



# Weddel's World

★ WESTFIELD  
★ TOMOANA  
★ PATEA  
★ KAITI - in conjunction with  
Gisborne Sheepfarmers  
Freezing Co. Ltd.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
ISSUED BY  
W. & R. FLETCHER (N.Z.) LTD

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## Patea Works fill vital role



THE celebration of Patea's centennial last month illustrated the prominent part played by the Patea Freezing Co. Ltd in the history and development of the borough.

One of the first industries to be established in the area, the company has had a chequered career over the past 100 years but today looks forward to a new period of prosperity.

The works, originally named the West Coast Meat and Produce Export Co. Ltd, were initiated by a small group of settlers in 1883 — only one year after the first freezing company was established in New Zealand. Meat sold for fourpence a pound, and was described as being "of excellent quality". Wool, skins and tallow were also marketed.

The company changed hands and suffered a number of setbacks before being taken over by W & R Fletcher Ltd in 1934. Under the new ownership the works were upgraded and many sections rebuilt. Wages were restored, and by 1943 444 men were employed in the killing season.

In the past 20 years there has been further upgrading, resulting in vastly improved amenities and increased efficiency. Today the works play a vital role, serving the needs of the farming community and providing a major source of employment. In the 1979/80 season total production was valued at nearly \$30 million, a far cry from those early days when it was considered an achievement to slaughter 10 animals in a day.

Pictured (above), an aerial view of Patea Freezing Co. Ltd with beautiful Mount Egmont rising in the background; on page 2, the company's prizewinning float in the borough's Centennial Parade.

# Industry warned not to forget smaller markets

**PROMISING** smaller markets should be developed even at the cost of lower initial returns, according to the General Manager of W & R Fletcher Ltd, Mr P.H. Johnston.

Speaking to a Lincoln College seminar on lamb marketing, Mr Johnston said that the need to foster promising smaller markets at some initial disadvantage was a necessity.

"This is a strategy the MEX is fully aware of, and is well able to handle. There is evidence that this is already occurring.

"Such an approach, however, does not alter the fact that some 30-35 percent of our product will land in the Middle East where the wealth seems likely for the next 20 years."

Citing the development of shrink wrapping to improve bloom at delivery and reduce weight loss, both in transit and in store, Mr Johnston said that presentation of the product was an area which needed further improvement.

"Water is thrown at the product in the cause of hygiene and present regulations dictate a 'final wash', i.e. after the lamb has passed inspection and the scale.

"This causes problems of cost in subsequent handling and loss of bloom," Mr Johnston said.

"We are looking at this requirement — we should have the co-operation of MAF, not a blind insistence on regulation."

The intrusion of politics into the industry was also criticised, particularly in the area of export licences. Although the MEX and NZMPB

were invited to make recommendations the Minister of Agriculture was not obliged to follow this advice.

"He very often has not. A proliferation of licences has resulted and, it can be argued, a proliferation of small in and out 'sellers' with no marketing expertise, intention or responsibility".

He was not suggesting a restricted licence system, Mr Johnston added. But if there had to be a licence system there should be some "dispassionate criteria" on the basis of organisation, facilities and representation.

## Dehorning trials

RESEARCH now being carried out in the Auckland area will test the effectiveness of dehorning selected animals.

Dehorning can be carried out either at birth or at docking, according to the September "Food Processing News". However, the first trial was unsatisfactory and re-growth occurred. An improved method is now being tested.

In some areas about five percent of sheep entering the works have horns. Problems are caused when the horns become tangled in machinery. The animal can also be difficult to butcher.

Dehorning animals on farms is common practice in the beef and dairy industries, the report says; but has not been considered before for sheep and lambs.

## A use for everything

**THE** old saying "nothing is wasted at a freezing works", is illustrated by the number of by-products produced throughout the W & R Fletcher group.

### Chilled lamb

A growth of chilled product was desirable in the long-term, as in the Middle East frozen product was at the bottom of the preference list. This was partly because lamb was more prone to deterioration than beef, and a number of companies were working on this problem.

Tomoana, for example, processes about 500 kilograms of tail hair in a normal season. This is a small amount compared to some other products, but makes use of something which would otherwise be wasted.

Production was stopped by

last year's fire, but is expected to resume next season.

The process is quite simple. The first step is to separate the dirty tails from the clean. Dirty tails are dumped, and the rest are placed in boiling water for about 10 minutes to loosen the hair

from the skin, so it can be plucked off.

The tail hair is then graded into white or mixed, according to colour, and packed in bales for shipment.

While there is still a good demand for tail hair, production has been falling away. One reason for this is that more and more farmers are bob-tailing their stock, particularly in the case of dairy herds.

The finished product is shipped to Hamburg in West Germany, and used mainly in the manufacture of brushes.

### Mucosa

MUCOSA is another less familiar byproduct. It is the interior lining of the casing from the intestine of the sheep, and is used to produce heparin.

This is sold to New Zealand Pharmaceuticals, and is ultimately used to coagulate blood during operations.

Group Casings Superintendent Keith Taylor said this was the first season Tomoana had sold mucosa, which was previously a waste product; but it has been produced at other works for the past six years.



**MAKING** a slight dig at their Australian friends the Patea Freezing company's float won first prize in the commercial section of the borough's centennial parade.

## Butcher completes overseas mission



AFTER 18 months working as a missionary in England, Tori Reid is back at Tomoana where he has been a butcher for more than 40 years.

Ordained as a Bishop of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, Tori has been very active in church affairs in New Zealand. He has also been to Australia, and made six visits to America to attend seminars.

This was his first mission to England, although he visited there as an All Black in the 1930's.

Tori, and his wife Mary, spent a short time in London before moving on to the Greater Manchester area, Cheshire and Lancashire. He was responsible for an area of some 200 square miles, his main tasks to administer the church and create leadership. He also supervised the building of a new church.

The couple did a lot of travelling, covering 58,000 miles; and made a lot of good friends there.

"The Mission President said we had done three years missionary work in 18 months," Mr Reid commented.

He paid tribute to his wife for her support, adding: "She was the greatest!"

Mr Reid was a solo butcher for seven years, and has been with the company for 40 years.

"I love working, and I find a lot of pleasure working at Tomoana," he told Weddel's World.

## Lady foreman

JACKY MOREHU worked in offices and a clothing factory before joining the staff at Tomoana. But she claims her new job as foreman in the lamb cutting room is the best yet.

"I love the work," she told Weddel's World. "It's a challenge to keep the department running smoothly and the staff happy".



Jacky was previously a union member in lamb cuts personnel, then an industrial engineer on the staff. She was appointed foreman in June this year and is now responsible for 25 people, both men and women.

She finds the freezing works a good place to meet people and make friends. In her spare time she plays netball and basketball, and is a member of the Hawkes Bay Women's Softball Team after being captain for several years.

## Record lamb kill

JUNE 26 was a red letter day at Tomoana, when the two millionth lamb went through the works.

This was only the second time that the works had handled this number in a single season, according to assistant works manager Graeme Armstrong. Another record was set on March 25 this year, when Tomoana made a New Zealand record lamb kill of 20,000 in a normal working day.

On both occasions, a big marquee was set up on the lawn for a staff celebration.



## New wrap has big advantages

FINAL trials on packaging frozen lamb and sheepmeat for export in plastic bags instead of stockinette are now underway at the Tomoana Freezing Works in Hastings.

So far the trials, which have significant implications for the New Zealand freezing in-

dustry, have proved very successful.

The main value of the new style wrap is that it reduces the moisture and subsequent weight loss of the carcass during storage and transport overseas, resulting in a more attractive bloom or meat colour.

Plastic bags also allow clear printing of brands and grades, and because the film is semi-transparent the customer can assess the quality of the product without having to remove the wrap.

Special carcass handling and shrink packaging machinery has been developed to apply the new, pre-shaped plastic bags. The frozen carcass moves along a special conveyor which allows the bag to be applied, and the open end is heat sealed to give an air-tight package.

Pictured, Assistant Works Manager Graeme Armstrong (right) and foreman Ted Miller compare the new plastic bags with the traditional stockinette bag.

## Dairy conference

MILK harvesting, herd and cow feed requirements and farmer education will be the main themes of a dairy production conference in Hamilton in February, 1982.

Convenor Dr Jock Macmillan, from the Ruakura Agricultural Research Centre, has called for contributions from New Zealand and Australian dairy farmers, advisers and scientists.

The conference precedes the South Pacific Friesian Conference in Auckland.

# STAFF NEWS

RECENT transfers include:

**TO WELLINGTON:** Marissa Niemiec from Nelsons, Gisborne to head office shipping; John Fretchling from Patea, accounting trainee; Denis McLenaghan from Patea, production.

**TO PATEA:** Ray Offord from Wellington, chief accountant; Graeme Daines from Wellington, production manager.

**TO TOMOANA:** Andy Parkinson from Patea, chief accountant.

**TO HASTINGS TANNERY:** John Astley from New Zealand Light Leathers, Timaru, to replace Nigel Dobson as Manager.



**EACH** of these six staff members, who recently retired from Westfield, have given more than 40 years' service to the company. This will become a rarity in the future with later school leaving and earlier retirement ages, notes our Westfield correspondent.

**From left:** Bill Wilson (Chief Works Clerk), 49 years; Trevor Clayton (Forwarding Supervisor), 45 years; Andy McMullen (Assistant Freezer Foreman), 43 years; Dennis Clarke (Cannery Adviser), 49 years; Trevor Gillett (Paymaster), 42 years. **Sitting:** Lloyd Souness (Assistant General Manager), 45 years.

**Ships Stores Manager Jack Calder** just missed out on being in the photograph — he had completed only 38 years' service.

## PROFILE

### Westfield engineer wins accounting prize

JOHN BLACK, recently appointed Assistant Chief Engineer at Westfield, is a graduate member of the NZ Institute of Engineers and the Institution of Chemical Engineers (London).

Head Prefect at Onehunga High School in Auckland, John won a bursary to Auckland University where he gained a Bachelor of Engineering degree with Honours in Chemical and Materials Engineering.

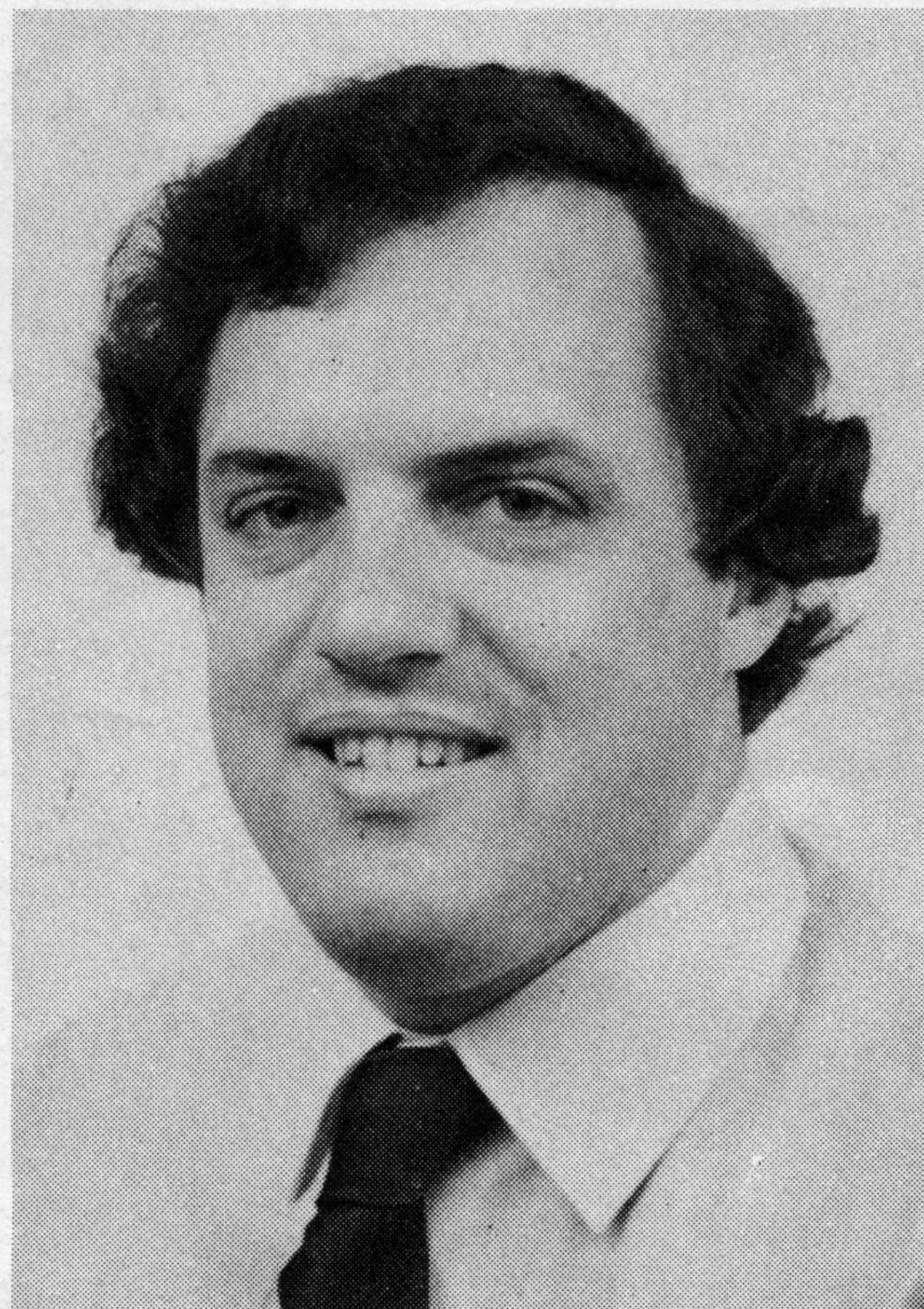
After being employed by the NZ Electricity Department as a cadet and assistant engineer, he joined the

Westfield Freezing Co as project engineer in 1976.

In 1979 he began to study for a Bachelor of Commerce degree by correspondence from Massey University, and last year was awarded the NZ Society of Accountants prize for stage two Financial Accounting and Cost and Management Accounting.

He was appointed to his present position following the transfer of Bob Shilton to the UK in May this year.

John's wife, Jan, has a Bachelor of Arts degree. She also has diplomas in music, and teaches the piano.



### 40 years service

THE record number of gold watches presented at Tomoana this year must be a good recommendation for the company, and the relationship between management and staff.

Forty years service has been completed by Pat Donnelly, engine room; Dave Thompson, watchman; Tom O'Kane, mutton slaughterfloor; William (Chappie) Kingi, senior mutton slaughterfloor; Dave Colello, rendering; Brian (Guthie) Reeves, butcher shop; Tori Reid, slaughterfloor.

The next presentation will be to Martin (Bully) Ropiha snr, mutton slaughterfloor.

## Retirements

BEST wishes to Ray Bernie, assistant boning room foreman, who has retired from Tomoana due to ill health.

Mr Bernie joined the staff in 1956. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

MR Graham Fredericks has retired as Group Purchasing Manager after 41 years with the company.

The management and staff of W & R Fletcher Ltd wish Mr Fredericks many happy years, and good bowling!

## GOLDEN OLDIES IN THE STATES

THE recent "Golden Oldies" Rugby Tour to California and Hawaii had a strong Tomoana content with five players from the works, and one from Hastings Tannery, in addition to the many supporters.

To qualify as a "Golden Oldie", players had to be over 35 years of age. Most were members of the Havelock North Rugby Club, but joined with the Hawkes Bay Saracens to form one of the 13 New Zealand teams in the tournament.

Players included George Maoate and Ian Henderson, both butchers on the chain; Winston Stephenson, beef house delegate; Terry Davies, slaughterhouse senior foreman; Frank Jones, assistant slaughterhouse foreman; and Bob Mitchell, accountant at the tannery.

Among the supporters were Rangi Whaanga, Dick Cunningham and Milton Mako, all from Tomoana; two women union members, Maryanne Pearse and Daphne

Mako; and other wives.

The team won two of the three games played at Long Beach, and took part in a mini-tournament at San Francisco where they had a single win. They also had a win in Hawaii, playing in a mixed team.

It was a "great trip", according to Terry Davies, a player and one of the assistant tour managers.

The American hospitality was "just fantastic", he added.