

TOWN HALL OPEN

WELLINGTON'S new Town Hall, the Michael Fowler Centre, is officially open and has been lauded as the capital city's most impressive cultural centre.

Long-standing readers of "Weddel's World" will remember the October 1977 issue which featured presentation of a \$4,000 cheque by W & R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd and Blue Port-ACT, to the then Mayor, Sir Michael Fowler.

It was the first cheque in a joint, five year, \$20,000 commitment to the project.

Construction began in January of 1980; Sir Michael having persevered against initial opposition to the project. His drive, enthusiasm

and persistence not only brought the venture to a brilliant culmination, but were rewarded by having the centre named after him.

It was also the constant support of companies such as W & R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd, which made the project possible.

PICTURED: Even more splendid by night than day is Wellington's Michael Fowler Centre, opened recently during two days of gala celebrations. W & R Fletcher has good reason to be proud of the support it gave to its construction.

Thanks go to staff for record kills

DESPITE a year of debate within the industry, pressures from EEC, and a move towards a radical marketing change, the W & R Fletcher Group has no reason to be downcast or apologetic.

The 1982/3 operations basically went very smoothly with record or near record kills at all meat plants, and other operations were also quite promising for the future.

Thanks for this must go to all our staff — both union and non-union — for recognising this challenging time for New Zealand and putting in the unremitting effort.

Our organisation expects to play a continuing part in the overseas marketing — and in New Zealand to continue the progress which has marked the last few years.

While times will continue not to be easy we have no doubt that the efforts of 1982/3 will be continued, and hence we can confidently wish all our workforce a very happy Christmas and a healthy and rewarding 1984.



This issue of "Weddel's World" reflects the increasing importance of Middle Eastern and Asian countries, as major importers of New Zealand beef and lamb. W&R Fletcher (NZ)

Ltd has responded to the need for increased financial investment with a commitment to change which will cater to the requirements of these and other markets.

Beef kill acceptable to Muslim markets

SLAUGHTERING at the Westfield Freezing Company is now totally Halal and the works is believed to be the only one in New Zealand which can produce beef acceptable to Muslim consumers.

W&R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd's Quality Control Manager, Mr Denis McClenaghan said countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and other middle eastern and Asian nations, have become large buyers of this country's beef and lamb.

"We have to cater to the market places — it is a buyer's world and these countries have made the major requirement that the slaughter of animals be in line with their religious laws.

"While the lamb situation has been in place for the past few seasons, extension into beef processing has only moved with urgency over the

last six months. Our markets were becoming limited with the conventional system — Malaysia in particular, has banned imports of beef which has not be slaughtered according to its religious needs," Mr McClenaghan said.

The Westfield plant, under the guidance of Works Manager, Mr Robin Reid, conducted trials on some 3000 head of cattle before arriving at what was considered to be an acceptable system.

Westfield was also fortunate in having guidance and approval given by the Senior Muslim (shia) Religious Authority Resident in New Zealand, Mr Mahdavi. He is also responsible for supplying the 20 Muslim slaughtermen, employed by Westfield, Tomoana and Kaiti.

Islamic Laws require the cause of death to be cutting of the throat, associated veins and arteries, with a sharp

knife. This is carried out by an approved Muslim slaughterman who offers a prayer of thanks and blessing as he kills the animal.

To enable this, Westfield no longer uses the captured bolt stunner which used to penetrate the skull. Instead, a stunner with a flat top about one inch across renders the animal unconscious, but doesn't kill it.

Works manager, Mr Reid, said freezing workers' co-

operation was needed to introduce the new system.

"The fact that they have helped in this matter reflects their understanding of such market requirements. While the change has taken time and money, one must view it not only as a move to create markets, but a recognition of the variety of societies which make up the world, and their right to have a product which conforms to their learnings and lifestyle," Mr Reid explained.

Delegation visits

DURING a visit to New Zealand last month, a Kuwaiti delegation visited the Tomoana Works to inspect its mutton slaughtering operations.

Tomoana's mutton slaughter is completely Halal, as is Kaiti's, and the delegation visited to satisfy itself that proper techniques are carried out by qualified Muslim slaughtermen.

General Manager, Mr Michael Sanders, said Kuwaiti

acceptance is important to New Zealand as that country is considered to be an opinion leader in many of the Muslim countries. He was "pleased to report that the delegation was well pleased with the operations it saw at Tomoana".

The party was escorted to the plant by Assistant General Manager of the New Zealand Meat Producers' Board, Mr David Wright, and Mr Peter Brown of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Packing systems developed

W&R FLETCHER (NZ) Ltd has developed two new packing systems to help cut rising production costs and retain the viability of products with low profit margins.

New packaging systems for lamb brains and livers have eliminated the use of inner cartons. Brains are now tray packed in a similar manner to that used for peaches.

Livers are placed in divided cartons, which still supply buyers with six 4.5 kilogram packs in a plastic bag. (The eventual extension of this method, would be to use a leakproof carton, thus eliminating bags altogether.)

Both these packs reduce freezing time by about seven hours. The systems are not, however, designed to improve returns; rather to make it viable to save low profit margin products on markets which show weaker values.

ANOTHER refinement for which W&R Fletcher's quality department has been trialling various packaging systems, is an unlined carton for edible, bulk pack, ground meats.

Having already provided a quick release pack, minus the poly-liner, for inedible products, this was the next natural step. Customers who process the meat can now release the product easily without fear of damage or tangled film.

This change was, however,

far more complicated than the introduction of the first pack. Because edible products require greater care for hygienic handling, bacteria counts were carried out at each packing stage.

While it will be some time before a full market evaluation can be carried out, this type of pack is likely to have a good future on the American and Canadian markets.



MEMBERS of the delegation from Kuwaiti.

Better wool prices ahead, but . . .

. . . it could be the second half of 1984 before farmers receive more money than the Government's guaranteed price.

During a recent visit to the U.S.A., Europe, Asia and Australia, a survey by W&R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd's Wool Manager, Mr Alan Chapman, produced "only one reliable conclusion — namely that it is impossible to predict with certainty, the price that wool will fetch over the next 12 months".

"However, there is good news! The U.S.A. economy is definitely on an upswing, with recent usage of wool being very encouraging and, more to the point, at a level that we have not seen for a long time.

"The U.K. is also showing far more confidence in wool textiles, with spinners and knitters, albeit grudgingly, owning healthy order books. The Far East is moving quietly along and is well-placed to take advantage of the anticipated increased demand from the West," Mr Chapman explained.

"It does sound encouraging. However, at today's level of auction prices, farmers are still receiving a subsidy of around 11 percent. This of course means that wool prices will have to rise at least

11 or 12 percent before the farmer actually receives a bigger cheque for his wool than at present.

"Farmers can take comfort, though, from the fact that the New Zealand woolgrower is in a far more comfortable position than his 'Aussie' counterpart. With the Australian Wool Corporation already stockpiling 1.2 million bales, plus a prediction of 1.7 before too long, our crossbred grower can be reasonably sure of better days ahead," Mr Chapman said.

"At least we are not being undercut by South African and South American Merino growers because of a strengthening dollar. . ."

Westfield's renovation nearly complete

CONSIDERABLE planning and a major financial investment has gone into modernising Auckland's Westfield Freezing Company.

The works now aims to comply with New Zealand and worldwide standards including EEC; hygiene standards are more easily maintained and staff enjoy better working conditions. Most upgrading will be completed in the first half of next year.

Assisting with planning and monitoring progress, has been W&R Fletcher (NZ) Ltd's Chief Engineer, Mr Ian McGregor. He praised the speed and efficiency with which work was carried out and said it was a credit to the engineering staff, contractors Miller Mechanical Ltd, and Westfield's recently appointed Chief Engineer, Mr Dave McElhinney who has been overseeing the operation.

Upgrading has taken place in almost every department and building, but one of the most major has been realigning and replacing equipment of the three mutton chains. Carcasses now follow a straight path down the chain and the interior has a more spacious and efficient air.

A mechanical pelting machine, manufactured and in-

stalled by EHS Engineering, is a new addition. Mr McGregor noted that the machine is unique in New Zealand, in that it fits Westfield's line configuration without structural alterations.

"The first chain will be completed by December and the remaining two before commencement of the 1984-85 season. Something else to be done before the new season will be post-scale electrical stimulation," he explained.

Major interior upgrading has been carried out in the cold stores. New impervious floors have been laid, columns and walls have a new coating, while new sodium lighting units add to the bright and enhanced effect.

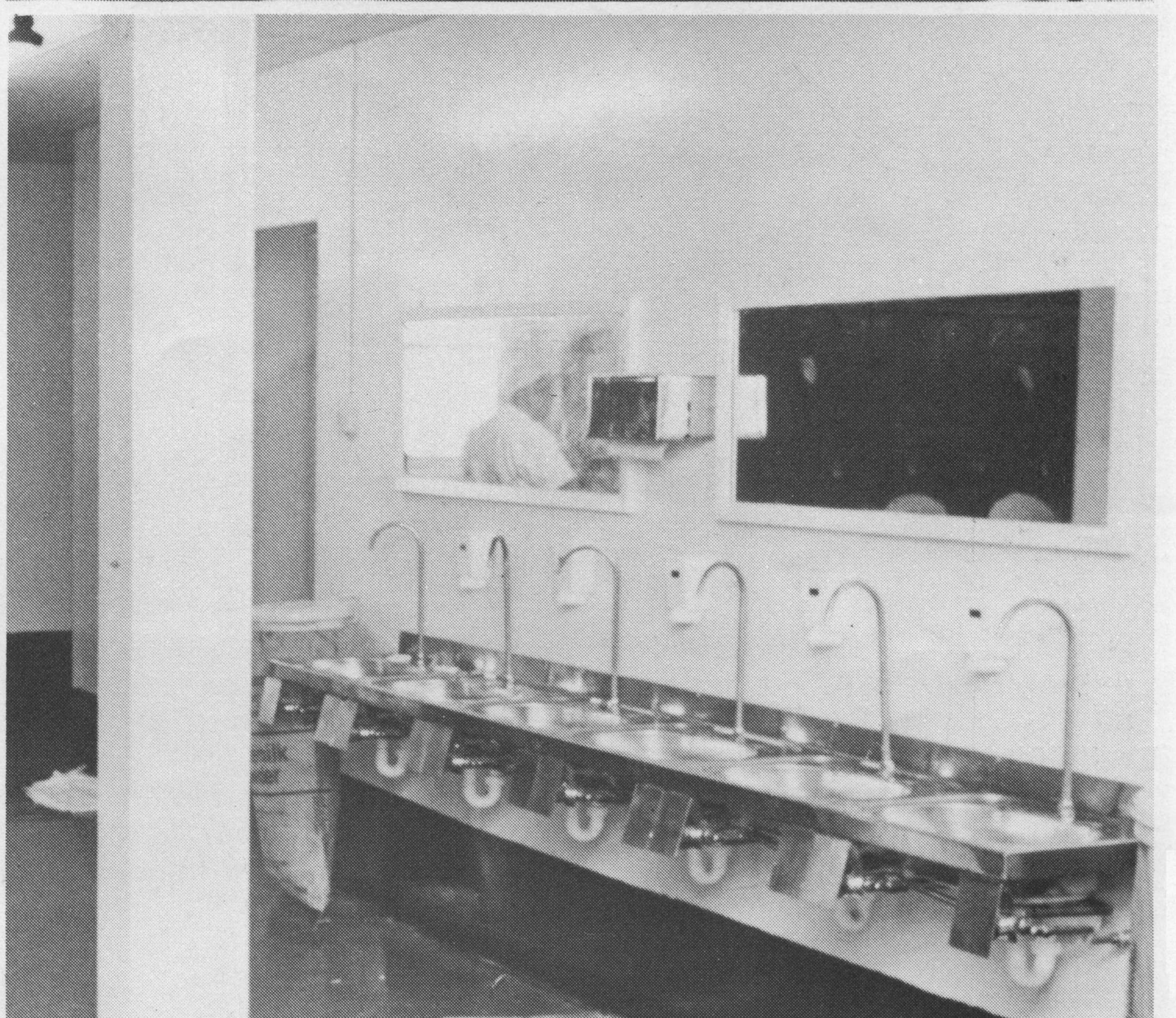
Generally, departments including beef and boning, as well as amenity blocks and surrounding roads, have all been upgraded. Improvements include cleaning the exterior of buildings by water blasting; new coatings for floors and walls; better lighting; paintwork; upgraded drainage. A beef chiller, freezing cabinets and pack-

ing area have also had attention, and an additional compressor has been installed in the engine room.

All at Westfield are pleased and proud, while even regular visitors are surprised and delighted at the effect.

PROCESSING areas and staff facilities have been given equal importance in upgrading considerations as can be seen by the pictures below. At the top, the packing area in the main boning rooms; in the centre, the staff dining room. Both have new floors, walls, lighting and a pleasant, airy atmosphere.

Pictured at the bottom are knee-operated taps which have been installed in the locker rooms to comply with Ministry of Agriculture hygiene requirements.



New computer allows greater flexibility

IN A MOVE towards greater efficiency, the Tomoana Works has installed a new administration computer to replace an outdated NCR 399 and Burroughs 1719.

Just how limited the original Burroughs was, becomes clear when its capacity of 128 thousand bytes is compared with the new Burroughs B1955. It has a memory capacity of one million bytes and the potential to be upgraded to two million, said Group Data Processing Manager, Mr Arthur Atkins.

He said the additional memory capacity was the main factor in the decision to upgrade Tomoana's computing facilities.

"This development will enable us to have a fully integrated system with complete screen inquiry access. Input to the computer is generated from one source only, preventing duplication and

reducing the error rate," Mr Atkins said.

"The new system will also enable staff to create their own reports and to this end, training of staff will be undertaken. The idea is to get departmental users to extract information themselves, making reporting easier and more efficient. It will also help to provide management with current data needed to control expenditure.

"The flexibility that exists through the inquiry and reporting options, are such that even one-off reports can be produced in minutes. This facility is a major benefit when compared with traditional data processing which requires new programmes to be written for any new reports.

"Advantages of the upgraded administration computer facilities will not only benefit Tomoana, but will flow on into the farming community," Mr Atkins concluded.

Jack Baker plans active retirement

A DINNER and presentation was held in Wellington this month to bid farewell to Gisborne Refrigerating Company's General Manager, Mr Jack Baker, who retires at Christmas.

Manager at GRCO since 1973, Mr Baker has been with the Vestey organisation for 42 years. He joined at Patea in 1941, and in his initial years of service gained experience in a number of divisions of the meat export industry, working in the fellmongery freezer, livestock and accounting sections. He was appointed accountant at Patea in 1954 and took over as manager of the works in 1966.

Mr Baker is held in high esteem by both Group management and staff who have worked with him, so it is only natural that he will be missed by all.

Obituary

IT IS with regret that Weddel's World reports the death of Mr Syd Roskams, after a period in hospital. Mr Roskams worked in freezer stock control and gave 23 years' service to the Westfield Freezing Company. He is survived by his wife and two adult children.

Valued colleague retires



IT WAS retirement day recently for one of W&R Fletcher's agency personnel. Mr Wilf Bentley has worked with Pearce and Co. Ltd, and its successor, Pacific Mercantile Co. Ltd, the trading arm of the Stinson Pearce Group for nearly 40 years.

He is pictured (left) being congratulated by W&R Fletcher's Assistant Export Sales Manager, Mr Stuart Mills, at a farewell function in Suva. Mr Mills was visiting the islands at the time and made a presentation to him on behalf of W&R Fletcher.

Pearce and Co. Ltd, and later the Stinson Pearce Group of Companies, have been W&R Fletcher's agents in the Pacific islands for over 45 years. Mr Bentley's association with W&R Fletcher extends over most of his 39 years' service.

In 42 years, Mr Baker said he has seen many changes take effect, but added that the most dramatic have been increasing requirements of overseas importing countries.

"These have been mainly hygiene requirements in New Zealand. We have been able to make some work in our interests, but they have added considerably to the cost structure of the industry," he said.

As for his well-earned retirement, Mr Baker plans to spend more time on the golf links and take up trout fishing — a pastime he said he has never had time for before. He and his wife, Rae, also have a small orchard where he can indulge in another of his major hobbies, gardening.

When the urge takes them, Mr and Mrs Baker plan to travel overseas — something Mrs Baker has enjoyed in the past and is looking forward to continuing.

Mr David Gusscott, GRCO's new General Manager whose appointment takes effect in the New Year, is familiar to most in the WRF Group. He has previously been General Manager of New Zealand Stockfoods, before transferring from Auckland to Tomoana, where he was Assistant General Manager.



JACK Baker admires one of the six crystal brandy goblets presented to him, while W&R Fletcher's General Manager, Mr Peter Johnston, and Mrs Baker discuss a silver sweet dish, the company's gift to her.

Gisborne's golf team wins 1983 Rowlands Shield

THIRD time seemed to be the lucky one for the Gisborne Refrigerating Company's team in this year's W&R Fletcher Golf Tournament.

While it has been suggested that team members must get too much practise, their win was a deserved one and they carried off the winner's Rowlands Shield. Perhaps too, the imminent retirement of the team's captain, Jack Baker, who was also a founder of the tournament, gave it an extra spur.

Regardless, he added the W&R Fletcher cup and with it a silver dish kindly donated by Rank Xerox, to Gisborne's tally. Jointly with Maurice Taylor, also of Gisborne, Jack won the Cryovac Cup. Maurice Taylor also took the Lauritser Cup.

To round Gisborne's win, Roger Langford won the Mark Hinchliff Trophy.

Anniversary

This year was the tournament's 30th anniversary and was played on the Taupo Golf Course. In spite of Gisborne's near monopoly on the prizes, Wellington, Westfield and Tomoana were also well represented by team members.

Wellington won the Patea Trophy and Mr Peter Johnston, the Blue Port-ACT Cup. John Dorreen of Tomoana won the Sconz Cup while Westfield's Percy Lambly carried off the Wally Knight Cup.

The Patea Trophy was

awarded for the first time this year and presented in recognition of the part played by its teams in the past. A large wooden spoon, it was hand carved by craftsman Moni Taumaunu, lately of Kaiti but now tutoring at a carving school in Palmerston North.

The trophy is certainly a far cry from the first cup presented in 1953. A competitor remembers how the General Manager of the day shuddered whenever he had to present it.

Fondly named the Sausage Meat Cup, it consisted of a Weddel liver pail (by now a collector's item), atop a Salisbury Tongue tin, resting on the lid of the pail!



GISBORNE'S captain, Mr Jack Baker, is pictured receiving the Rowlands Shield on behalf of his team, from W&R Fletcher's General Manager, Mr Peter Johnston.