable future.

Mr Muldoon said: "The relative volume and return is grossly disproportionate and there is, in the case of lamb and to some extent butter, literally no market in the world that can absorb what we must send to Britain if the New Zealand economy is going to prosper or even survive in its present form."

Mr Muldoon also spoke on the value of the role played by the major exporting companies in the development of the British market which required considerable market research and massive investments in both capital and in managerial and technical skills in the entire operation, not the least being in the United Kingdom itself.

Mr Muldoon stressed New Zealand's relationship specifically with the two great British meat processing houses of Vestey's and Borthwick's, which had provided a vertically integrated marketing system from farmer to consumer, and which should not be overlooked in terms of its importance to the growth of New Zealand's trade.

STRONG NEW PACKAGING



The Westfield Freezing Company has introduced a newly developed packaging for export meat cuts which has so far proved not only cheaper but more resilient under shipping and freezing conditions.

Westfield's purchasing manager, Mr Mike Patterson (left) inspecting two of the new Armalite cases produced by the Hygrade Packaging Company with the Hygrade marketing services manager, Mr Rob Mouncey.

The new cases are made from heavy duty corrugated board which are lighter than the comparable solid fibreboards and significantly cheaper, thus providing an avenue of holding the rapidly increasing costs of meat export.

Formerly, solid fibreboard was regarded as the most suitable board for meat and primary produce packaging because of the rapid heat transfer it allows during freezing. Conventional corrugated boards were not so easy to freeze because of insulation provided by air gaps in the corrugations.

However the new Hygrade cases, built with low profile fluting to minimise air-insulation problems, gives a freezing characteristic which is similar to that of the solid fibreboard.

The method of construction and use of heavy duty papers have proved that the new cases have less tendency to bulge in stacking tests than solid cases.

FARMERS VISIT TOMOANA



A group of farmers from the Dannevirke area recently visited Nelson's (N.Z.) Ltd's Tomoana works at Hastings for an "insight" visit of the plant's large scale development programme.

The group consisted of about 30 people most of them being members of Federated Farmers and the remainder comprising some of Tomoana's regular clients.

During the visit the farmers were given details of the new complex plans, which will cost more than \$13 million, and how they will improve the company's operations.

Afterwards the group expressed their appreciation of the tour which they said they found most worthwhile and informative.

Some of the visitors pictured at the entrance to the Tomoana plant, from left, Mr George Timmons, Mr Tom Morrison, Mr M.J. Sanders, manager Nelson's (N.Z.) Ltd, Mr Tom Atchison of Federated Farmers' Electoral College, Mr John Harrison, Tomoana union president, and Mr John Kelly.

GISBORNE'S NEW EFFLUENT SYSTEM NEARLY READY

Construction is well underway on an important new effluent disposal system at the Gisborne Refrigerating Co. Ltd's Kaiti works.

The project is expected to come into operation next month with the installation of the pumps.

The discharge point was set at 4,200 feet out to sea at a depth of seven fathoms, with the discharge being released at a specified diffusion rate through diffusers set in the final two hundred feet of the pipeline.

In all the pipeline comprises 6,000 feet of 24 inch diameter concrete piping forming the land line from the Kaiti works to the coast towards the eastern head of Poverty Bay.

The submarine pipeline consists of 100 forty foot long lengths of 24 inch spiral welded mild steel which were coated both on the inside and outside with a tough coal tar epoxy and finally encased with an outer layer of concrete.

All the work on the disposal system was carried out by local contracting and engineering companies and the method used to launch the pipeline involved the assembly of three lengths of pipe into 0 foot sections then connected to the preceding sections.

For the initial "launch" the nose cone and diffuser points were sealed to keep the air in the piping and thus keep it partly buoyant for easy pulling along its route out to sea.

A wire rope from the nose cone was fed through a pulley anchored out to sea, and returned at approximately a 45 degree angle to a winch on shore which was used to guide the pipeline into position.

After being positioned on the ocean floor, each forty foot section of the pipe had two four tonne concrete saddles placed over it to ensure that it would remain firmly secure to the ocean bed.

The outflow will be discharged by gravity from the works to a pump station sited at the shoreline, as it will be necessary to pump from that point on against the sea-head.

25 YEARS' SERVICE



Fletcher's General Manager, Mr Mark Hinchliff, presenting Mr George Reu, the Shop Manager of the Wanganui Mild Cure Bacon Co. Ltd, with a gold watch to mark his 40 years of service.

George started with W.M.C. in 1936 in the Bacon Factory at the old Taupo Quay site under the management of Mr Stan Clark, and the following year he moved to one of the Company's shops in Victoria Ave where he managed the Delicatessen Business and Pastry Products trade.

Over the years George has been actively involved in supervision at the shops and also at the Bacon Company itself at the New Heads Road Factory which was built in the early 1960's.

He sees the greatest change within the Industry as new Hygiene Regulations although he states products made today taste little different to those of 40 years ago.

LIVESTOCK CORNER:

PICKING THE BEST



With the onset of another killing season a period of intense activity, begins for W.&R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Ltd's livestock staff.

While in some areas they are called "drafters" or "pickers" and simply "buyers" in other areas, no matter what the term used, the prime consideration of all of Fletcher's field staff is the selection of stock in the best interests of their clients.

Drafting is an art in itself, calling for organising ability and skill of a high order to be able to draft to a specific weight and value, and also to feed conditions.

This is the basis of the trust the farmer has in his Fletcher drafter, and it makes for sound buyer - client relationships. Terry Goldstone, pictured above in a pen of sheep, is one of Nelsons (N.Z.) Ltd's Tomoana works most experienced field staff and one of the most skilled drafters to be found anywhere in New Zealand.

KOREAN VISITORS

The Managing Director of Korea General Foods Co. Ltd, Mr Soo Woong Lee, and the company's general trade manager, Mr Bonchang Koo, recently visited Wellington for four days of talks with W & R Fletcher's head office staff and the Meat Board.

Korea General Foods was recently appointed as Fletcher's agents in Korea and negotiated a recent prestige order for 500 tonnes of beef, and there are hopes that Korea will continue to develop as a newer market for New Zealand meat.

Mr Lee and Mr Koo also visited Australia where they had talks with another Vestey group company, W. Angliss and Co. (Aust.) Pty Ltd.

PATEA WINS GOLF

The 1976 inter-works golf classic, played on the Wairakei International course recently, was won by the Patea team who turned in consistent performances to take the Tony Rowlands Challenge Shield.

Patea turned in a three round total of 31½ wins from 36 matches to finish clearly ahead of the head office team which finished second with 15 wins. Tomoana was third with 14 wins and Westfield (last year's burglars) "swam home" in the wet conditions to take the wooden spoon with 1½.

The bad weather provided testing conditions with the matches being played off the championship tees but the off course conditions were as usual.

The W. & R. Fletcher cup for the best three round nett total was narrowly won by Roger Rei of Patea with a total of 208, only one stroke ahead of Joe Pearson of head office. Roger fought off a determined last round charge from Joe who, with a final nett 69, cut four strokes off his lead.

The newly presented Wally Knight cup for the best par round was won by Brian Sills of Westfield and the Blueport ACT cup for the best stableford was taken out by Ike Ansley of Patea.

Duncan Young continued Patea's good showing to take the Lauritzen cup for the medal competition round while the Cryovac cup for the best medal over three rounds went to Cam White, also of Patea.

H.D. (Bert) Wilson, who has now retired, missed out on his final chance to take the classic in his last showing after participating in all the matches since their inception, but he did make the scorecard by taking the Most Honest Golfer's title. And for Stewart Pauling, head office shipping manager, the classic was a "blue duck", but the practice rounds obviously paid off as the following weekend, representing the group in the Wellington Woolbuyers' Association team playing the shipping companies, he took the Scandinavian cup for the best nett round figures.

APPOINTMENTS

The following staff appointments have been made recently.

At Westfield, John Day, Roy Black and Alan Reid have been appointed project engineers and John Sinclair, works bacteriologist.

At Tomoana Bob McWilliams has been appointed works chemist. He was previously chemist at N.Z. Stockfoods Co., in Auckland; engineering clerk Bill Moretta has been appointed safety officer; Alan Whatton, works electrician; Laurie Clothier, assistant works manager, meat division; Derek Rixon, slaughter/boning superintendent; Terry Davies, senior foreman mutton flood; Rowan Hawkes, office manager; Leon Davidson, manager stock department; Trevor Smith, preventive maintenance engineer; and John Authier as project engineer.

Vincent Hooker has been appointed clerk of works and Paul Mercer quantity surveyor on the Tomoana new works site team.

The single appointment at Patea was Neville Cardiff as casings foreman.

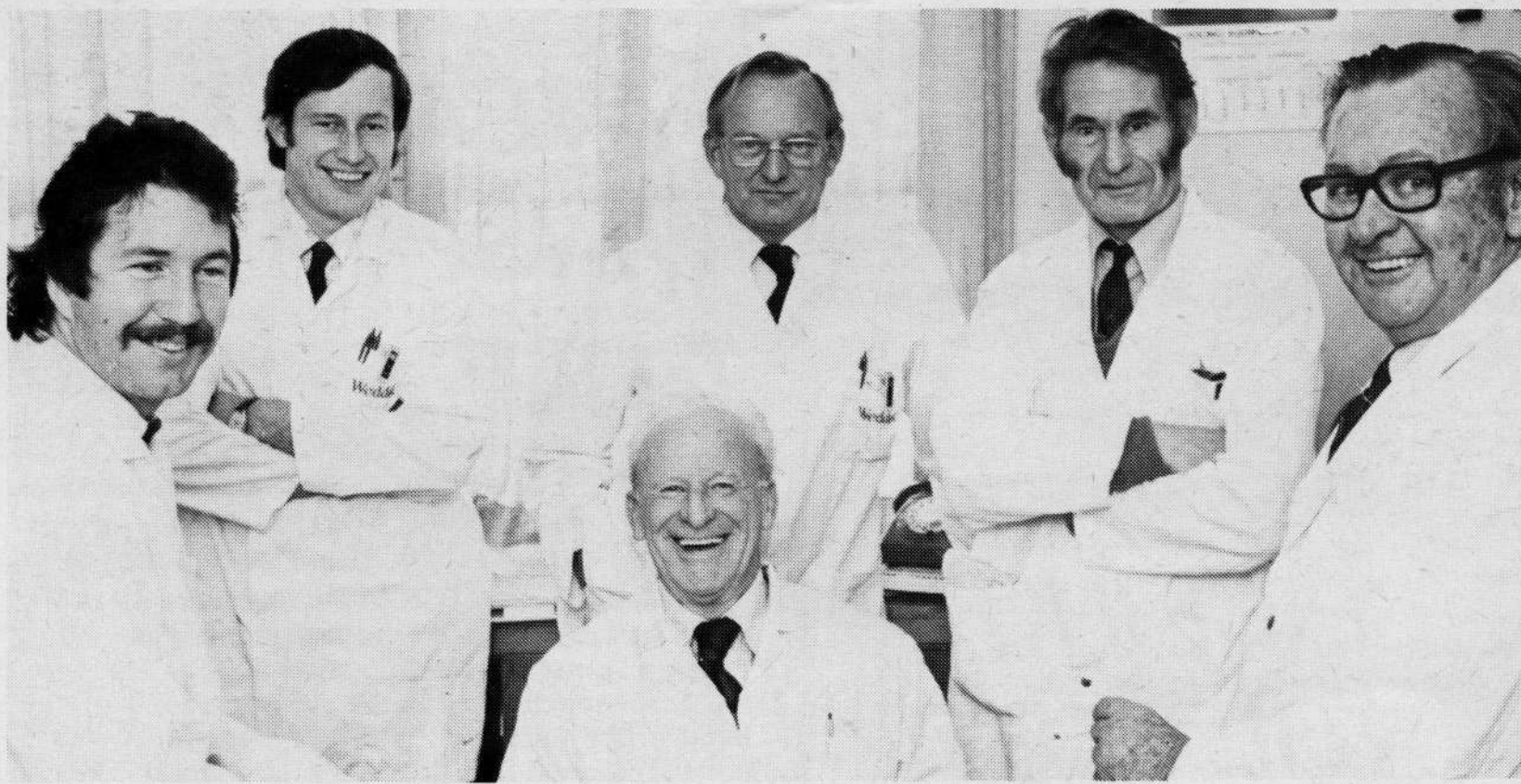
OBITUARY

Condolences to the family of Ted Beckett, senior slaughter floor clerk at Tomoana, who died recently. Ted had been with the company since 1933.

RETIREMENTS

Three long serving members at Tomoana retired recently . . . Ron Evans, the works chemist, Bill Peters, Safety Officer and Theo Brain, hide foreman.

TOP DOGS



A "pre-farewell" gathering to wish Mr F. (Bob) Oughton (seated centre) well in his retirement from his fellow engineers (from left), H. Godfrey, B.O.J. Halsey, K.J. Tomlinson, R.A. Shilton and K. Brockbank.

More than 100 of the Westfield Freezing Company's staff attended the official farewell, which marked Bob's retirement after having spent 29 years with the company.

Bob was a foreman in charge of Westfield's can making operation for many years until he was seconded to the engineer's office where he carried out many duties for the chief engineer.

At the ceremony Mr Tomlinson spoke of Bob's contribution to the Westfield operation and of his interests and activities away from work.

Bob was then presented with a collapsible portable work bench and a cheque by Mr L.G. Souness on behalf of the staff.

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we record the death in August of Miss M.F. Fleming who will be well remembered by many of the longer serving members of W. and R. Fletcher's.

Miss Fleming joined the group in 1925 and from the early 1930's until her retirement in 1958 served as private secretary to various Auckland Provincial Managers.

Her knowledge of Weddel's world wide organisation was remarkable and the many friends which she has left behind are deeply saddened by her passing.



The head office staff of W. & R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Ltd turned out in force to pay a well deserved tribute to popular staff member Mr H.D. (Bert) Wilson at a function to mark his retirement after 33 years in the sales department.

Bert, who joined the company in 1943 on his return from Second World War, was presented with a deluxe set of outdoor bowls in a handsome leather case which carried a suitable inscribed gold plate.

Bert is now looking forward to pursuing his new outdoor interest of bowls as well as keeping his old hobbies of golf and fishing.



W. & R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Ltd, who manufacture Tomoana Full Feed Dog Crackers, has been prominent supporter of the dog trial movement in New Zealand for many years.

This sponsorship has also been beneficial to the farming community which is heavily reliant on the working sheep dog which musters the nation's flocks, as the dogs, apart from being the farmers' "best friend", are their most economical labour units.

The quality of the dogs and the standards they set at a national Sheep Dog Championship Trial are usually very high, and the 1976 national trials held at Waimate, South Canterbury, were no exception.

One of the country's leading competitors, Mr R.J. (Ron) Christie, who farms at Wendon, Eastern Southland, turned in a magnificent performance with his dogs Jack and Bess (pictured above).

With Jack he won the New Zealand Zig Zag Hunt (after earlier getting fourth placing in the South Island event), and he won both the New Zealand Straight Hunt and the South Island title in that event with Bess.

Ron took out the W. & R. Fletcher Silver Salver in the New Zealand Zig Zag Hunt.

Ron Christie has been a top ranking dog trialist for many years now and the results he achieved in the recent championships were the fruition of those years of experience and of his management and were also a tribute to his skill and perseverance.

Weddel's World congratulates a fine sportsman and farmer.

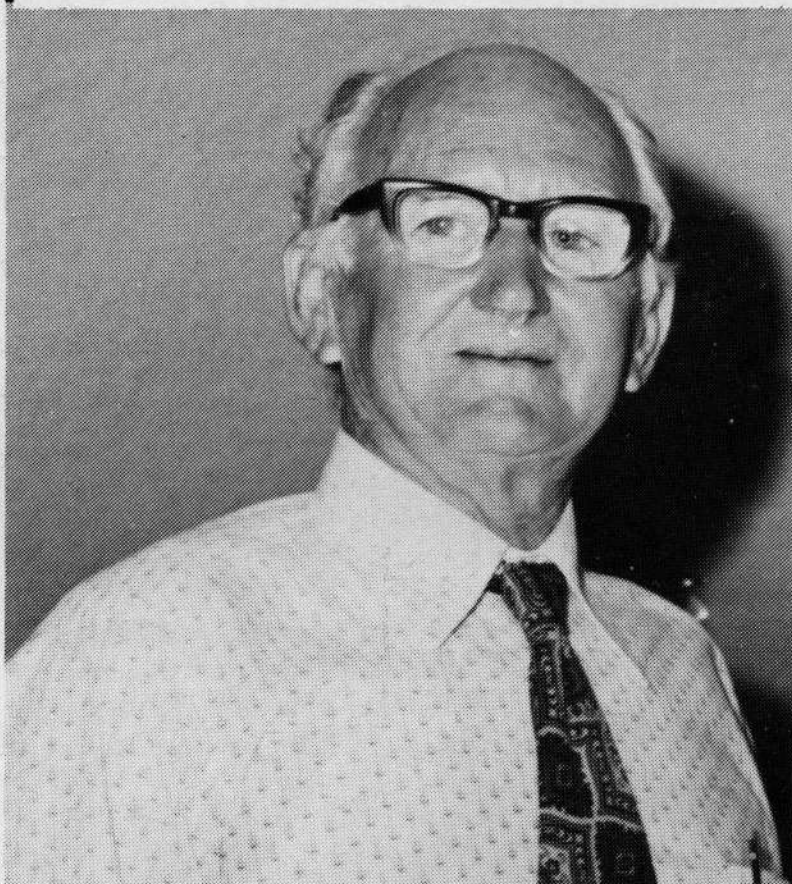


About 100 members of the Westfield Freezing Company's staff gathered together recently to farewell Mr W.J. (Bill) Gray on his retirement after having served the group for 43 years.

Bill joined Fletcher's in 1933 in their Auckland office and was shortly afterwards transferred to the company's head office in Wellington. He returned to Auckland in 1936 to join the Westfield operation where apart from various clerical jobs Bill was a foreman in the Stockfood department and over the latter years was a foreman in the freezer department.

At the farewell function Mr O.C. Wood spoke of Bill's many attributes and his valuable contribution to the company over the years and the Westfield assistant manager, Mr L.G. Souness on behalf of the staff presented Bill with some electrical machinery equipment and a cheque. His many friends wish Bill and his wife a long and happy retirement.

COMPANY PROFILE



A.G. (Athol) Harding commenced service as office boy in Fletcher's Hamilton office in 1930 and has continued to be closely associated with the procurement of livestock in the Auckland Province ever since. Appointed Auckland Provincial Livestock Manager in 1953, Athol has formed many impressions of the Meat Industry over the years. Among them are: the adaptability and resolution and skill of the New Zealand farmer through recurring periods of recession; the remarkable international marketing organisation built up by Vestey's in this century and the efficient and effective chain of procurement and delivery to works of vast numbers of livestock with only minor argument or disagreement between buyer and vendor. He enjoys most sports and had some success as a cross-country runner in earlier times. He saw service in Italy with an artillery regiment in the Second World War and says that he counts it a pleasure to have been associated with bringing up a large family in this enlightened age. Athol pays a warm tribute to the livestock buyer's wife for she plays an important part in any success which he may enjoy.