

and it was a job that could not be handled by foresters alone. So began what was to be his greatest work, the recruitment and direction of a team of foresters, hydrologists, grassland ecologists, animal ecologists and people of other disciplines to analyse the problems of the mountain watersheds and, where possible, to develop remedial techniques.

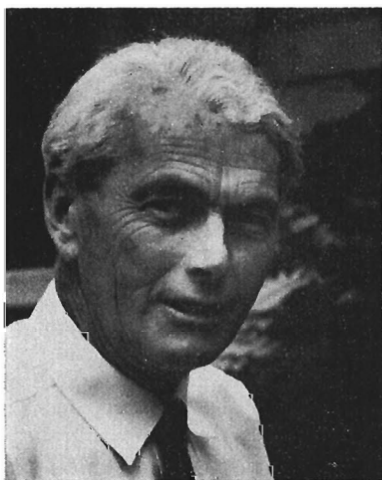
Many of us have vivid memories of his great intellectual capacity and good judgement. Examination of his many papers shows the attributes of a fine scholar: precise exposition and knowing when generalisation is justified and when it is not.

We have recollections, too, of a tough and effective fighter for what he thought was right, or to counter false representation and humbug.

And we are left with a strong impression of a modest, kindly man of quiet dignity.

P.J.McK.

Eric Arthur Cooney, 1910-1977



A trip around the Selwyn Plantation Board's areas with Arthur Cooney, including a call at the Darfield homestead to sample the liberal hospitality of Margaret his wife and to meet, perhaps, some of the five children they raised there, followed by a finale at the Board's office, was always an invigorating experience. And this circuit for visitors and friends went on for forty years, for E.A. virtually spent his whole working career (1936-77), first as Forest Assistant, then as Superinten-

dent and later as Superintendent-Secretary to the Board. He followed R. G. Robinson, and these two officers between them saw the establishment and management of the plantations as a forestry and business concern.

A product of the two short-lived Forestry Schools of Auckland and Canterbury University Colleges, E.A. graduated B.(For.)Sc. from the latter in 1933. His schooling before that had all been in Rotorua, where he was known as a boy with definite personality and ideas.

Like a number of other youths in the Rotorua area Arthur became interested in the State Forest Service activities. Kaingaro Forest was then being established. He obtained a Smith Wylie scholarship of £100 per year, then being offered by New Zealand Perpetual Forests, the forerunner of N.Z. Forest Products. This was almost sufficient to support students through the Auckland Forestry School.

After a brief spell at Athenree when it was being planted by the New Zealand Railways Forestry Branch, E.A. applied and was appointed to the staff of the Selwyn Plantation Board.

Not many foresters would have relished his position. To wrest an income from 5000 ha of plantations scattered over the Canterbury plains, partly for the purpose of wind protection, was not an easy task. Windthrow more often than not determined the cut. During his whole career the Forest Service dominated the stumpage-setting scene, determined on a residual basis because governments insisted on price control of sawn timber. Stumpages were low, often depressingly so. In addition a flood of rimu timber crossed from the West Coast to east-coast markets.

E.A. saw as part of his task the running of his plantations to at least break even, if not to be profitable. This he did, in spite of obstacles that would have daunted most people; and his hard bargaining for adequate stumpages became well known. (At one stage I tried to entice E.A. into the Forest Service as its seller of standing timber.) In his bicentenary report in 1961 he wrote: "... unless the market is prepared to pay a fair and reasonable stumpage rate, the tree continues to grow! ... There is no chance of a forest owner obtaining a fair return for the risk and capital invested; and the growing of trees will be limited to exploiting companies and the State, which so far has shown a lamentable lack of appreciation of this very principle."

This clear dictum that E.A. preached and practised all his career should be taken to heart by New Zealand foresters if they wish to share adequately in the proper use of our land.

A.L.P.