



# Weddel's World

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

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

DECEMBER, 1984



Reproduced from an old print, this picture shows Smithfield Market shortly after its construction in 1868.

## Tradition rivals progress

*The passing of more than 100 years, and technological advances in the meat industry, have done little to change the face of the Smithfield Market in London.*

Lorries replace horses and diesel fumes, manure; Stinking Lane, Flesh Shambles and Bladder Street have gone, but daily business goes on in much the same way with the spirit of lively competition and quality for which the Market has become known worldwide.

Smithfield is Britain's largest meat market, selling about eight percent of the country's wholesale meat and poultry. Any of the eight million or so Londoners can be fairly certain that the meat on their dinner table came from the Market.

Officially known as the London Central Market, the site was known in the 1100s as a "smooth field", ideal for cattle and horse markets, fairs, sports tournaments and public executions — the area's bloody association was not confined to cattle slaughter.

The original market established in 1638 survived until 1855, by which time it had become a public nuisance, congested and filthy, with offal heaped in the streets at the closing of the day's business.

In 1868, the present meat market building was completed at a cost of £2,000,000 for the 10-acre block of land, buildings and fittings. The remaining sections were added between 1875 and 1899, as well as the adjacent cold stores, which were built in the 1880s to store the meat shipments beginning to arrive from New Zealand and Australia.

There is an admirable, stubborn pride in traditions at Smithfield, in spite of the competition from more convenient methods of meat packaging and selling. The sturdy old wooden hand barrows with their steel-rimmed wheels which the porters, or "bummarees" still use, have hardly changed for 100 years.

And although mechanical cutting of quarters and sides was introduced in the early 1900s, nearly all meat cutting is still done by hand in the highly skilled, but old-fashioned way, whereas the Market's European counterparts now use

power saws and electric knives. However, there is an increasing amount of pre-cut and boned meat arriving at Smithfield, which could be the undoing of this tradition.

Smithfield retains a basic simplicity of method that is efficient and competitive — therefore economic. It is hoped that this will continue.

The hygiene standard maintained, in spite of the age of the building, is a tribute to the excellence of the original design by City Architect, Sir Horace Jones.

It has been said that Smithfield was a "brilliant conception". In keeping with its standing in the city, it is quite ornate and runs back in two functional cast-iron and glass "naves" to either side of the central entrance arch. Opening windows in the roof provide fresh air, while wooden louvres shade the floor area with its carcasses from the sun.

Unloading into the 162 meat stalls begins at midnight, from lorries which have arrived all day from all over the British Isles and Europe. Trading begins at five in the morning and is finished by eight, rarely leaving any fresh meat unsold.

Meat is sold either on a commission basis for producers or dealers, or more often bought and resold by the wholesaler on his own account. Prices fluctuate hourly in a free market arrangement and the lively competition produces prices quoted all over the world.

The Market is owned and administered by the Corporation of London, and is the base for the Vestey organisation, which also has other buildings, Dewhurst House and Weddel House nearby.

The building will survive as it stands for some time to come, as it is listed by the Department of the Environment as being of special architectural and historical interest.

The Smithfield area, too, has an immense history and tradition, much of which is still strongly in evidence in the existing streets, buildings and activities. But as for the future, only time will tell whether progress will do to Smithfield what the Great Fire of London, Hitler's bombing efforts and the huge office and hotel boom of the last two decades, have failed to do.

## S. Korea tender win encouraging

New Zealand succeeded in winning one third of a recent, 3,000 tonne beef tender in South Korea, the first since April, through Weddel and Co. Ltd in Seoul.

W & R Fletcher supplied 26,000 cartons of the quota which left for Seoul last month and Export Manager, Mr Bruce Bishop, said he hoped to see tenders becoming more frequent and in greater quantities of boneless beef, which would allow New Zealand to participate.

The government-controlled tendering system, aimed at supporting domestic beef and pork prices during periods of over supply, have been the major constraint on boosting beef exports to South Korea.

Changes to specifications, allowing increasing quantities of boneless beef, rather than the bone-in-beef primarily sought before, have however, helped New Zealand boost exports to South Korea from \$NZ8 million in 1982-83, to almost \$NZ16 million in the year to June 1984.

The New Zealand industry saw the latest tender success as offering encouragement for this production season.

## Interest in canned range high

W & R Fletcher strengthened its already firm hold on the Fijian market for canned meats at the New Zealand Exporters' Fair held at Suva late this year.

A full range of these, as well as meat pastes, chilled beef and lamb cuts, were on display on the WRF stand under the banners of Stinson Pearce (NZ) Ltd and the company's agent in the islands, Pacific Mercantile Co. Ltd.

Assistant Export Manager, Mr Stuart Mills, said the main benefit of the fair for W & R Fletcher was the contact made with potential new buyers of canned meats from various Pacific countries.

The fair, organised by the Export Institute of New Zealand, was the first in Fiji for 11 years and about 50 New Zealand companies participated. Interest was high with 1,250 trade and 3,000 public visitors attending over the five days.



From left: Mr Ken Dyer of Pacific Mercantile; Mr Stuart Mills; Mr Peter Stinson of the Stinson Pearce Group; Mr Chris Bing of Pacific Mercantile; hostess, Sala Bose.

Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji, Mr Ratu Tonganivalu, officially opened the fair and toured the stands accompanied by New Zealand's Minister for Overseas Trade, Mr Mike Moore.

## Stunning advances

Advancement of new technology in the meat industry, coupled with importing countries' specialised requirements, has affected many department's processing methods.

One in particular has been the electrical stunning of all sheep, lamb and bobby calves.

To comply with the MAF requirement that all animals be rendered insensible to pain before slaughter, electrical stunning was introduced and for a number of years this has been carried out using hand held appliances. These have now been replaced by an automatic device which applies a controlled electrical current to the head of each animal. It can then be slaughtered using a knife.

Successful trials were carried out in September and the unit (pictured) has now been accepted as standard equipment at Tomoana.

## NZ company studies world leather trade

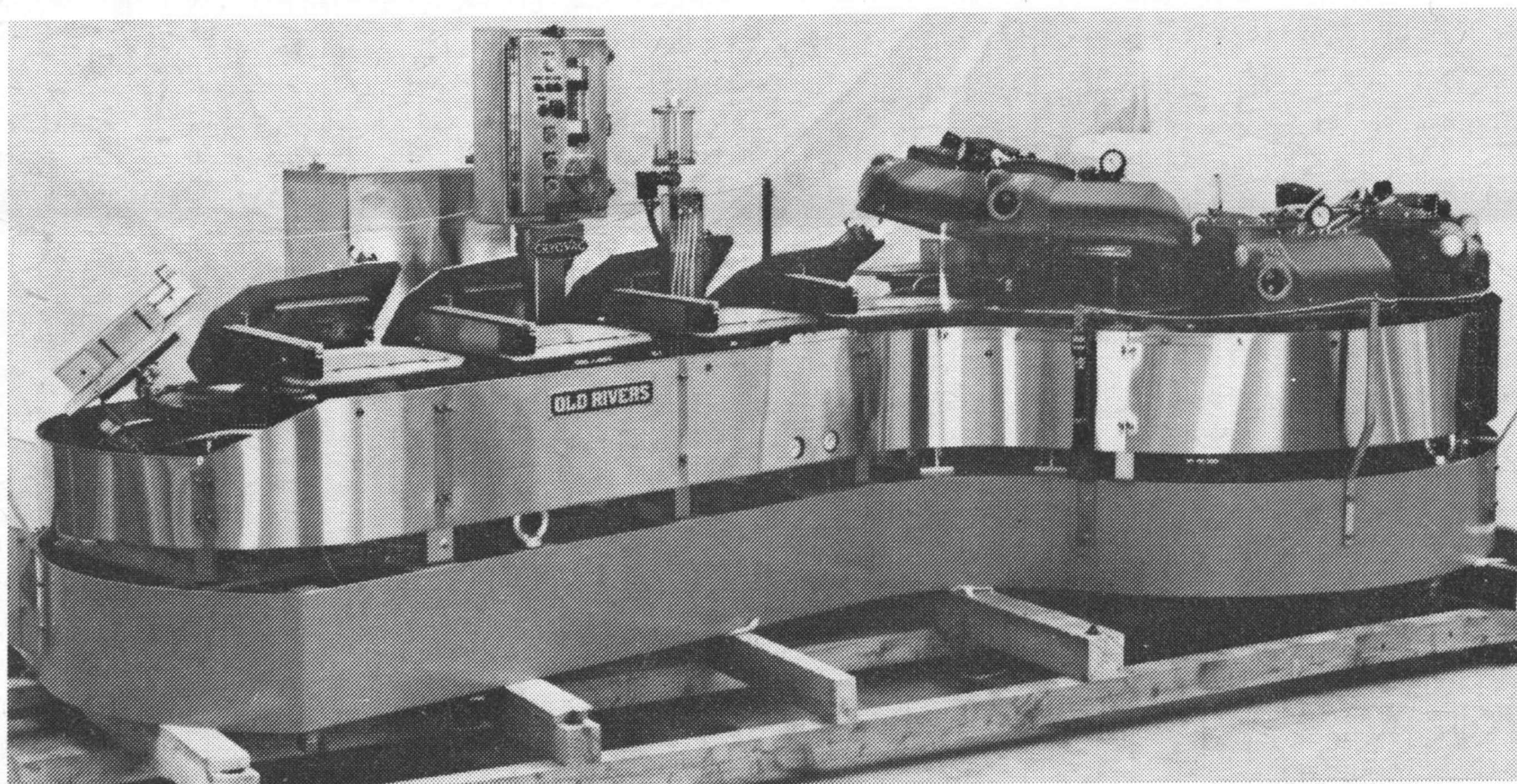
International trends in leather demand were studied by New Zealand Light Leathers at three trade fairs held in Paris, New York and Hong-Kong this year.

As well, the company exhibited a selection of its own products, which General Manager, Mr Nigel Dobson said received favourable responses.

"There is still strong demand for garment leather worldwide, although prices are becoming very competitive. The rapid increase in New Zealand lamb pelt prices this season could however cause fashion designers to swing to materials other than leather.

"The strongest demand, however, is for lightweight nappa leather, rather than suede-type leathers, which make up the bulk of New Zealand's production. We are having to be more innovative in producing nappa from suede-type materials, which should prove to be challenging for our technical people," Mr Dobson said.

## WRF stays on top



The Cryovac 8300B-12 rotary vacuum chamber packaging machine installed at Westfield early this month.

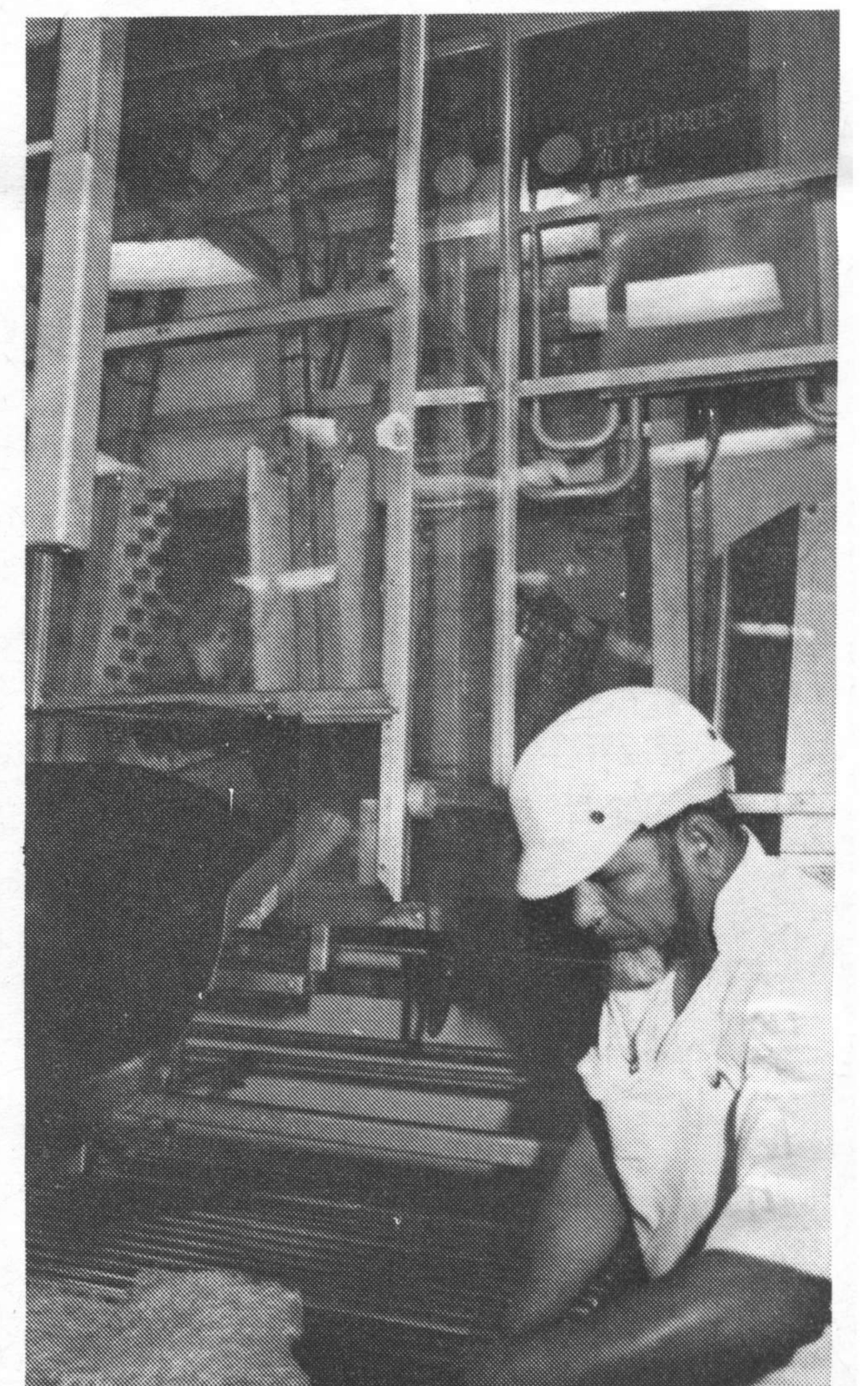
Capable of sealing 40 cuts a minute, the machine will enable W & R Fletcher to stay on top of the latest market requirements for further processed cuts.

It has eight vacuum chambers and is designed to work in continuous motion in a closed 'keyhole' shape. It measures 4.38 metres long by 2.34 metres wide and takes a range of lamb cuts from shortloins up to whole legs.

## Tannery opens

Closer to home, NZLL's third tannery is now operating in Thornbury in Invercargill.

Poor market conditions in the woolskin sector have slowed the scaling-up of operations from the experimental stage which began in March of this year, but Manager, Mr Robert Reid, said the wool skin tannery's production is proving satisfactory.



## G.M. praises staff

New Zealand is in hard times and consequently its major industry — meat — was the recipient of hard words from many quarters. "Experts" abounded in the marketing and processing areas. Well-wishers even suggested W & R Fletcher might go away.

Despite that, Fletchers can be proud and pleased at the progress in all its areas of activity, and we are very aware that this is due to the devotion of a loyal and efficient staff and a very real degree of responsible union approach. The well-wishers should note we are staying.

A difficult year, but a successful one and we look forward to continuing on that road with prosperity and health for all, in 1985.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## Team effort results in record breaking season

What could have been one of the Gisborne Refrigerating Company's quieter seasons, turned out to be a double record breaker.

The 1983-84 season followed closely on the heels of one of the worst droughts the East Coast has experienced in many years, and lambing percentages were reduced throughout the district.

But Manager Mr David Gusscott reports that the works processed record

amounts of both lamb and mutton.

"It certainly wasn't expected. Even if we'd thought we might have a total record number of animals processed, we didn't imagine that we'd have two records in one.

"I would put it down to a fine team effort on the part of all at the plant," Mr Gusscott said. "The increased support we have received from farmers in the district has been appreciated."

Below: Caught during the annual livestock buyers' meeting at Papakura recently: Westfield's buyers, Auckland Meat Company and Head Office personnel.

## Livestock buyers meet

### In brief . . .

New Zealand Stockfoods reported a particularly high volume of sales of Denkavit products and calf meals this year, as a result of the large number of calves reared.



## Remarka-bull!



A proud owner, a bored bull and a slightly bewildered presenter.

It was reported that "Rissington Monitor" had become a little restless during official proceedings and his owner, Mr John Absolom (centre) of Napier, needed both hands to hold him still. Meanwhile, Mr Johnston was left with the dilemma of who to hand the prestigious Meat and Wool Cup to.

The presentation was part of W & R Fletcher's sponsorship this year of the Supreme Champion Beef Animal at the Hawke's Bay A & P Show. (Photo compliments of Country Life)

## Exhibits draw crowds

The Tomoana Works used the recent Hastings A & P Show to full advantage this year, with exhibits including beef and lamb processing, leather and wool fashion and livestock technology.

As well as leather and wool displays prepared by New Zealand Light Leathers and Nelson's woollscour staff, it was decided to stage fashion parades using two well-known fashion houses to enable farmer clients and the public to see "finished products".

These proved highly popular with visitors to the show and attracted a large flow of people through Tomoana's tent.

Considerable interest was shown in the new livestock services, "eartag identification" and "fat trend reports", which were well supported by a grading display by the Meat Board.

New Zealand Stockfoods, abattoir facilities and "Tomoana Then and Now" were also subjects for displays.

As well, an Expo Show Tent was a combined effort by the major meat processing plants in the Hawke's Bay, demonstrating to the public the practical aspects of beef boning, lamb cutting and boning. As well, vacuum packaging, cartons and other packaging materials were displayed.

Tomoana's boning demonstrations were carried out by Murray Lobbin and commented by Mr J Freeman, head of the butchers' training school at the Manakau Training Institute.

There was also detailed information about the requirements of importing countries and a comment often made by visitors to the stand was: "I didn't realise such sophistication and detail was required by our markets."

# Gisborne repeats tourney win



Bruce Bishop of Wellington (background) enjoyed watching W & R Fletcher's General Manager, Peter Johnston, present Tomoana's team captain, Andy Parkinson, with the wooden spoon that had adorned his own office for the last year.

*Gisborne did it again — just to prove last year's win in the W & R Fletcher Group Golf Tournament was no "stroke" of luck.*

As well as the Rowlands Shield, presented to team captain Alan Edwards at Taupo by W & R Fletcher's General Manager, Peter Johnston, Gisborne took several other major prizes.

Noel Adcroft of GRC won the WRF Cup, while the Mark Hinchliff Trophy went to Dave Hutchins, also of GRC. Nelsons Gisborne's Maurice Taylor carried off the Sconz Cup.

Wellington, Westfield and Tomoana were not disgraced however. The Lauritzen Cup went to Percy Lambly of Westfield, while Wellington took the Cryovac Cup, won by Peter Johnston (Jnr) and the Blueport ACT Cup, won by Laurie Edwards. And while Ray Bernie of Tomoana took the Wally Knight Cup, the Hastings team was awarded the doubtful honour of the Patea Spoon for the lowest score.

## Sad loss



Mr Jack Baker

*Management and staff of the W & R Fletcher Group were deeply saddened on learning last month of the death of former General Manager of the Gisborne Refrigerating Company, Mr Jack Baker.*

Mr Baker retired only last Christmas after 42 years with the Group, although he retained the Chairmanship of the Gisborne Harbour Board. He was well-known and highly respected both in New Zealand and overseas and will be sorely missed by all.

W & R Fletcher extends deepest sympathy to his widow, Rae, and family on their sad loss.

## Fireman celebrates service

*Westfield Works Industrial Fire Brigade fireman, Mr Harry Smith, celebrated 25 years' service last month.*

*He is pictured below with his wife, receiving a presentation from W & R Fletcher's General Manager, Mr Peter Johnston, in recognition of his dedicated service.*

*The Gold Star presentation was made by fire force commander, Brian Armstrong. Trevor Gilbert, secretary of the Auckland Provincial Gold Star Association presented Harry with the lapel badge and Mrs Smith, with the Association brooch.*

*As well, chief fire officer, Ross Whittle, presented a video recorder on behalf of his fellow brigade members and Mrs Helen Whittle presented Mrs Smith with a bouquet of flowers.*

## No match

Still on the golf scene: In Lower Hutt last month, Head Office's Bruce Bishop, Graham Clark and Bruce Sloane joined about 120 other participants from meat companies and related fields to compete in the annual New Zealand Meat Board Golf Tournament — unfortunately, however, without success in winning any prizes.

## STAFF NEWS

# Supervisor saw fire, revolution

*In the 27 years Keith Taylor was involved in Tomoana's casings department, he witnessed a processing revolution which made the W & R Fletcher Group an industry leader.*

As departmental foreman, Mr Taylor assisted with the introduction of "tubing" in 1969, now the final processed form for 66 percent of total production.

It was this event, as well as Tomoana's fire in 1979, that Mr Taylor remembered most vividly from his career with the company, as he retired this month.

"The fire was on the top floor, but had been contained by firemen. Only the foreman and I were there at the time, on the ground floor with about \$56,000 worth of uncured casings about to be ruined by the smoke. We worked like mad and managed to save it all by dumping vast quantities of salt everywhere," he said.

Mr Taylor spent a year working in the freezers at Tomoana in 1950, before going into the retail trade. He rejoined the company in 1957 and became assistant foreman of the casings department 10 years later. He was made foreman in 1969 and took up the latest position of Group Production Supervisor in 1979, a position he held until his retirement on December 6.



Mr Keith Taylor

A keen sportsman, Mr Taylor was a physical education instructor for the RNZAF during the war and later played representative rugby for the Hawke's Bay. He is now Patron of the Mahora Swimming Club and also enjoys bowls, a sport he will be able to devote more time to in his retirement.

