

# HAWKES BAY NZIF SECTION RESURRECTED

**John Coppola**

The Hawke's Bay Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry is alive and kicking! After four years in recess, a renewed interest in forestry in the areas has seen the Branch's resurrection. National President Wink Sutton officially launched the Branch in September, with the election of

officers. Barry Keating was nominated Chairman, John Coppola as Secretary/Treasurer, and Ian Lyver as the Auditor. Membership now stands at 40, and there is always a large turnout at meetings.

Since its revival, speakers have included Dr John Valentine, Secretary of Forestry, who presented his view of the future of the forestry sector, and there was a

very successful panel discussion on the implications of the Resource Management Act to forestry.

The Hawkes Bay Branch will also host the 1993 AGM, whose theme will be Forestry and Employment.

It is encouraging to see the Institute expanding its activities at a time when enthusiasm for forestry is on the rise.

## FORESTRY IDENTITY

### Alfred Neville ('Mick') Sexton

**C.G.R. Chavasse**

Mick Sexton was born in Auckland on October 28, 1909, descended from one of the earliest British settlers in New Zealand. His maternal great-grandfather emigrated from Bideford, Devon, and came with the Rev. Samuel Marsden in 1834 to settle in Kerikeri. His paternal grandfather came from Staines, Surrey, via the Californian goldfields of 1845 and settled in Auckland.

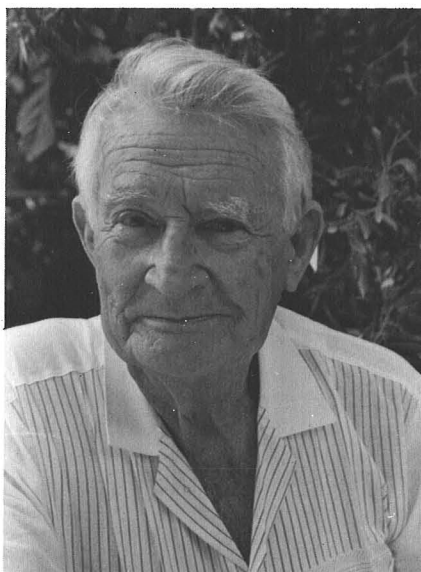
Mick was educated at Auckland Grammar School (1924-27) and joined the State Forest Service in April 1928 as a Technical Trainee. He worked at Riverhead and Tairua forests, supervising planting gangs in winter, and in summer working on topographical mapping and indigenous timber cruising in the Auckland Conservancy.

In 1935 he was promoted to Forest Guard, and carried out a full reconnaissance of Omahuta and Puketi forests which included topographical mapping, assessment of kauri stands and construction of roads.

In 1935 he married Winifred Mary (Mick) Simpson, daughter of the Officer Commanding 2nd. Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers. Sadly, she and their son David died in childbirth in 1940.

In that year Mick became Forest Ranger in charge of Waipoua Forest, but shortly after that he joined the armed forces and was commissioned as Divisional Engineer in 1941. He took a detachment to England in April 1942 and joined Forestry Group NZE, which operated sawmills in southern England.

In August 1943 he went to Algiers with the 14th Forestry Company and in



**Mick Sexton**

January 1944 he took a detachment to Italy to administer the 8th Army timber Zone in Calabria. Production had been at a standstill, although the potential yield was in excess of that of New Zealand. Food and wood supplies had been in very short supply and the port and railways had been working at a very low level. However, when the 14th Forestry Company arrived most of these difficulties had been overcome, largely through the cooperation of the timber industry.

Mick was awarded the M.B.E. (Military Division) for his "great organising ability" and for building up a system of control "based on fairness and straight dealing which helped materially to enhance the good name of his country"

The 14th Company returned to New Zealand in September 1944, but Mick remained with Allied Forces Headquarters, being given a roving commission to deal with timber supplies in central Italy. He left Italy with Joe Rawlings and Guy Mayfield, travelling to Britain and then to the USA. Landing in New York in April 1945, they spent seven months visiting forests in the USA and Canada, returning to New Zealand via San Francisco in November of that year.

Mick resumed work with the Forest Service as 2i/c Kaingaroa. From that point his progress was rapid, with frequent moves, first to Rotorua as Senior Ranger, then as District Ranger to Tapanui in December 1951; and to Nelson as Conservator in November 1952. He was then appointed Officer in charge of Kaingaroa Forest and Deputy Conservator, Rotorua, with special responsibility for the large Tasman timber sale.

In 1958 he moved to Christchurch as Conservator, and three years later was appointed Conservator in Auckland, where he remained until his retirement in December 1969. From that time he has been active as a forest and ecological consultant based in Auckland.

Mick's wife Pierina was born in Cremona, north Italy. This ancient city, birthplace of Verdi and Stradivarius, was one of the oldest republics in Europe, and retained its independence until modern times.

Mick and Pierina have a close-knit family of a son and daughter and six grandchildren, all resident in Auckland.