

OBITUARY

Carl Syrach-Larsen, 1898-1979
(Honorary Member)

Dr Carl Syrach-Larsen will go down in forestry history as the pioneer of forest tree breeding. He was born among trees, in the Forest Botanical Garden near Copenhagen, Denmark, where his father was the head gardener. His place of birth brought him from an early age into close contact with forest botany and this undoubtedly played an important role in his choice of career.

After gaining a Masters degree in forestry in 1923 he engaged in the study of variation in forest trees and in artificial hybridisation of species of spruces, firs and larches. His conclusions from these experiments were summarised in his doctorate thesis "The Employment of Species, Types and Individuals in Forestry", 1937. This is but one of a long list of his publications from 1926 to 1966, the best generally known possibly being his book, *Genetics in Silviculture*, 1956.

In 1937 Dr Syrach-Larsen was appointed curator of the Forest Botanical Garden and also Director of the new Arboretum at Horsholm, north of Copenhagen. With the new facilities and extra staff, the work on tree breeding methods expanded. Numerous young foresters were for shorter or longer periods employed at the Arboretum for training. Dr Syrach-Larsen's warm personality, original thinking and enthusiasm made him an excellent teacher. His many students have fond memories of the lunch-hour discussions when Dr Syrach-Larsen expanded on his ideas of how genetic principles could be applied to the improvement of forest trees, the importance of gene conservation, the use of vegetative propagation in forestry, and the place of seed orchards for the production of improved seed for practical use.



After the war Syrach-Larsen travelled extensively and his enthusiasm and sincerity infected foresters and administrators; as a result we saw in the 1950s the initiation of numerous tree breeding programmes world-wide. It was no coincidence that the late A. R. Entrican, after Syrach-Larsen's visit to New Zealand in 1949, decided to include tree breeding in the programme for the new FRI being established at Rotorua.

Dr Syrach-Larsen was the recipient of many honorary awards and was made an honorary member of forestry societies in nine countries, including the New Zealand Institute of Foresters. His scientific and personal contributions will have a lasting effect on forestry practice.

I.J.T

M. R. Jacobs, 1905-1979
(Honorary Member)

Dr Jacobs was born in Adelaide and studied forestry and soils there in an environment which produced a number of Australia's well-known foresters. He commenced work in Canberra in 1927 where he was to spend the rest of his life, apart from study periods away and three years' war service with the Royal Australian Engineers. His overseas studies and research at Oxford and Saxony later culminated in a Doctorate in Philosophy from Yale in 1941.

His teaching career commenced at the Australian Forestry School in 1934 where he became principal in 1944. The substantially increased roles after the war, catering for returned servicemen, included New Zealanders from 1949, so his indirect influence on today's Australasian forestry is enormous. Many

