

Carnival Mood at Tomoana Opening

Nelsons (NZ) Limited's Tomoana plant in Hastings took on a carnival atmosphere for the official opening of the company's new \$35 million mutton slaughterhouse complex by the Governor General, Sir Keith Holyoake in May.

The entire operation at Tomoana closed for the day as staff made it into a family affair to tour the new complex, which is the most modern sheep slaughtering operation in the world.

In his address Sir Keith noted New Zealand's dependence on meat exports for foreign exchange earnings and said that the country needed to keep up its high standard of meat exports.

He said he was surprised to learn of the extent of the hygiene regulations governing the industry, with New Zealand meeting requirements for the more than 80 countries she supplies with meat.

Lord Vestey, the joint head of W. & R. Fletcher's parent company, Union International, told the large crowd attending the opening that he thought the future for New Zealand in lamb, mutton and beef looked more secure than it did three years ago.

But he said that while sheep meats may look promising it must be remembered that beef was the popular world meat.

And he said as a wise policy New Zealand farmers should look to balanced farming.

Lord Vestey said his company was very conscious that at Tomoana there was a joint interest and a joint venture with the people who operated the plant.

"If we don't produce, then we both suffer," he said.

"The design of Tomoana is aimed at improved working conditions and comfort in keeping with the present day and age. The union has been very definitely involved in the layouts and details even though the broad concept is based on the most recent and generally acclaimed modern design from our other overseas works developments."

The Tomoana meat workers union president Mr J. W. Harrison said his union was impressed with the spaciousness of the slaughterboard which should achieve safer working conditions for all staff and make conditions more comfortable for slaughtermen training beginners on the learners' chain.

He added that the high standard achieved in the amenities area would be much appreciated by his union members, who he said wanted to ensure that the operation was successful.

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Many willing hands get together to make light work of the impressive hangi prepared for Tomoana staff and visitors at the opening.



Automation Engineering's computer manager David Kinneburgh points out a running feature to Sir Keith Holyoake with Tomoana's general manager, Michael Sanders and senior site engineer Andy Copland looking on.



Sir Keith unveils the plaque to officially open the works.



Part of the large crowd files down the chain to examine the equipment.



WEDDEL GOES INTO S. KOREA

Weddel has opened a new office in Seoul to service the rapidly expanding South Korean market for New Zealand meat, slipe wool and associate by products and Mr Kim Darton of London has been appointed the first liaison officer for the area.

Mr Darton joined the Vestey organisation in 1975 in London as a trainee and after an extensive indoctrination covering all aspects of the meat industry moved to the group's continental marketing operation based for the past two years in the Canary Islands and Lille involved mainly in meat sales.

He recently visited New Zealand for talks with W & R Fletcher management staff on details of New Zealand trade with South Korea.

Korea first emerged as a buyer of New Zealand beef four years ago and after an initial import of some 4,000 tonnes of beef has developed to a market today requiring some 100,000 tonnes.

Mr Darton says one problem posed by the South Koreans is their preference for bone in beef, which increases shipping charges and limits supply as New Zealand processors do not keep supplies of bone in beef in their cool stores which restricts the year round supply situation.

An extensive campaign has been mounted by New Zealand to re-educate the South Koreans to boneless cuts and Mr Darton says this is beginning to reap results as the Koreans are made aware that cuts form a year-round guaranteed supply of beef and that shipping costs will be reduced.

"In addition we do not supply any sheep meat to the Koreans as they are traditionally not sheep meat eaters, but we will be trying to change this trend by liaising with the Meat Exporters Council and the Meat Producers Board in mounting promotions and campaigns to introduce sheepmeat to the Korean diet."

Mr Darton says his main task initially will be to liaise with the Weddel agents in Korea for meat and the valuable wool, hides, skins and other by product trade.

Apart from beef, South Korea is now also established as a major buyer of New Zealand slipe wool for the textile industry, competing with other traditional manufacturers in the area, Japan and Hong Kong.

Tomoana (Contd)

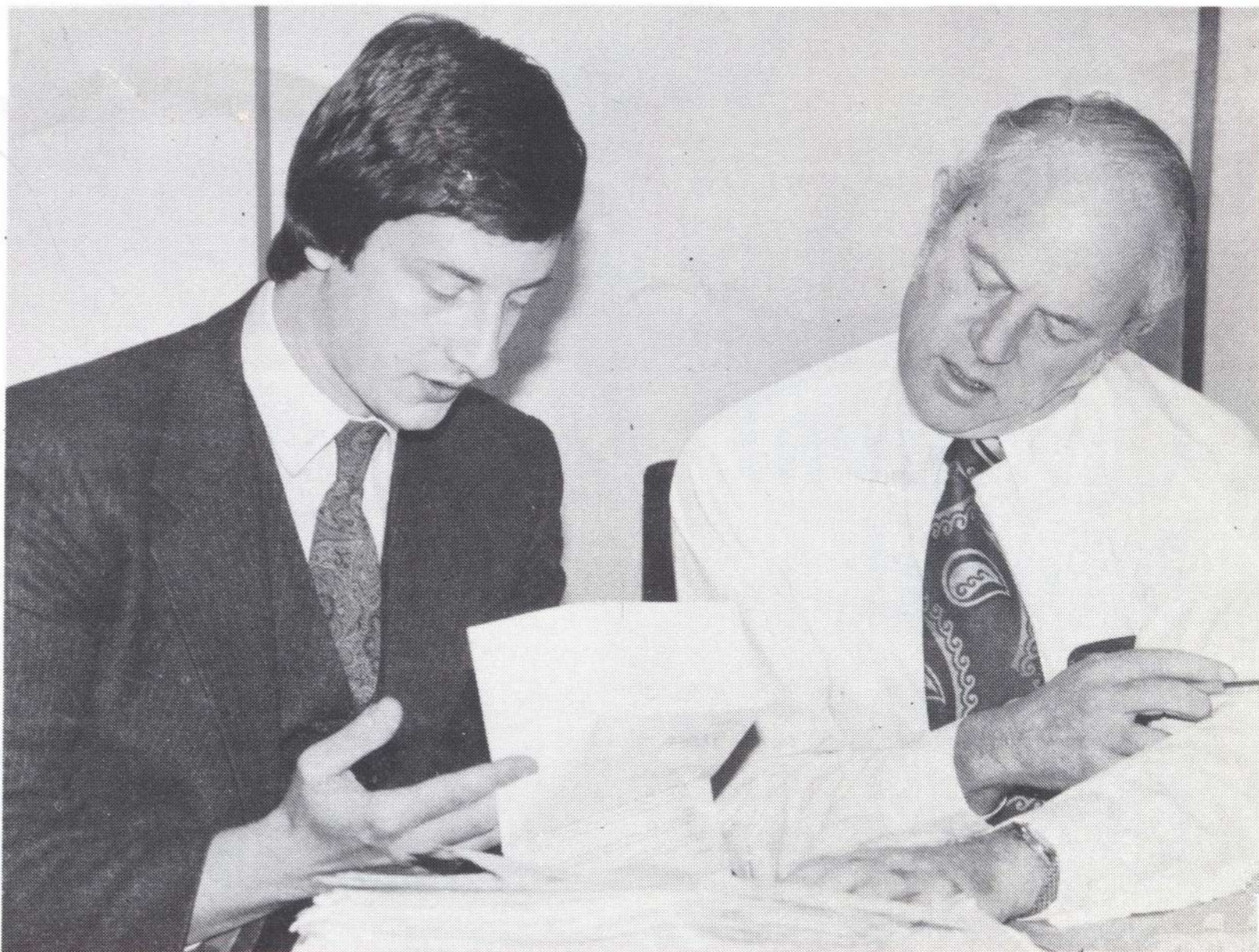
More than 2,000 people toured the new plant with other distinguished guests including the British Ambassador to New Zealand, Sir Harold Smedley, MP's Mrs Tirikatene-Sullivan and Mr David Butcher, the local member.

The day was not all officialdom: much of it was devoted to festivity with the highlight being an impressive lunch for all those who attended the opening.

Focal point of this was an immense hangi made up of 25 sheep, two pigs, 40 chickens, 20 rolls of beef, 30 sacks of potatoes, kumera and pumpkins, puha, watercress, eels and swans.

In addition numerous barbeques were in operation with a store of 1,500 Tomoana sausages, 400 kilos of lamb chops and 100 kilos of steak together with salads and a plentiful supply of refreshment for all.

And with the closing of the official ceremony a pipe band and a local jazz group provided further entertainment with the many children on hand also well catered for with rides around the plant on the veteran Tomoana fire engine complete with siren at full blast.



Kim Darton discussing details of the by-product trade with South Korea with W & R Fletcher's by-products manager Mr Harry Beauchamp in Wellington before leaving to take up his post as Weddel's first representative in South Korea

IRANIANS, IRAQIS VISIT WESTFIELD



The Westfield freezing company recently played host to a high ranking Iranian delegation touring New Zealand on a fact-finding mission to evaluate local killing practices as they apply to Islamic requirements.

Pictured above, the delegation is (front row from left) Mohsin Mohsineen Mosheri, Iranian retail butcher shop representative, His Eminence Hojatol Islam A Mohammed Sharif Mahdavi, the leader of the delegation, Hojatol Islam Mohammed Nakhai Menhaj and Mr Bill Hillman, union secretary at Westfield; (back row from left) Mr Hessian Shaida, N.Z. Meat Producers Board representative in the Middle East, Hossein Mashhadi Mohammed, an Iranian slaughterman and Mr Ralph Ulrich, Westfield Union President.

Mr Shaida, who had accompanied the delegation, said they had been most impressed with what they saw at the works.

After the delegation's visit Iran announced that it wanted to re-open negotiations to buy large quantities of New Zealand lamb.

The visit to New Zealand had been arranged by the New Zealand Meat Exporters Council and the Meat Producers Board.

Earlier another delegation from Iraq led by the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Matouk Sulaiman, toured Westfield as part of a visit to New Zealand.

(Earlier this year Iraq concluded a major lamb deal with New Zealand through W & R Fletcher.)

During their stay the Iraqi delegation were shown all aspects of the works' production, stockfoods manufacturing, Poultry, dairy sheep and cattle farming and meat products being loaded at the Port of Auckland.



The Iraqi delegates with the leader Matour Sulaiman (second from right) inspect lambs destined for the Middle East.

UPWARD WOOL TREND SHOULD CONTINUE

The manager of W. & R. Fletcher's wool department, Mr Alan Chapman, says he expects to see a continuation of the firm-to-upward trend in wool prices next season following the dramatic upward trend earlier this year.

Mr Chapman said he believed the prospects for the 1979-80 wool season appeared to be reasonably bright at this stage.

"The price rise in wool which, together with other base raw materials, occurred during the first quarter of 1979 lifted this commodity too sharply and the expected market reaction ensued during April and May," Mr Chapman said.

LIVESTOCK CORNER: A DOGS LIFE



The winner of the 1979 television dog trials, Rex Berkahn, who farms in the Maraekakaho district — west of Hastings, carrying 2700 ewes and 120 breeding cows on his 835 acre property.

Rex has lived and worked on the farm all his life and has been a regular supplier of livestock to Tomoana.

Rex has two heading dogs, Prince and Laddie, which are both part of his working team. Rex and the dogs are well known to the farming community and general public because of their success in the 1979 TV Dog Trialling series "A Dog's Show".

He found the experience invaluable and rated the opposition as some of the most competitive he had ever met. He also feels that the series has done a lot to create more public interest in trialling.

Rex feels the major reason for his success is "control". He says "If you can control the dog, you can control the sheep," and also believes in rewarding the dog for a job well done.

Most of the preparation for trialling is taken care of by working the dogs on the farm with only a small amount of extra training needed to prepare them for the competition.

Over the last 20 years Rex has had 9 wins and 14 seconds in the H.B. Centre Championships, and in 1961 won the N.Z. Longhead Championship with Faye, and in 1977 won the N.Z. Shorthead Championship and was runner-up in the Longhead Championship with Prince.

Perhaps the best measurement of the respect fellow trialists have for Rex can be shown by the fact that he has been a North Island Trial Judge since 1962 and is currently a N.Z. reserve Trial Judge.

PRICES STABILISE

"Prices have now tended to stabilise and we rather expect a continuation of the firm-to-upward trend next season. Frankly we prefer to see prices rise gently — sudden sharp increases are very difficult for manufacturers of wool products to absorb and inevitably a price fall follows.

"Japan has recently built up her stocks of Australian merino wool but stocks of New Zealand crossbred wool in most user countries are modest.

"Since consumers have appeared to have accepted the higher plane of wool prices on balance the prospects for another season of healthy wool returns to our growers is favourable." Mr Chapman said.

WOOL BOARD VIEW

The managing director of the Wool Board, Mr H.L.M. Pierse, said that while New Zealand wool was currently enjoying a relatively buoyant market demand position with prices reasonably ahead of last year this understated the extent of the improvement.

He said this year all production was moving into the distributive pipeline together with a significant amount from the Wool Board stocks — approximately 20,000 tonnes.

"With production at around 315,000 tonnes this involves about 335,000 tonnes being sold commercially as compared with 295,000 tonnes last year.

"The underlying position is strong in our main western consuming markets which presages a firm position over the next few months as we move into the 1979/80 season.

"While there is an improved market level, this of course is only part of the picture. Costs continue to rise and as New Zealand is still experiencing inflation at double figure rates, growers need to see rising gross returns if they are to keep one step

ahead of being caught in the perennial cost-price squeeze."

Mr Pierse said the Board was very much involved in activities designed to reduce the impact on growers of rising costs. Many of these costs were not directly borne by growers but are still reflected in their market prices, such as costs of scouring, testing, freight and distribution for export.

"Freight costs form a large component of the total cost of getting wool from the New Zealand producer to the consuming northern hemisphere processing mill. In this area the Board's work is carried out in conjunction with the exporting trade who are fully represented in our Wool Freight Council.

"Over recent years a considerable burden has fallen on this council as the welter of problems linked with the conversion to containerisation and cellular ships have arisen and then been tackled and overcome. The council's role is that of permanent adviser and it has an essential part to play in ensuring that trade requirements are properly met," Mr Pierse said.

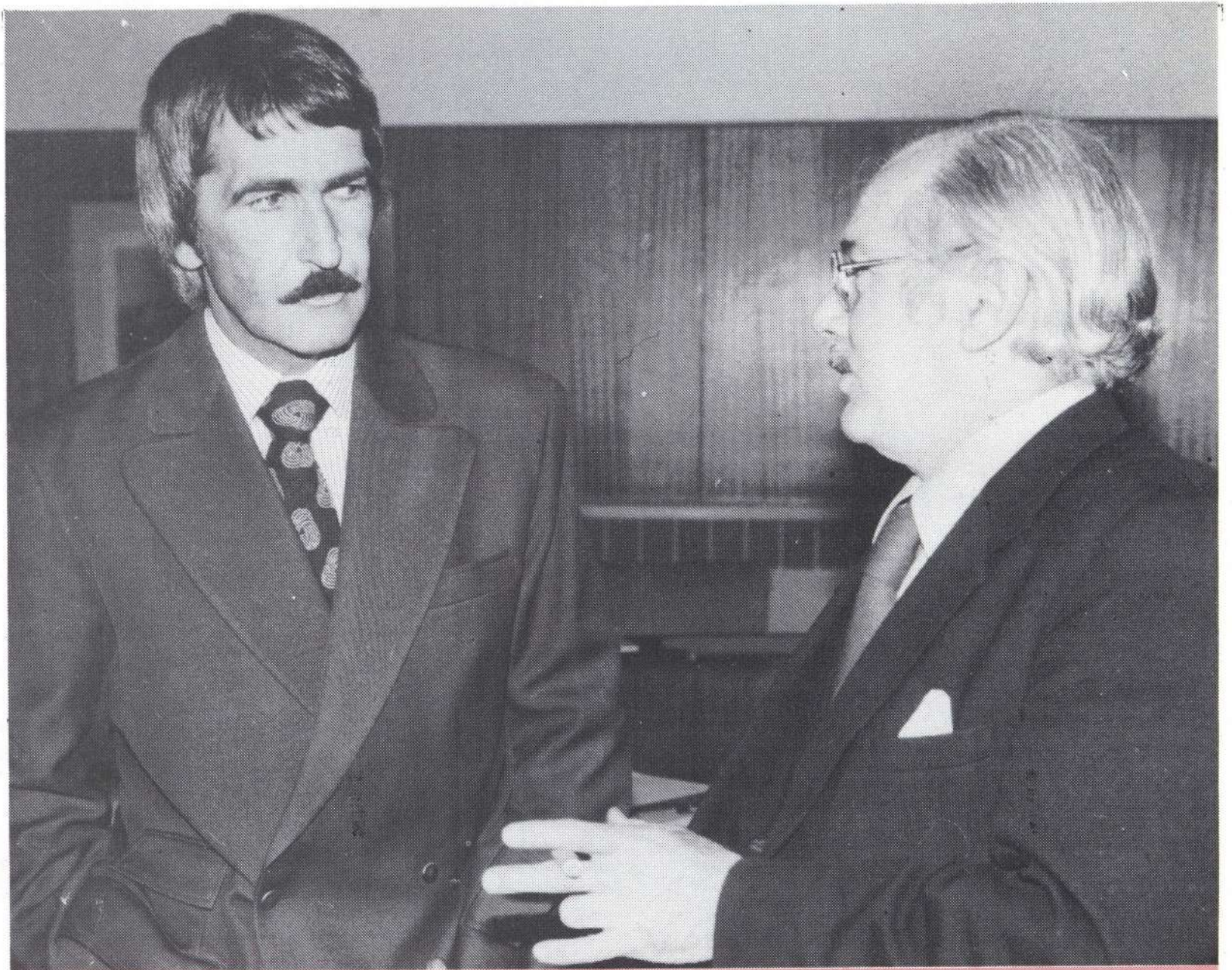
Mr Chapman, who is chairman of the Wool Freight Council, recently formed part of the New Zealand negotiating team at the annual freight talks held recently in London. He also represented the New Zealand Committee of Wool Interests at the International Wool Textile Organisation conference in London at the same time.

On his return from the shipping talks Mr Chapman said: "The result of these negotiations can be regarded as successful from the growers point of view in that the marginal increase arranged with the shipping lines is significantly below current inflation rates."

NZ TO HOST WORLD MEETING

New Zealand anticipates hosting the 1981 I.W.T.O. conference in Christchurch, an event which will attract leading figures in the textile industry from most wool consuming countries in the world.

En route to London, Mr Chapman visited Fletcher's mill clients in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, where he said demand for slipe wool remained healthy.



Mr Chapman and Mr Pierse discussing prospects for New Zealand wool growers for the coming season at the Wool Board in Wellington.

HAPPY IN RETIREMENT

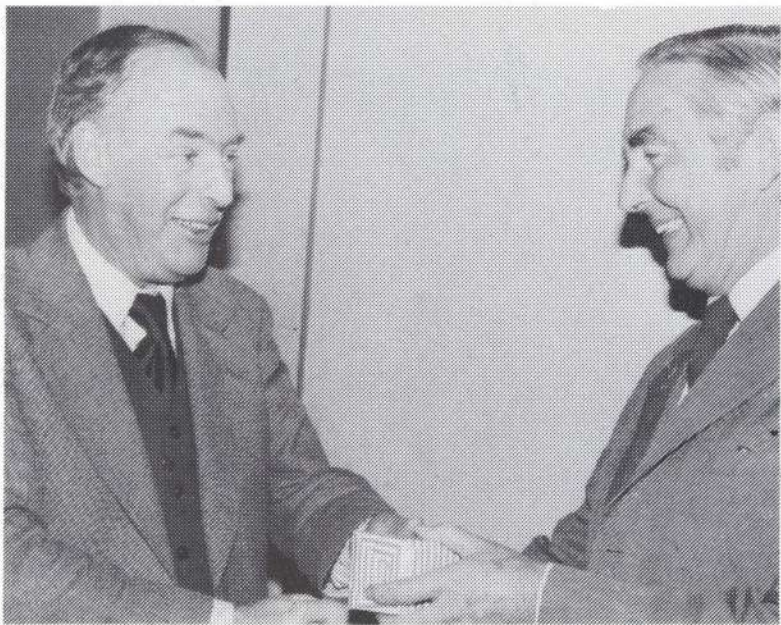


All set to enjoy his retirement after 43 years service with the Wanganui Mild Cure Bacon Company is George Reu, who proudly displays his retirement gifts presented to him at a staff farewell. Mr Reu joined the company in 1936 and after a period of war service took over the management of the company's shop Mayfair Provisions. In 1977 he transferred to the company's factory.

Mr Reu is well known in Wanganui bowling circles having won a number of centre titles and other tournaments.

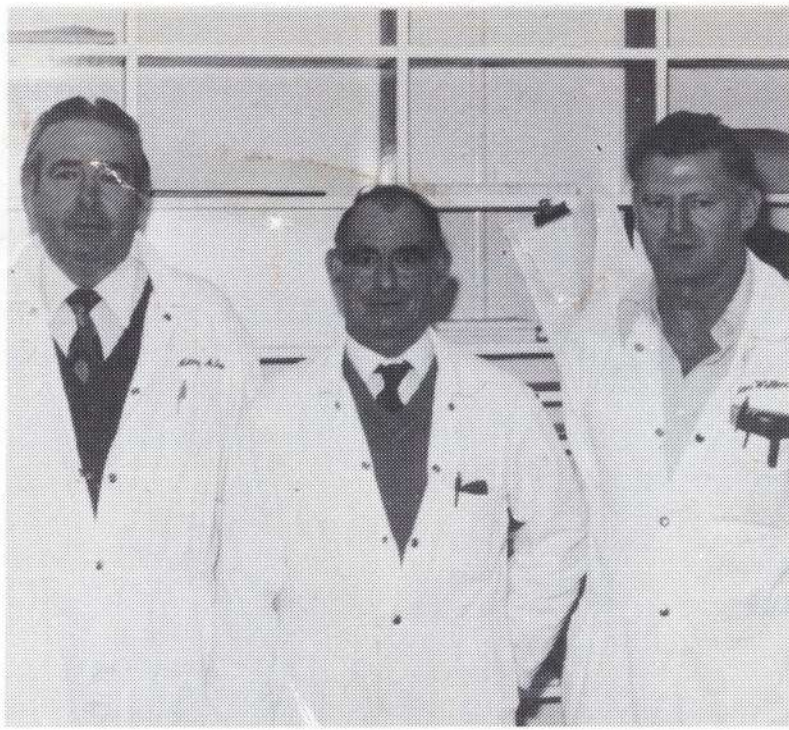
It is with deep regret that Weddel's World records the death of the former group chief engineer Arthur Glendining Brebner in Auckland recently. Mr Brebner is survived by a wife and two children.

GOLD WATCH



The Wellington manager of the New Zealand Stockfoods company, Ken Stephenson being presented with a gold watch to mark his 40 years' service with the Fletcher group by the company's general manager, Peter Johnston. Ken joined the company in 1939 as assistant purchasing officer and shortly afterwards joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a navigator seeing service in Britain, Europe and the Pacific during the Second World War.

After the war he rejoined the purchasing department and in 1948 transferred to sales where he handled canned meat production from Westfield and stockfoods. He was also involved in setting up the Fropax frozen foods operation.



Assistant freezer foreman Bob Bell (centre) with two long serving workmates Murray McIvor (left) and Brian Wallace on the eve of his retirement after having worked with the Westfield Freezing Company for 39 years, the past 13 in his present position. At a farewell function Westfield general manager Gordon Taylor thanked Bob for his valued service to the company over a long career and wished he and his wife Olive a long and happy retirement.

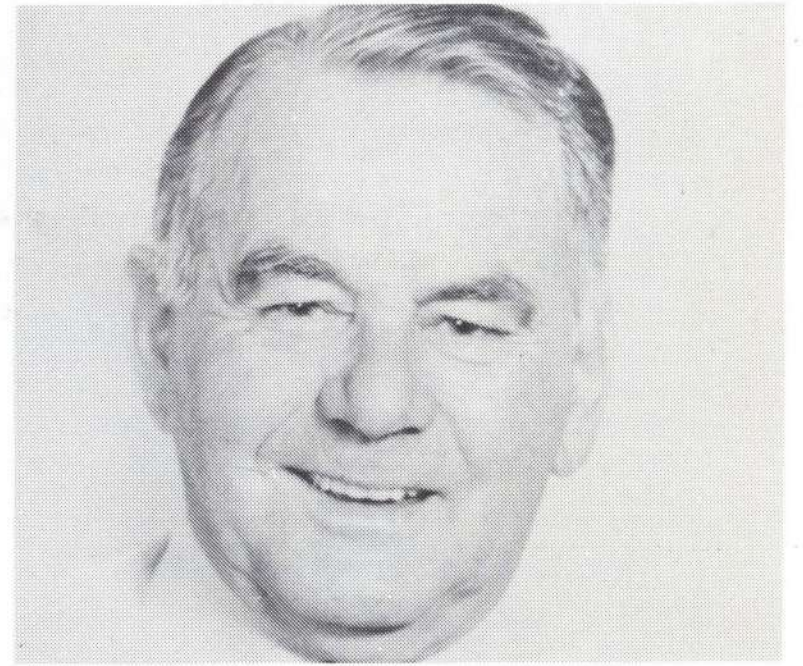
A VARIED CAREER

Livestock buyer Len Arnold recently retired from Fletcher's Hamilton office after a career spanning some 37 years. Len joined the group as a pig buyer in the Te Awamutu district in 1940 and in 1955 he moved to Hamilton. In 1960 he moved to Whangarei to run the wholesale meat business there and two years later saw another development where he was asked to start up a Monarch Bacon Wholesale outlet in Whangarei which he moved from an initial monthly turnover of £50 to almost \$200,000 in 1973.

In 1973 Len transferred back to Hamilton as a pig and boner buyer and when a vacancy opened in the Hamilton office in 1977 and Len spent half of his time in the office and the other half out in the field.

Len has been an active member in many community organisations and today is a life member of the Te Awamutu United Rugby Club and the Cricket Association and has over the years played a strong role in the Te Awamutu A & P. Show serving a term as vice-president.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Former Tomoana works manager, Geoff Bloore and his wife Josephine, are both in good health and are enjoying the many friendships that they have made during their thirty years in Hastings.

Geoff's main interests are centred around his home, tending his garden, poultry and canaries.

He also grows his own grapes and of recent years has become interested in home wine making "with some success" — he says!

Geoff, who was Works Manager at Tomoana from 1959 to 1970, joined the organisation as office boy with Nelsons (N.Z.) Ltd., Gisborne in October 1928, when the late Mr Fred Tolerton was manager and Carl Petry was accountant.

In 1930 Nelsons amalgamated with the Gisborne Sheepfarmers FM & M Co. Ltd. and formed the Gisborne Refrigerating Co. Ltd., which then commenced operations at Kaiti Works leased from Gisborne Sheepfarmers.

Geoff was taken onto the staff of the new company and in 1935 accepted a transfer to Fletcher's Head Office Wellington, where he worked with the late Mr Frank Knight and Mr A.H. Niker in the Costing Production Department until 1948.

During this time his work was interrupted by 12 months in the armed forces 1942-43, and a season at Westfield 1946-47.

In December 1948 he transferred to Tomoana where he served until his retirement in December 1971.

COMPANY PROFILE

Wally Varley, works manager at the Gisborne Refrigerating Company which is a joint operation involving Fletcher's and the Gisborne Sheepfarmers Refrigerating Company, has a complete understanding of the problems facing his work force having started at the Kaiti works in the days of solo butchering. Wally originally joined the company as a tally clerk in 1935 but decided that he would switch to the slaughtering operation the following year. As a solo butcher he had his own pen and performed the whole operation himself — slaughtering, legging, pelting, gutting and then washing the carcass ready for export. "It was hard work in those days," Wally recalls, "as with farmers producing more wool than meat we had more sheep than lambs and we had to lift carcasses of some 60 pounds dressed weight on to the trimming rail. But a competent butcher would handle more than 100 carcasses daily." In the off season Wally felled bush in the final clearance of the Gisborne area, being a member of a team that would spend up to four months in the scrub clearing upwards of 100 acres. It was his skill as a bushman and slaughtering work that saw Wally's early demobbing from the infantry in the Second World War to fill dual roles in essential industries at home. In 1950 Wally became assistant slaughterhouse foreman at Kaiti and in 1955 was appointed senior foreman.

"In those days we had two foremen where today there are 12, a necessary expansion because of the greater diversification of work and attention to hygiene requirements, making today's foreman's job a more demanding one." Wally was appointed works manager in 1963, which was then the next promotional step in the smaller work force. Wally says the major changes he has seen in the meat industry were the introduction of the chain operation to both the sheep and beef houses; increased cutting of the meat in New Zealand to meet the growing diversification of markets and the major reconstruction to meet the increasing hygiene



demands from overseas markets. In his youth Wally was a keen sportsman involved in swimming, boxing, rugby, hunting and woodchopping, where as a competitive axeman he won many events with his best performance being a third in the North Island championships. Today his interests centre around tramping and climbing, and he is currently president of the Gisborne Tramping Club which becomes involved in search and rescue work in the area. Wally and his wife Win have two children, both of whom are presently on working holidays in Great Britain.