

Obituary

Jim Lysaght 1906 – 1992

Geoff Chavasse and Priestley Thomson

Jim Lysaght had the distinction of being the longest-serving executive officer of the NZIF. He joined in 1931 and was Honorary Secretary from 1949 to 1969, a record which is likely to stand for all time. He was an honorary member.

Jim's forebears, who originally came from Ireland, followed military or naval careers. His grandfather was a country squire who came to New Zealand in 1874 with nine children and settled on a considerable property at Mokoia near Hawera. Jim's father, youngest of the nine, also became a farmer, near Normanby.

Jim was born in 1906, after which the family moved to Welcome Bay. Remote from schools, Jim was educated by his mother until he was able, in 1914, to ride the six miles to Tauranga Primary School. From 1915 he went to boarding schools, finally New Plymouth Boys High, which he left in 1922.

Jim's working life started unpromis-

ingly as a sawmill hand at the Tauranga Rimu Company, which shortly ran out of bush and closed down. For the next two years he worked as a labourer for Taranaki Forests, land clearing and tree planting. In 1927 he joined the State Forest Service as a trainee labourer, working in Kain-garoa Forest and Whakarewarewa Nursery.

From 1930 to 1933 he attended Canterbury University College and obtained a forestry degree. It was a bad year for foresters. He went to the Forest Service Head Office in Wellington where he was told by the redoubtable C.M. Smith: "We have nothing for you."

Undaunted, Jim wrote to everyone he could think of to see if he could enter a career in forestry. Eventually Norman Dolamore, Southland Conservator, gave him a job as labourer at Dusky Forest in 1934. It turned out to be a charge job, supervising 30 relief workers, roadmaking, pruning and thinning.

In 1936 Jim moved to western Southland, based at Riverton and Otautau, as a Leading Hand, working on timber appraisal. Four years later he moved to Head Office in Wellington, working mainly on timber grading and inspections in connection with war supplies. However, a year later he became Assistant Forester in Rotorua Conservancy, a position he held until 1948. During this time he took part in a tour of American bases in the Pacific, inspecting machinery which could be useful in New Zealand.

In 1949 he moved to Auckland as Chief Forester, then back to Rotorua as Assistant Conservator in 1952. His final ten years were spent in Wellington as Working Plans Officer, whence he retired in March 1967.

Jim was an active member of many organisations, and held a number of secretaryships for many years.

He had been a member of the Commonwealth Forestry Association since 1949, and a member of the Ornithological Society since the early fifties.

Priestley Thomson recalls that he first met Jim Lysaght in 1931 when he went to Canterbury University College to do a forestry degree. There were the four of them in their year, the others being Arthur Cooney and Pat Duff; they were together for three years. Jim was seven years older than Priestley was and seemed a formidable character. He was indeed almost the same age as their lecturer Frank Hutchinson and to the other students' surprise Jim would sometimes have Frank on in no uncertain terms. But Jim was basically a kindly and popular person.



Jim Lysaght

A most vivid memory for Priestley was the time of Jim's mountaineering accident. Priestley had been leading a small C.M.C. party at the Carrington Hut in the Waimakariri and when they left, Jim and a companion went on over the Three Passes. When Jim and his friend did not turn up at the Wilberforce hut the onus was on Priestley to organise the search parties. Jim had had a fall on the ice coming down the Whitehorn Pass and his arm was badly damaged. He had a gruelling time in the open and in bad weather before he was rescued. Priestley recalls that the endurance and courage which Jim then displayed was inspirational.

Jim is survived by four children and 12 grandchildren.

Professional development

Survey

The initial response to the questionnaire carried in the November issue of the Journal has been very disappointing. Please get your form filled out and sent in so that we will have a viable base of information on which to work.

Of the returns received to date there has been strong support for the first three topics on the suggested list – Forest Taxation, Financial Evaluation, and the RMA. The preference is for advanced level courses on these topics.

Taxation Course

The pilot course on Introduction to Forest Taxation was presented by Mark Blackburne in Napier on November 24. The 30 attendees comprised farm foresters, consultants, forest company staff and accountants.

Course reviews were generally very favourable and Mark took on board a number of points for refining course notes and presentation for future sessions.

John Galbraith

NZIF Handbook

As members may be aware, the handbook is due for revision. This handbook has served its purpose well, but much has happened since it was produced in 1986. Major events such as significant changes in ownership, and more subtle events such as the strong support the forest industry is currently receiving make a review timely.

A handbook such as this is not intended to fill up a bookshelf, but rather to be used. Thus it is important to incorporate as much as possible of what **you**, the users, require in a format which is of most use to you.

To gauge users' ideas (and I use the term users rather than members deliberately), a questionnaire is included in this issue. You are asked to complete and return this as a guide to the production of a new handbook. Responses will be used to answer questions such as:

- what should be included and/or excluded?
- what new sections are required?
- what is the desired format?

And yes, the binding will be improved!!

Please answer and return the questionnaire, providing as much information as you wish.

Remember, this handbook is for your use, so the greater your input, the more likely it is to meet your requirements.

Don Hammond