



NEW TOMOANA BEEF HOUSE OPENS

The new beef complex at Nelson's NZ Ltd's Tomoana works in Hastings came into operation this month only nine months after the previous operation had been destroyed by a major fire.

Nelson's general manager, Mr Michael Sanders, said it had been able to use the basic structure of the old brick house, but even so the construction had met the most optimistic targets.

He praised the company's chief engineer, Stewart Bricklebank, and all the contractors for their efforts which meant that Tomoana could again process its client's beef.

"Throughout the past season Tomoana's farmer clients have had a most difficult time as we farmed the beef kill to other W & R Fletcher facilities and to our competitors in the Hawkes Bay area", Mr Sanders said.

"This has meant uncertain drafting arrangements for them and our livestock department has handled the difficulties of this season very efficiently. We are all very pleased to be able to draft again for our own facilities at Tomoana."

The fierce blaze in September 1979 gutted the beef building, but fortunately since the brick walls were not structurally damaged this allowed for an accelerated redevelopment programme.

The building was re-roofed and all facilities in the slaughterhouse, boning and packing room, chillers and amenities replaced.

Chief engineer Stewart Bricklebank said that emphasis was placed on improving working conditions in all areas, concentrating on the reduction of noise levels and improving lighting conditions.

In the beef house the complete chain operates from a programmable controller which synchronises all movements and also records weighing and grading of the carcasses and providing printouts for the accounting system.

To reduce the noise in the working area all hydraulic equipment and pumps are located outside the area and plastic wheels and guide runners have been fitted to the chains.

More windows have been fitted to improve the natural light and the lighting level has been further increased in the chain area and other areas with the introduction of new higher powered systems.

One feature of the new chain is two new downward hide pullers, which allow the more hygienic removal of the skins from the carcasses.

A new 24 inch pre-breaker unit replaces the former 18 inch facility for handling condemned bodies, heads and feet for rendering, and this unit is capable of processing an entire body, while the former could only cater for quartered carcasses.

The pre-breaker has been mounted on specially constructed anti-vibration pads to reduce both vibration and the consequent noise effects.

Working areas have been fitted with Fibre-clean walls and Shureshield flooring to meet the latest MAF and Codex hygiene requirements.

The boning room has been fitted with insulated wall panels of polyurethane with epoxy coated steel which were used for the speed of construction and their insulating properties.

The working area is about 30 percent larger than the former complex to allow a bigger throughput, and it includes a new aircondition-

ing system, which is being used in only one or two other plants in New Zealand. This distributes the air through "socks" with holes in them rather than the traditional ducts, which should reduce draughts and give a better and more even air distribution.

It is designed to run at 10°C, as required by the present hygiene regulations, but can be reduced to 8°C should that become a new requirement.

The marshalling, or holding area for quartered beef awaiting boning and cutting, is situated outside the boning room and has been designed for the dual use if necessary as a chiller for over-night or week-end use by reducing the temperature to 0°C.

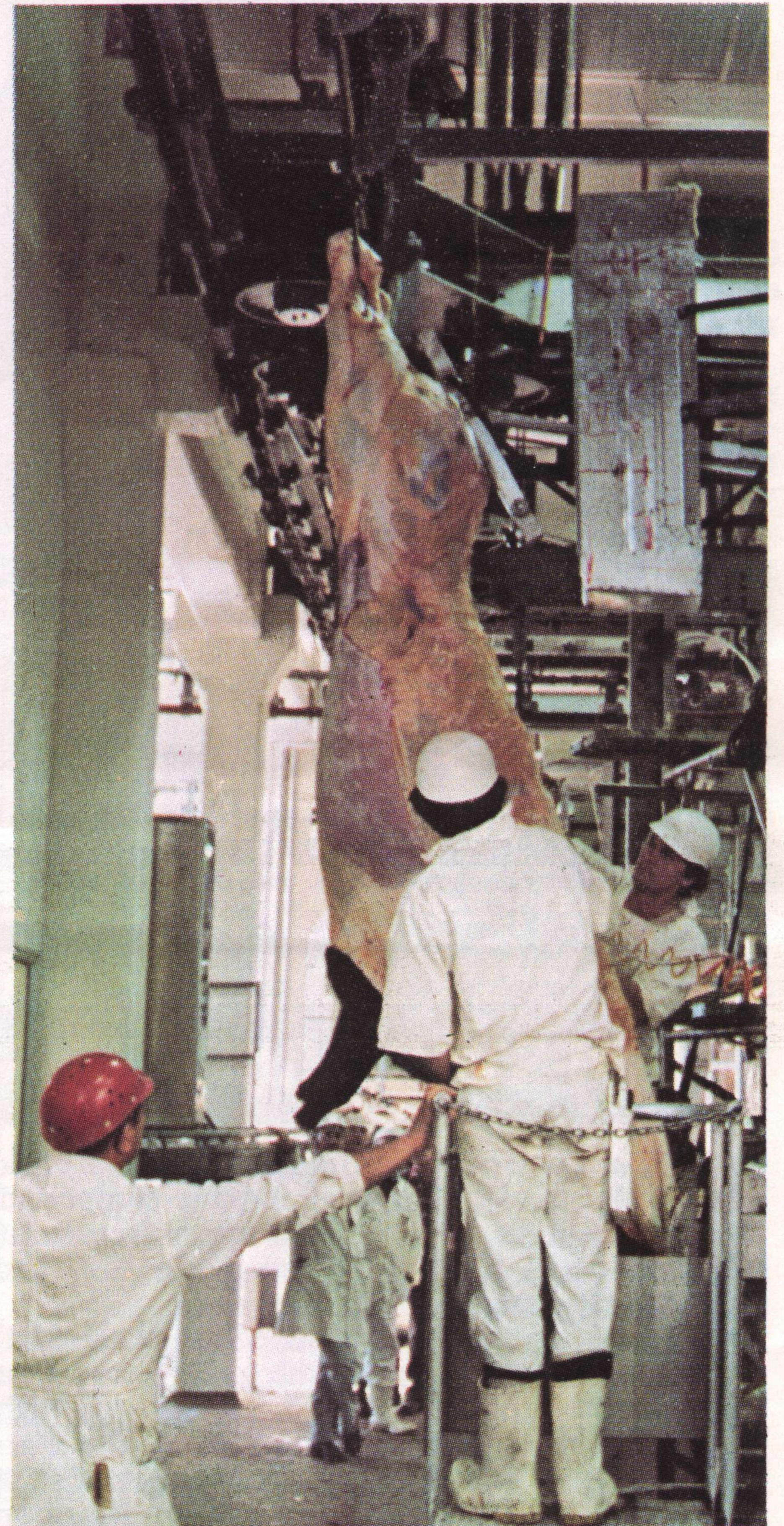
Of the five original beef chillers one was completely destroyed in the fire and the other four slightly damaged.

The reconstruction has seen an increase in freezer space with the four damaged chillers being repaired and two new units, of the panel-type construction being built.

The improved amenities facilities have been gutted and replaced for workers and MAF personnel in the beef house, boning room, offal department, and the pig house. These include offices, showers, changing areas, a dining area and first-aid room.

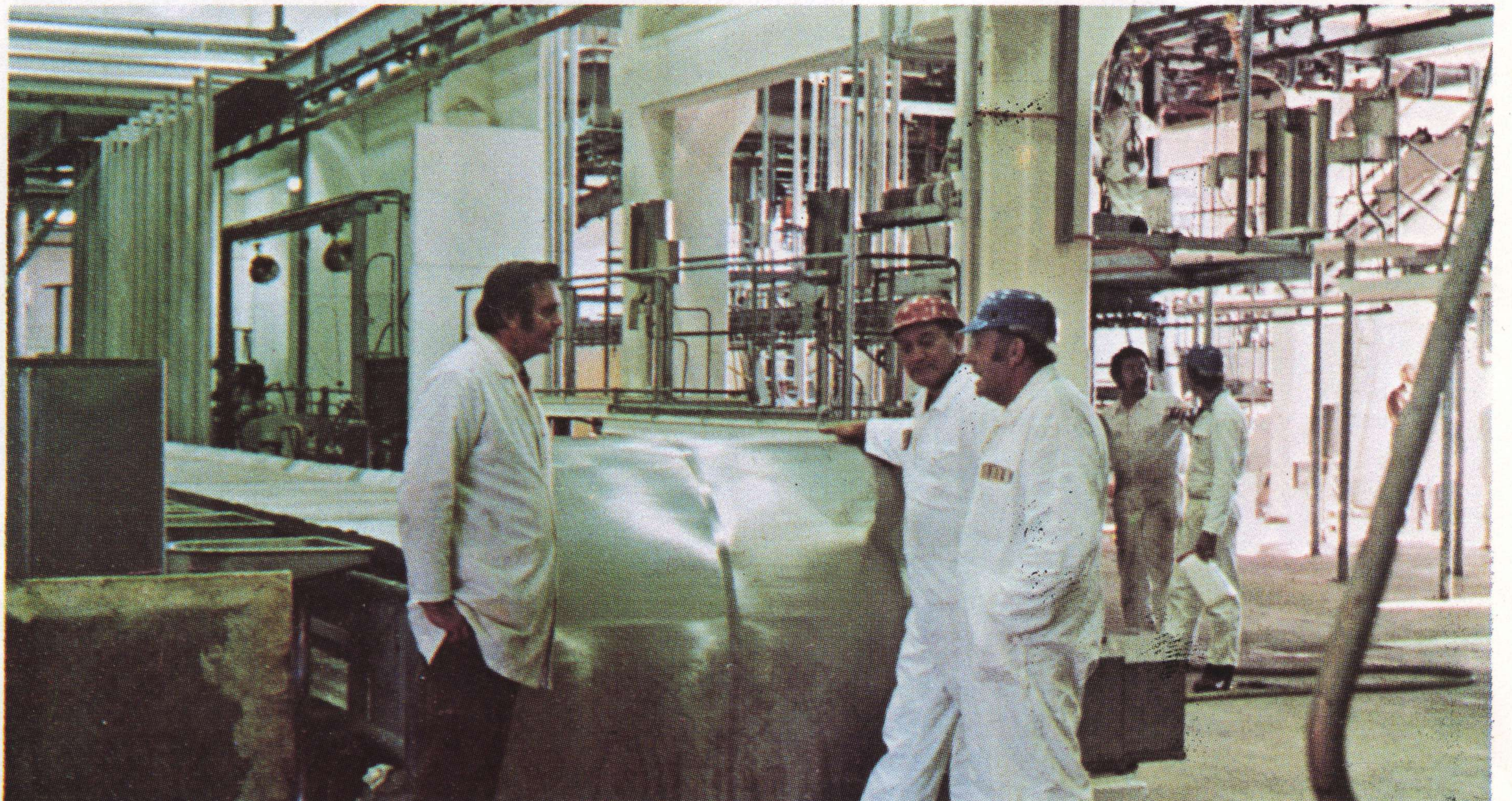
The whole area has also been fitted with a totally new sprinkler system that meets the requirements of the local fire brigade, council and the State Services Fire Commission.

The new beef complex underwent its initial testing in early June and Stewart Bricklebank, and works manager Alan Edwards both said they were well pleased with the way the new system performed.



"A" grade butchers Norm Peters (left) and Winston Stephenson, who is also a union delegate, operating the new downward hide puller in front of an interested crowd of co-workers.

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Chief engineer Stewart Bricklebank discussing the details of the new beef house with foreman Barry Wati (centre) and Frank Chilton, the assistant foreman (right).

NEW FRONTIERS OPEN



W & R. Fletcher's by-products manager, Mr Harry Beauchamp, (right) reviewing the company's operations with Mr Ling Tsui, liaison official with Union International in Hong Kong.

The Liaison official with Union International in Hong Kong, Mr Ling Tsui, recently visited W. & R. Fletcher's operations in New Zealand for talks on the expanding trade of by-products in the Far East.

Mr Tsui recently opened up Union International's trade links with the Republic of China, which he says in six months has shown the potential of becoming a major market for New Zealand.

He has been liaising with major Chinese operations in the leading trading centres for the sale of mainly hides, pelts and woollskins.

Previously sales of New Zealand products were negotiated by the company operating through brokers in Hong Kong.

Mr Tsui says that he will also be actively promoting the sale of New Zealand slipe wool to the Chinese.

"In the past the Chinese have traditionally operated on a large scale bulk buying operation which has caused some disruption to the suppliers who cannot plan ahead.

"I will be trying to pass on the philosophy of sales on a regular basis and will pass on relevant details to the Chinese officials so that they can maintain a regular assessment of prices against their requirements," Mr Tsui said.

"The market has a growing potential for New Zealand and I have seen a steady growth since we entered the direct sales field about six months ago.

"In addition to sales we also arrange for the group the purchase of cotton yarns manufactured by the Chinese."

Mr Tsui, who joined the Vestey organisation ten years ago, had previously worked in the by-products division of the Hong Kong Refrigerating Company.

LIVESTOCK CORNER

From humble beginnings in a disused building in the Auckland Meat Company compound at Westfield in 1973 to a modern factory at Mangakino in the South Waikato in 1977 and an export award in 1979.

This is the story of Slink Skins (Auckland) Limited - a company which processes dead lambs and produces baby lamb skins of high quality for export to Europe and the Far-East, where after tanning and dyeing the skins are used in the manufacture of ladies fashion garments and suede/woollen gloves.

A dead lamb collection service covering the northern half of the North Island is provided to sheep farmers of the central plateau, the King country, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, the East Coast from Wairoa to Ruatoria, and to the farming districts of North Auckland.

During the lambing season the company employs a staff in excess of one hundred people with the factory providing employment for

INSIDE SLINK SKINS

some 50 per cent of this figure on skinning, processing and grading under the factory manager Murray Greensill of Mangakino. The remainder of the personnel are outside staff operating the lamb collection service under the field supervisor Ron Giles of Tokoroa.

The production of baby lamb skins at the Mangakino factory has increased from 80,000 skins in the 1977 lambing season to 180,000 in 1979, and the company is looking forward with confidence to further expansion and success in this field.



Inside the Slink Skins factory.

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The testing drew large crowds of interested onlookers including many of the butchers who will work on the newly constructed chains.

Mr Bricklebank has now been responsible for the construction of two beef houses for the W & R Fletcher group, the first being at the Westfield works, where coincidentally he also worked with Alan Edwards.

He joined Fletchers as a shift engineer at the Patea Freezing Company and after just over a year transferred to Westfield where he was subsequently promoted to fitting shop foreman and assistant to the Chief engineer.

He later transferred to Tomoana and in 1976 was appointed Chief engineer for Nelson's NZ Ltd.

W & R FLETCHER VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE'S LONG AND COLOURFUL HISTORY

An important and colourful aspect of W. & R. Fletcher (N.Z.) Limited's operations at its Westfield, Patea and Tomoana works are the staff volunteer fire brigades.

Conducted on a completely voluntary basis these industrial brigades have a long and important history in the company's overall operations, and they draw a special breed of men.

The loyalty of the men to their brigades is borne out by the number of long service emblems awarded regularly at each of the three works.

The Fletcher's fire brigades have over the years efficiently handled both minor and holding action for major emergencies saving considerable damage and inconvenience at the various works.

One example was the Tomoana fire brigade's prompt answer to the recent disastrous fire which gutted the beef house.

The brigade started the emergency procedures and mounted a successful holding action while other regular fire service units rushed to the scene.

Their action was highly commended by local fire officers and helped contain the fire to the beef house and away from other operations including the newly constructed mutton slaughterhouse.

The three fire brigades often take part in local competitions and they strongly contest an annual interworks tournament with great rivalry for the various trophies.

W. & R. Fletcher's general manager, Mr Peter Johnston, said the company and the three works were very aware of dedication and good work put in by the volunteer firemen.

"They put in long hours and have all reached and maintained standards that would be the envy of any industrial brigade in the country.

"Their prompt and efficient action in the past has coped with many an emergency and I am sure they are aware of the company's gratitude to them."

Weddel's World will feature the various brigades in forthcoming issues starting with Westfield in this issue.

Westfield Fire Brigade

The Westfield Freezing Company's Industrial Volunteer Fire Brigade was first formed in May 1917 and is considered to be one of the oldest industrial Fire Brigades in New Zealand.

During the war years of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 a number of the Brigade personnel served in the New Zealand armed forces overseas, some with distinguished service.

Over the years the Brigade has been honoured by having six Gold Star members.

The Brigade of today has a membership of fifteen which includes Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Third Officer, Station Officer, Senior Fireman and eleven Firemen.

The training of personnel is carried out on Monday evenings to make members efficient in handling equipment which is used in firefighting procedures.

A fully equipped fire appliance is in service to deal with fire, ammonia escapes and chemical situations within the plant and is also standardised to meet the requirements of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission.

In the early years of the Brigade a Fire Hose cart-reel was used in fighting fires within the plant. On the sounding of the alarm four firemen would make themselves available to manhandle the cart-reel and proceed to extinguish the fire.

The using of canvas hose with screw couplings made hard work for those running out the hose and many a hand and an arm endured canvas burns.

After a number of years a motorised appliance with a trailer pump was introduced along with more modern equipment. In 1950 alloy instantaneous couplings and rubber lined synthetic hose was obtained and allowed personnel to lay out the hose in a more efficient manner.

From 1958 to the present day the Brigade has been known for its participation in the competition field and has won them at National and Provincial Association levels.

BRASS HELMETS

The competition team have distinguished itself at Auckland Suburban Fire Brigades Association level for many years and have always been recognised by other Brigades by wearing the brass helmets – possibly the only brigade remaining in New Zealand that still possesses brass helmets!

A number of Brigade members have also been appointed in the capacity of Competition Officials at various Competitions throughout the country.

The Brigade personnel have attended numerous fires within the plant over the years some of the major ones being 1940 Wool Floor, 1965 Boning Floor, 1968 Stockfoods Factory and 1977 Main Engine Room.

The efficiency of the Brigade is held in high esteem by members of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission.



The Westfield Fire Brigade:

Back row from left: Firemen: S. Shepherd, P. Bedard, G. Clark, K. Gainfort, J. Sinclair, J. Pavard.

Front row from left: Fireman R. Benn, 3rd Officer N. Lyon, Chief Fire Officer R. Whittle, Senior Fireman M. Bradfield, Fireman G. Jones.

Absent were Deputy Chief Fire Officer F. Horspool, Station Officer K. Riley, Firemen G. Miers and H. Smith.

NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN



The New Zealand Meat Producers Board has elected Mr Adam Begg as its new chairman to succeed Mr Charles Hilgendorf, chairman for the past eight years.

Mr Begg, who farms at Stirling, Otago, was appointed to the Board in 1969 as a Government nominee. He was elected as producer representative in 1976 and had been deputy chairman of the Board since 1974.

During his 11 years on the Board, Mr Begg has served on all of the organisations internal committees, was chairman of the promotion and marketing committee and is at present chairman of the shipping committee.

Mr Begg, who is 48, comes from an Otago farming family. He was educated at John McGlashan College, Dunedin, and then returned to the family farm. He farmed in partnership with his brother for about eight years before establishing his own farm at Stirling in the late 1950's.

He is engaged mainly in producing prime lambs but runs sheep for cross-bred wool and fattens some cattle.

The Board elected Mr Norman McRae as its new deputy chairman.

Mr McRae, 49, who farms a beef and sheep property at Mokoreta, near Wyndham, Southland, was appointed to the board as a Government nominee in 1976. He resigned from this position recently and successfully contested the producer vacancy on the Board created by the retirement of Mr Hilgendorf.

SPORTS NEWS

Patea and Fletcher's head office netball teams shared the honours in a recent competition also involving Tomoana played at Palmerston North. Due to the late arrival of the Wellington squad Tomoana and Patea had already started the competition without a draw, the result going in Patea's favour by 12-7.

Tomoana lost the toss and had to field a tired squad against the head office team and subsequently went down by 17-12. Because of the time element the final and deciding game between Patea and head office had to be shortened and ended up as a 9-all draw. The teams then retired to a local "watering hole" where they met up with the cricket teams from Patea and Tomoana for an after match function.



A fierce struggle for the ball!

With the annual cricket match between W. & R. Fletcher's and Blue Port shipping now a regular fixture, much interest surrounded the first rugby event between the two companies, which turned out to be a resounding win for Fletcher's by 42 to nil.

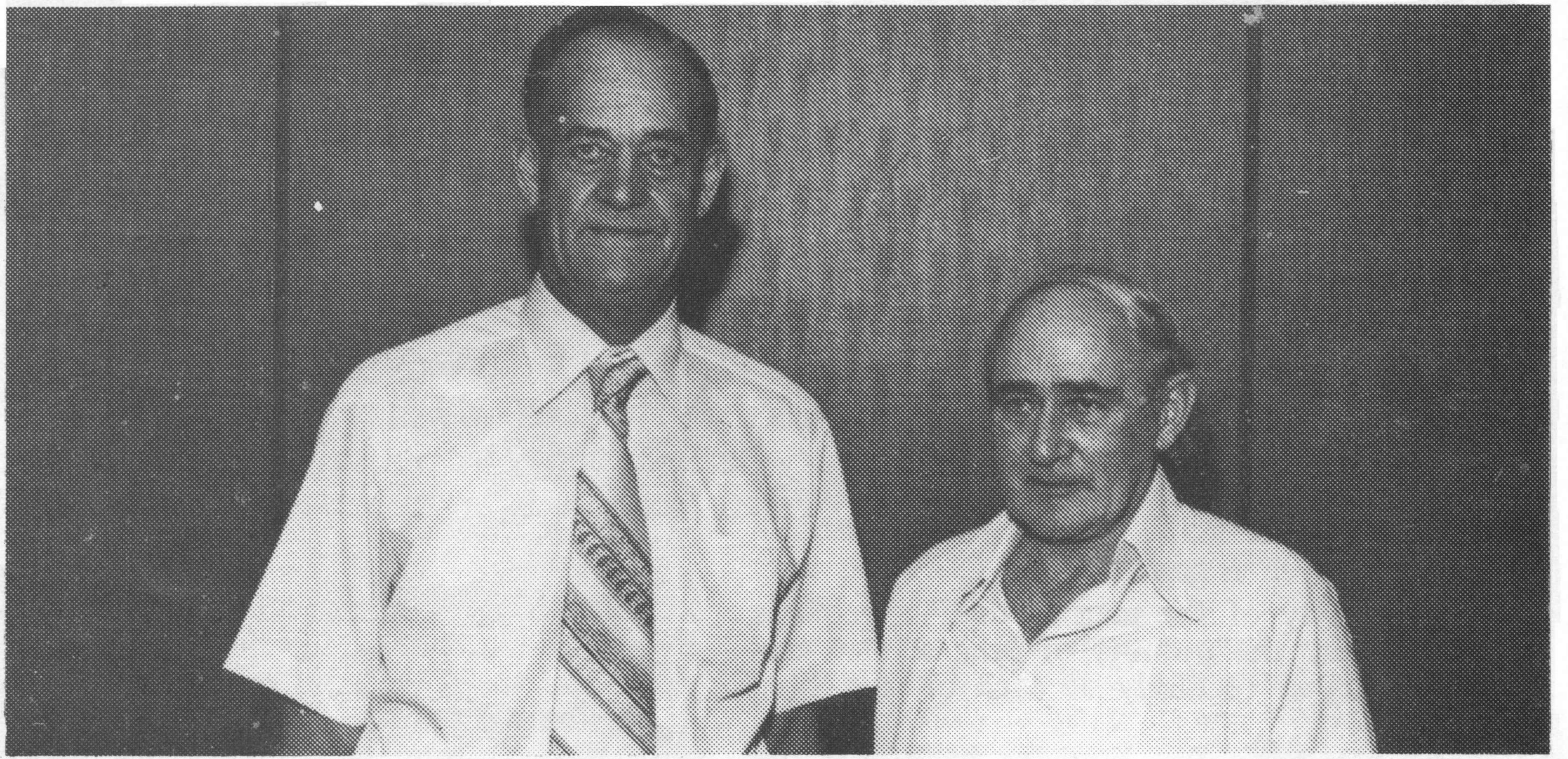
While Fletcher's, with good runs by Tim Parry and Tony O'Connell, had no trouble scoring tries, they had no success in converting them, partly due to the policy of offering all team members a kick. In fact it was not until half time that the first conversion, by Neville Slight, went between the posts. So poor was Fletcher's record that they offered the last conversion attempt to Blue Port. . . and were not disappointed!

In one touch of humour Victor Ezelle, visiting New Zealand from the Vestey organisations in the United States, took up the challenge and agreed to go on at half time to make up the numbers even though he had never played the game before and didn't know the rules - much to the spectators' delight.

Ieti Tiatia, Fletcher's captain said the win was a fine effort especially by the "retired" players, and he awarded man-of-the-match to first time hooker, Nick Parker, shown on the right of the photograph of a skirmish.



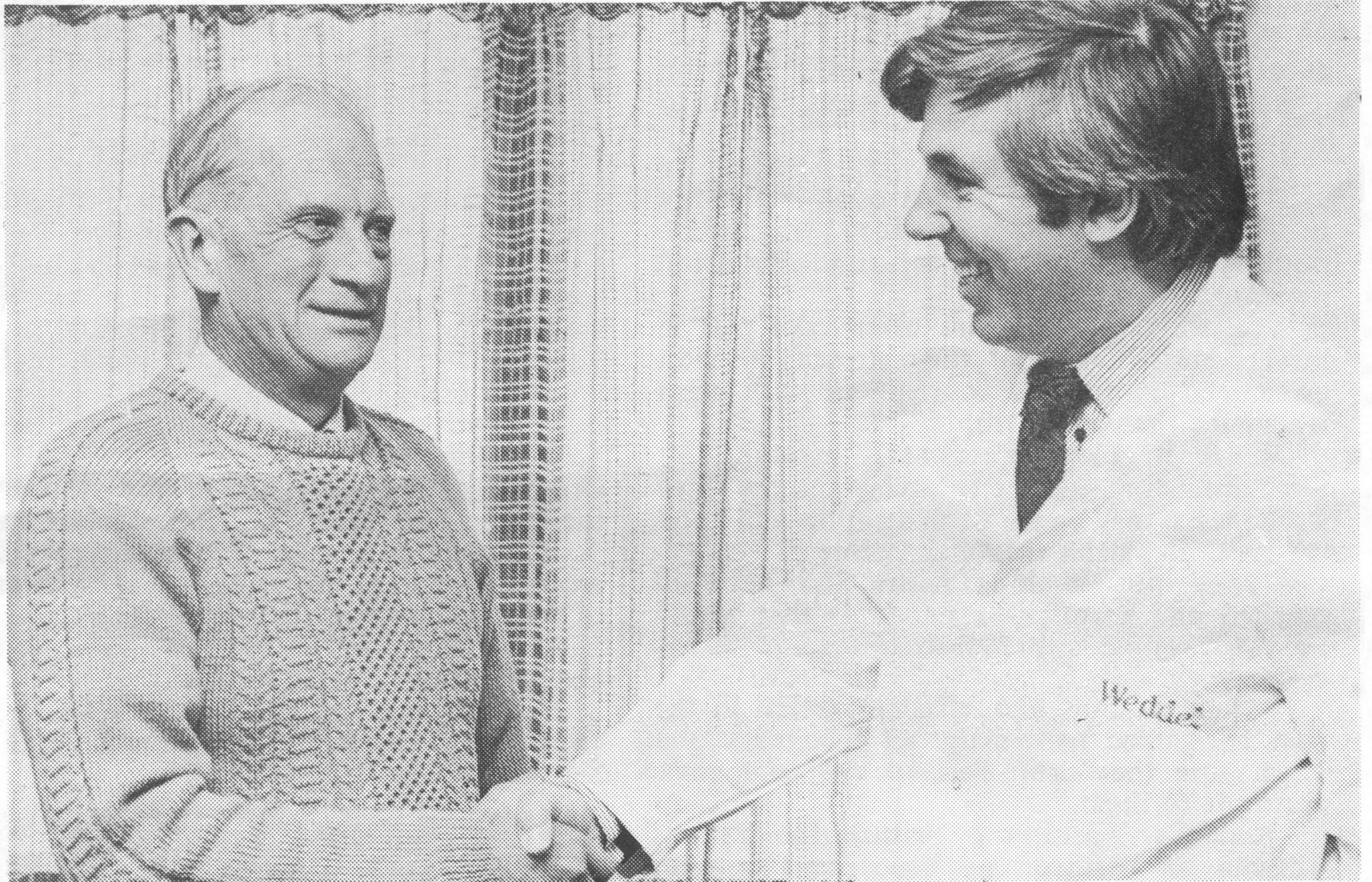
It is with regret that Weddel's World records the death of Mr Dave Wallace, who joined the Westfield Freezing company in 1929 and on his retirement five years ago was senior boning room foreman. Condolences to Mrs Wallace and family.



Two long serving members of the Westfield Freezing Company, Mr Mick Shilton, (right) and Mr Ernie Osmond, were farewelled by their colleagues recently on their retirement.

Mr Osmond joined the company on a temporary basis in the fellmongery in 1947. He was appointed to the staff as an assistant foreman in 1955 and held that position until his retirement.

Mr Shilton joined Westfield in 1966 as an assistant foreman in the stockyards, a position he held until his retirement.



Nelson's N.Z. Limited lost one of the stalwarts of its wages office recently with the retirement of Keith Humphreys, the paymaster, after 43 years' service - all in the same department!

He is pictured above being farewelled by Tomoana general manager Mr Michael Sanders.

Keith, who served with the second NZEF's 4th field regiment as an artilleryman during the second world war, says that on looking back while everything was calculated and processed manually in his earlier days, life in the wages office then was comparatively simple. The only wages deduction to be made was a flat tax rate of eight-pence in the pound for workers over twenty years old. But he says that over the

years this has changed as industrial awards have become more complex and income tax from a flat rate to a sliding scale.

Keith says that this has placed the wages personnel under much greater pressure, but for all that he says that he has enjoyed his time at Tomoana and made many good friends.

Brought up in Clive, Keith was a member of the local rugby and rowing clubs in his younger days and now directs his sporting activities to fishing, duck-shooting and "paua hunting".

Company Profile

Mr Andrew Parkinson, Chief Accountant of the Patea Freezing Company, joined the group as Office Junior at Westfield Freezing Company in January 1969. During the next eight years at Westfield he worked in the Livestock Department, Production Department but the major part of his time was in the Cost Department.

While he was the Junior member of the Cost department at Westfield in the early 1970's the group changed to the Standard Costing System and with this he saw the introduction and development of this effective form of Management Accounting.

Andy transferred to Patea in mid 1977 to take up the position of Cost Accountant. Then in 1979 was promoted to his present position of Chief Accountant. During his time at Patea he has seen many changes especially with the re-development work currently being carried out.

Andy is a keen golfer and is a member of the Hawera Golf Club with a handicap of 16. He has represented both Westfield and Patea at the annual Inter-Works Golf Tournament held at Taupo. He still retains an interest in cricket but now only plays for the Works team at the Inter-Works Tournament.

Andy is married with two small children, Suzanne 5 and Tony 18 months.

