

OBITUARY

Francis Edward Hutchinson

Frank Hutchinson was born in Wellington, and died in Auckland on 11 March 1982, aged 80, after an eminent and versatile career.

In 1911 his family migrated to the United States and settled in Wisconsin, where Frank completed his schooling. He took a four-year forestry degree course at the University of Montana at Missoula and graduated with honours in 1921, having worked nightshifts in Missoula sawmills to help finance his studies. During summer holidays he secured employment in Montana and Idaho with private companies and the U.S. Forest Service.



In 1922 he was employed by the Abitibi Pulp & Paper Company of Iriquois Falls, Ontario, and worked on the first large-scale inventory of the region towards Hudson Bay, travelling by canoe and dogsled.

In 1923 he returned to New Zealand and joined the then newly-formed State Forest Service as Forest Ranger. In 1924 he was appointed Lecturer in Forest Utilization at the first forestry school at Canterbury University College in Christchurch. In April 1929 he was admitted to the New Zealand Institute of Foresters, then two years old.

Frank's ten years in Christchurch were characterised by a keen and energetic approach to the whole of forest utilization and management. This was noticeable in the lectures he gave and in the fieldwork he supervised in the exotic species in Canterbury and in the indigenous podocarps in Westland. Original sample plots installed by his students are still of relevance over fifty years later in Forest Service regional records. During his lectureship, he encouraged and arranged debates between students on forestry

topics, and used the forestry Ford car to good advantage for field days. In his spare time, he learned to speak Maori and later developed this to fluency and became expert in Maoritanga. He was vigorous and positive in his general outlook, and did not always agree with the State Forest policy of the day. When the general depression caused the forestry school to close in 1933, he found it necessary to seek forestry employment in Australia where he spent 16 years from 1934 to 1950; He spent three years with the forest products section of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Melbourne in Mr Boas' time. He carried out a series of utilisation and timber grading studies in hardwood sawmills in all Australian states except Western Australia.

In 1937 he was appointed to the Forestry Commission of New South Wales as the first forestry officer to take charge of the then newly gazetted Wallaroo National Forest north of Raymond Terrace.

From 1946 to 1950, Frank was Timber Procurement Officer, Masonite Corporation, Raymond Terrace.

In 1950 he returned to New Zealand as Forest Superintendent, N.Z. Forest Products Ltd., at Kinleith, Tokoroa. He became a leader in Tokoroa in matters pertaining to forestry, local government, public health and Maori culture and welfare. It is reported that he served on the first Tokoroa Town Committee in 1953 and on every standing committee of the early administrative years. He also represented Tokoroa on the Waikato Hospital Board for many years.

Frank was largely responsible for the formation of the Tokoroa Te Rahui Maori Committee and was an early chairman and later a life member. His ashes were taken to a special public meeting at the Nga Waka Marae in Tokoroa where many local and other speakers eulogised his work as founder and from whence the ashes were committed to a reserved central burial site in the local cemetery.

It was during his sixteen years at Tokoroa that Frank became President of the Institute of Foresters (1954-56) and he was elected an Honorary Member at the 1964 Annual General Meeting. His wealth of experience and ability as a forester and administrator were of great value to N.Z. Forest Products Ltd. and to forestry in general in New Zealand and Australia. While in Tokoroa, he did valuable work helping to rationalise the management and utilisation approach to greatly increased production of timber, pulp and paper. He became well known and liked in Tokoroa through this and his other activities such as Justice of the Peace,

Rotary, and his participation in local government when the town was growing very rapidly.

Frank's eminence in forestry was partly reflected in his being chosen as a New Zealand delegate to the Commonwealth Forestry Conference in Canberra, Australia, in the fifties, and also to the World Forestry Conference in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., in 1960.

He retired to Hamilton, New Zealand, in 1966 and registered as a forestry consultant. He worked, *inter alia*, with two Maori incorporations in developing the ironsands around Kawhia Harbour where the dunes were stabilised by pine afforestation. This permitted early grazing in forest later to be harvested before the sands themselves could be used as raw material for steel manufacture.

Frank Hutchinson's association with forestry was often eminent and as often spiced with other interests of a human kind. He will be remembered by many for his ability, his industry, his sense of correctness, and for his concern for the Maori people and for others.

B.M.