

# Weddel's World

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

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

MARCH 1982

## Orderly shipping ensures our product reaches overseas markets



**NEW ZEALAND** relies on shipping for its basic livelihood – imports and fuel for our manufacturing industries, and the exports to pay for our imported goods.

The meat industry, too, is dependent on regular, planned shipping to all markets. Without this production would be jeopardised as there are only limited cold storage facilities.

W & R Fletcher's Shipping Manager, Mr Bruce Sloane, explains that every plant and department within the group

is dependent on the others to ensure the successful export of the company's products.

"Livestock cannot be processed without a market outlet, or if cold stores are full due to inefficient or insufficient shipping opportunities," he said.

(Cont. on page 3).



# Hygiene only one aspect of quality control

**QUALITY control is more than just hygiene. It takes in all aspects of production from processing procedures to overall presentation for both local and export markets.**

Presentation generally is undergoing rapid development as the industry improves its existing presentation and looks at new packaging methods for further processed products. One example is the packaging of lamb livers which has gone in a short time from tin pails to plastic wrapping, and cardboard packs.

W & R Fletcher Ltd was one of the first New Zealand companies to use the new cardboard packs, specially designed with a moisture-proof coating. Introduced by NZ Forest Products in 1978, the packs were Highly Commended in the recent AHI Packaging Awards; and have proved to be more economical than the plastic con-

tainers used previously because of their local content.



**INVESTIGATIONS** into new methods of packaging have been well received, although feasibility studies are still being carried out. Pictured (above), two hearts in an attractive retail pack for better consumer appeal and easier distribution.

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tainers used previously because of their local content. sport and results in a better product overall. When thawed, the carcass has the appearance of a freshly killed beast.

Trials are still under way but initial reaction has been enthusiastic, and the company expects the new wrap to be universally adopted throughout the industry. Offals are now being produced in portion or "consumer ready" retail packs, instead of in bulk, and again a better result is being achieved.

Vacuum packing machines are used to pack the items into individual mini-grip (interlocking) bags. Bright labelling adds graphic appeal, and the packs can be delivered straight from the producer to retail display cabinets.

While excellent results are being achieved in the whole area of presentation and packaging it must be remembered that every new development involves increased costs which have to be recovered. In many cases the industry will not achieve a higher market value through more attractive packaging, but hopes to keep up with the competition and sell the product more easily.

Any company which doesn't meet market conditions can expect to suffer disadvantage both locally and abroad.

## Group Production Supervisor transfers to UK

GROUP Production Supervisor Neil Bridgland (pictured) has been transferred to the UK for a two year term as assistant to Mr D. Lloyd, Australasian Manager in London.

When Neil first joined the company at Westfield 17 years ago, he was given the job of tying neck strings on lambs.

But this was only a start, as he completed a Meat Diploma Course extramurally through Massey while at Westfield.

He became a meat grader and quality control and production assistant, before transferring to the Gisborne Refrigerating Company at Kaiti as Production Manager.

### New challenge

After two years at head office he is looking forward to the challenge of his new appointment, which is basically a training position for New Zealanders and Australians to learn the marketing and management side of the industry.

"I sincerely hope we can prove that New Zealanders are just as good as their English counterparts," Neil told *Weddel's World*. "I would like to see New Zealanders getting to the top — subject to ability, background and training."

This will be Neil's first visit to London, but his wife Robyn spent three years there working for a Diploma of

Paedaetrics. With their baby son, Craig, the couple spent three weeks in Australia before travelling on to the UK.

They hope to continue some of their leisure activities during the next two years. Neil plays squash (he describes himself as an enthusiastic amateur), and enjoys jogging.



When he has time he also enjoys hunting, tramping and boating. He was involved in the Auckland Coastguard for several years, and also the Auckland YMCA's young adult programme.

Military history is another current interest. "I'm looking forward to seeing the places where it all actually happened," he said.

Shrink wrapping, which featured in the November issue of *Weddel's World*, is another new development which will improve the quality of the product.

For many years the lamb carcass was simply wrapped in stockinette, but increasing demands for a higher standard of presentation have led to the development of the new, pre-shaped plastic bags. The new method reduces moisture and weight loss during storage and tran-



**HIGH praise for Weddel's lamb from the Prime Minister, Mr Muldoon, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bill Rowling. The pair drew knives at a West Auckland vineyard, but only to carve the meat for the Wine Institute's annual viticultural field day. Mr Rex Austin, Agriculture and Fisheries Under-secretary, looks over the PM's shoulder to check his carving skill.**

# THE SHIPPING STORY

... from front cover

"If it is not produced, it cannot be sold or shipped."

To a large extent the shipping department of a freezing company dictates the most important facet of the company's operation — finance. Without shipment the company is not paid.

A major portion of our meat trade hinges on the correct forecasting of shipping space, which has to be nominated two months in advance.

Stock is usually in store for one to three months prior to shipment. But as the company has paid for the live-stock at the time of initial processing, any delays to shipping will mean decreased or delayed revenue and a direct loss to the company.

## 800,000 tonnes

With 800,000 tonnes of meat being exported nationally each year in addition to slipe wool, pelts, hides and casings, it is no mean feat to ensure the orderly movement of cargo. Ships do not just materialise. There are daily assessments and communication between producer, supplier, buyer and shipowner to ensure that ships are available as and when required.

"To those not immediately involved shipping is a matter of a ship in the harbour or at the wharf — something going on or coming off," Mr Sloane commented. "But it is rather more organised than that!"

"Even when our products are loaded, that is not the end. We are involved with harbour boards, transport operators, the MAF, NZ Railways, shipping companies, producer boards and, of course, the ultimate buyer who requires full and accurate documentation for the product shipped to meet customs and agriculture department requirements both here and at the destination."

## Conference lines

About two-thirds of the company's tonnage is lifted by ships within a conference or semi-conference shipping concept, with the balance shipped by charter vessels.

The Northbound (United Kingdom — Continent — Mediterranean) Conference is contracted by the NZ Meat Producers' Board in conjunction with the NZ Dairy Board, and covers freight

costs and frequency of service and calls. Similar conferences operate for shipments to North America, Japan and Korea.

The guarantee of refrigerated meat cargo (and dairy products) also brings benefits for other exporters, who can negotiate for the excess space available on the contracted services.

## Improvements

Most traditional markets are now served by con-

tainers, which have brought obvious advantages to the industry and the consumer alike. The product is handled less frequently, delays are minimised with better product out-turn, and temperature and hygiene control have been improved over conventional shipping.

As containers are treated as a unit from packing through to wholesaler, processor and distributor, the contents are not touched and the product arrives in top condition.

## Cover photos:

The Act 7 sails for the UK after loading a cargo of refrigerated meat at the Port of Wellington.

The Act 7 and its sister ship, the Australian Venture, are the Blueport line's largest vessels and two of the four largest reefer ships in the world. With a length of 248.58 metres and dead weight 39,454 tonnes, the ship can hold 2152 containers (1119 refrigerated and 1033 general containers).

The smaller photo shows containers being loaded from the terminal stack by straddle carrier. The crane can lift three eight by twenty-foot containers at a time, stacked vertically.

## Tomoana butcher notches up 54 years' service

**WHEN Lawrence (Milky) Mills started his first job as a labourer at Tomoana, he didn't expect to be there for long. He was only 13 years old at the time, and had to obtain special approval from the Inspector of Factories before being allowed to stay.**

Times were hard, and there was no unemployment benefit for those who didn't manage to find a job. But the young lad proved to be a keen worker and stayed on — for a grand total of 54 years!

Too young to be a butcher at first, he stayed permanently on piece work and "did the hooks" in the lunchtime. When the chains came in 50 years ago, he looked after the six butchers in the abattoirs.

His starting salary was \$157 a year with no provision for overtime, although he worked until eight o'clock at night. There were no showers for labourers, only "three old

tin things", and most bosses were "really tough".

"They had to be — they were dealing with tough men in those days," he says. "You were too frightened to complain in case you lost your job."

Some incidents still leave him grinning, though.

"I reckon I was the first streaker there," he told Weddel's World. "We had a three-foot trough of warm water where we scalded the pigs, and I thought I'd have a bit of a swim."

Unfortunately the manager appeared on the scene and

young Milky took off, leaving his clothes behind.

"I got a tune-up!" he added.

The earthquake of 1931 was another unforgettable experience.

"When the shake came an office fell against the door and no-one could get out — we finally got out down the sheep race."

Milky has lived on three acres of land outside Hastings since 1950, when he bought the property for 50 pounds. He also used to lease additional land for cropping and sheep, getting up at 4 am to do his chores.

He would arrive at the works at 6.30, an hour before starting time.

"I don't believe in rushing," he says; explaining that he had time to sharpen his knives and enjoy a cup of tea before getting down to the day's work.

## Many interests

Milky has been involved in training horses, played Rugby for Napier's Marist Club and still enjoys watching local games. A large garden also keeps him occupied. But he and Mrs Mills both enjoy travelling to race meetings in Wellington and Rotorua, as well as the Hawkes Bay area.

He also likes to keep in touch with some of the friends he made during his many years at Tomoana.

"I've met some great fellows there," he says. "I reckon I've met as good as any in the freezing works."



MR and Mrs Lawrence (Milky) Mills enjoy a brief moment of relaxation. Milky retired last year after 54 years at the Tomoana Freezing Works in Hastings.

## Pension Fund builds in Lower Hutt

THIS imposing three-storey building in the heart of Lower Hutt's "Golden Mile" has been erected on behalf of Fletcher (NZ) Pension Investments Ltd. It is situated between Dudley and High Streets, with access from both sides.

Designed by the Structon Group and constructed by Mainzeal, the building provides nearly 20,000 square feet of office and retail space with ground floor parking. It has been constructed in reinforced concrete and block with a soffit complemented by a lacework of steel forming a sunscreen, to give depth and shadow to the building.

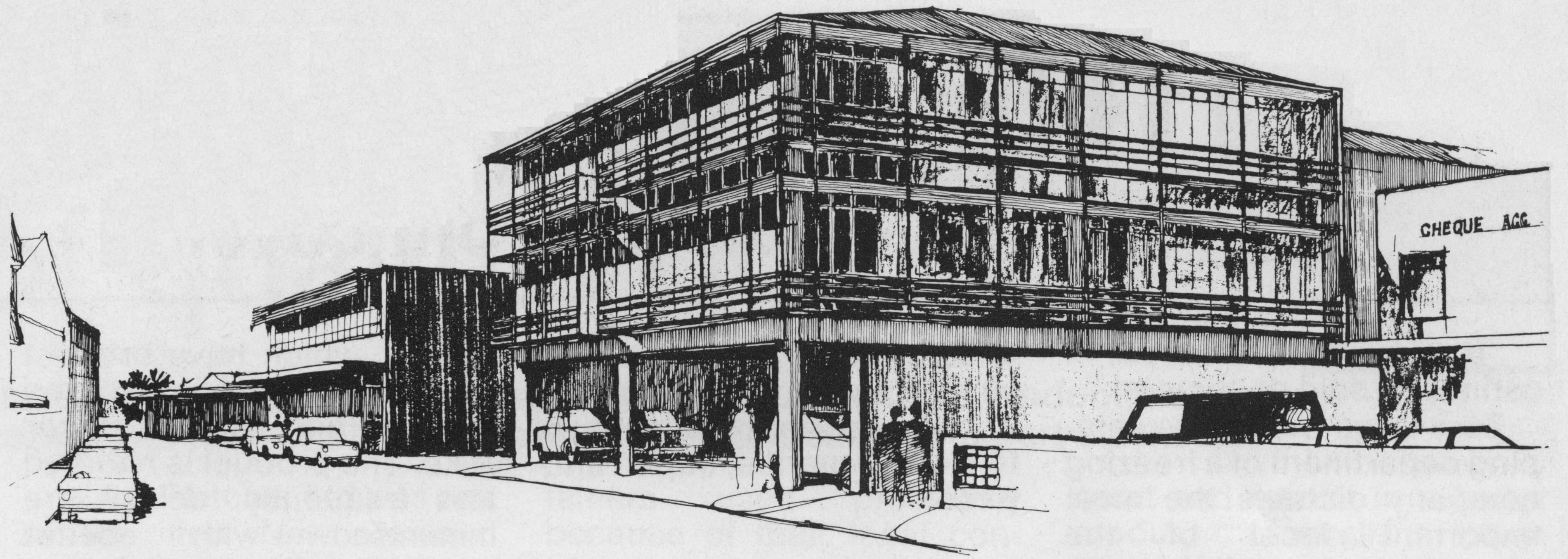
Group Property Manager Andrew Malinowski reports that the Housing Corporation is occupying the two office floors, while negotiations are continuing for the ground floor shops. The entire property is valued at approximately \$1.3 million.

W & R Fletcher manage another new block in Lower Hutt, constructed by Wilkinson and Davies for the Blueport ACT Pension Fund.

### In passing

APPLE cider vinegar, molasses and liquid seaweed has been on the menu for 200-odd cattle on the Waikato farm of Mr Owen Gillingham. Food Industry magazine reports that these liquid foods were used as a supplement when feed was short, but the owner is convinced of the therapeutic value of cider vinegar.

"This folk medicine has been known for thousands of years yet it has been completely overlooked by the dairy industry," he said.



In Auckland, Fletcher (NZ) Pension Investments Ltd completed the \$1.1 million UEB Industrial Building in July last year. Construction has now started on the \$3 million Greenlane Office Park complex in Greenlane Street. The 3565 square metre building provides three floors of offices and parking, and will be occupied by the Construction and Property Sector of the Fletcher Challenge Group.

RIGHT: Housing Corporation staff in Lower Hutt enjoy their spacious new premises more than twice the size of their previous office.

Assistant Manager, Mr F.C. Barton, said the new offices opened to the public just four days before Christmas. Originally only field officers and maintenance staff were based in Lower Hutt, but it became a sub-office in 1974. This year it becomes a full branch, and the present staff of 46 will more than double to handle the increasing responsibilities including mortgage applications.

"I doubt that there's a sub-office in the country that's busier than we are," Mr Barton commented.



## Visit by UK casings manager

MR Dennis Frederickson, Manager of Weddel's Casings and Tennis Strings Division, visited New Zealand in January. This was his first trip home since his transfer to the UK in January, 1980.

Mr Frederickson is responsible for the production and marketing of casings within the group, including casings produced in New Zealand and South America (Brazil); and tennis strings produced in the plant at Adelaide, South Australia.

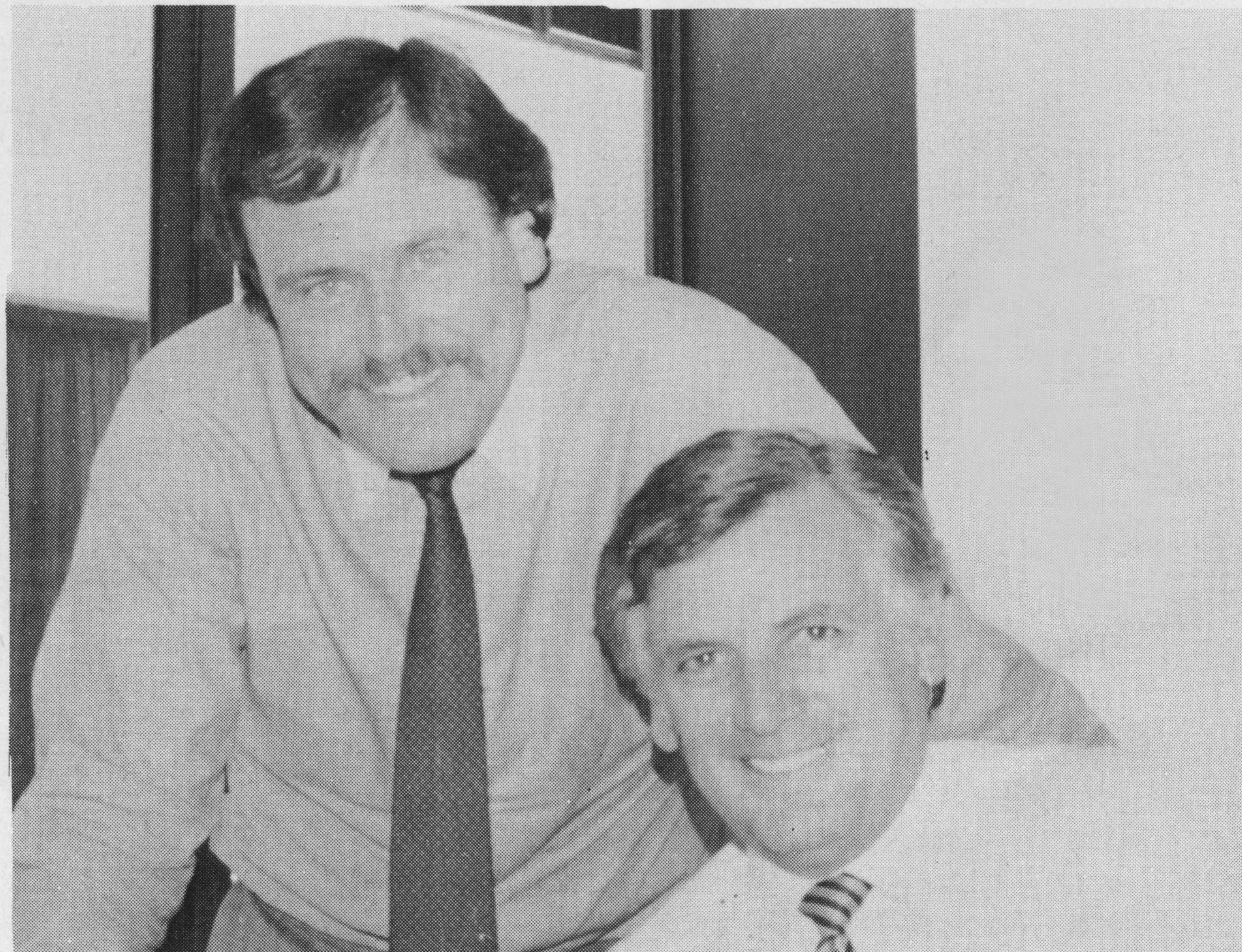
He and Group Casings Manager, Mr Laurie Edwards, visited the Adelaide factory before touring the four New Zealand plants at Patea, Westfield, Kaiti and Tomoana.

"I have been into many casing factories in the past two years and the standard of our New Zealand casing departments are equal to any in the world," he told Weddel's World.

The Frederickson family, which includes wife Marilyn, Kent (8) and Emma (7), are enjoying life in the UK. They live 25 miles out of London on the edge of the city, and spend their spare time exploring the countryside. They have also made trips to the Continent.

"It was quite a challenge at first as it's a completely different way of life," he commented.

"But it is not much dearer to live once you learn where to shop. We were surprised at how costs had increased in New Zealand since we were here last."



Pictured (left), Mr Edwards at the desk and Mr Frederickson standing.