Since the last issue of the *Journal* the Institute has lost another of its dwindling band of inaugural members. Alexander Douglas McGavock died at Christchurch in his 81st year on 8 July 1958. He was Conservator of Forests at Hokitika from the inception of the Forest Service in 1921, and Director of Forestry from 1931 to 1938. His association with forests and forest administration dated from long before his appointment to control of a Conservancy. As a public servant, he had at his retirement a record of 47 years of service, the whole of it in either Lands or Forests. He joined the Department of Lands in Invercargill as a very young cadet in 1891. Invercargill was then a very small and developing township with probably a much larger rural background than any other equal-sized town of the time. The period was significant for most matters of land and forest development in New Zealand. The Ballance Government was but recently and insecurely in office, with a policy that placed land-settlement reform in the foreground. Very shortly after, Ballance died; and in early 1893, the Seddon Government took office. Its Minister of Lands, John McKenzie (later Sir John) was also appointed as Commissioner of Forests. This was a noteworthy event, not now perhaps sufficiently remembered by New Zealand foresters. It was the first occasion in New Zealand history that a ministerial appointment was made for forest administration. Its significance for McGavock was that from that early period in his cadetship he served in departments which actively administered forest land on a large and increasingly intensive manner, and in districts where the forests of the Crown were often of greater financial national importance than the settlement lands. None knew better than he, nor ultimately as well as he, the ramifications of timber titles in their heyday with all of their complexity and obscurity. Ill-defined concessions often took the place of titles; stumpage payments were, sometimes but not always, represented by so-called royalties, which were in effect nothing more than token recognition of Crown ownership of land.

McGavock had at his fingertips the history of the periodical litigation by which the Crown’s title in timbers was slowly secured both for timber on Crown lands and for that on State forests. His final task before transfer to solely Forest Service duties was Secretary to the Royal Commission on Pastoral Lands of 1919–20, which marked the first national move in the world-wide and age-old conflict between pastoralism and forestry. It was locally the first overt official step towards what is now universally called soil conservation. He was not then formally associated with forestry because, in the official phrase-
ology of the day, that was termed "afforestation", and it dealt only with establishment of plantations of exotic species on land that was devoid of trees. When, after the First World War, a separate and autonomous Forest Service was set up in New Zealand, McGavock was quite logically and, very fortunately for forestry, one of the few senior officers selected because of his extensive knowledge of natural forest lands of all sorts. These few appointments of officers experienced in native forest administration, instead of in elementary afforestation, did not pass without comment, not always favourable; for the thirty-year-old tradition that a forester disregarded indigenous forests and timber died hard. McGavock pursued the even tenor of his way quietly and pertinaciously, for he was an assiduous officer in the best of the old-time tradition, and he had an unrivalled knowledge of land and forest laws of the Dominion. He knew their text in great detail; but he also knew the local circumstances and conditions that had given rise to their slow, evolutionary growth. In his view his task and his duty were to understand and to carry out the instructions and the policy of his Department and to keep completely silent about it. "Don't talk shop" was a principle that never had a better exponent than A. D. McGavock; and many were misled into believing that he knew no shop. When, in his later years, it became legal for public servants to accept municipal offices and even parliamentary office, and even for departmental officers to be appointed as public-relations officers, he felt that he had entered a world that was not his, and he was on the whole glad to retire. Politics and public relations had impinged on a public service, and there was no longer any place for him. From a sense of national duty, he did return to the Service in a subordinate and temporary capacity during the Second World War and thus completed his half-century, to his quiet pride; but he was not really contented or glad to be back again.

This unfortunately gives the impression that he was a forester of a wholly clerical and administrative cast of mind. That is entirely wrong. No one was a more appreciative or active outdoor man than he. He dates from the days when his native Invercargill was a small port planted between tidal water and scarce-touched native forest. The sports of forest, field, and coastal water he practised from earliest youth. They were as natural to him as walking. He was an active member for many years of local rugby clubs and boating clubs, naturally as half and as cox respectively, for he was of slight stature; but undoubtedly his greatest affection was reserved for duck-shooting, and he knew the winding estuarine waters of Invercargill as well as he knew its wide main street. It was this sport that remained with him all his life, and the first of the season was for him, even to his latest days, the greatest day of the year. It was, alas! the day that hastened his death, for he had travelled far to be there yet again at "the opening" when he was stricken with the illness to which he succumbed three years later.
Few forest officers of his later years knew of all his early sporting activities, for he was a man of few words on other than everyday topics, and he especially disliked listening to people who were not well versed in their subjects. His detection of such was rapid, and amounted almost to intuition. On the other hand, his highest praise of a stranger would be "He knows what he is talking about", and it was a rare comment. For his last three years and more he was bedridden; and his greatest pleasure was a visit from any of the older forest officers. He had become a little more talkative, and his constant and accurate stories of incidents of the bush and of days (and nights) "after the ducks" showed how genuine had been his interest in his lifelong profession and hobbies.

He had never married.

—C.M.S.

HERBERT ROCHE, 1892–1959

In the death of Herbert Roche, which occurred at his home in Nelson last February, the Institute lost a valued honorary member; forestry and foresters lost a friend whose influence extended and will live far beyond the small circle to which illness and suffering confined him in his latter years.

"Hub" Roche was born on the West Coast, at Nelson Creek, once noted for gold, silver pine, and scholars. In early life he worked for a Greymouth survey firm, and later for the Public Works Department on the Otira Tunnel and Mangahao Dam construction projects.

When the Forest Service was organised as a separate department in 1921 Roche joined the ranger staff, and for the next twenty-five years worked in the Westland, Wellington, Rotorua, Canterbury, and Nelson Conservancies. While stationed in Christchurch he was a student at the Canterbury School of Forestry, one of the first group who enrolled when the school opened in 1925. Roche was appointed Conservator at Nelson in 1940, but ill health brought an untimely end to his Forest Service career and he retired in 1946, being elected to honorary membership of the Institute during the same year.

Roche's happiest days as a forester were undoubtedly the eleven years (1929–40) he spent in charge of Hanmer Forest in North Canterbury. This period saw the beginning of large-scale thinning operations in some of the older forests, Hanmer among them. In those days thinning was not firmly accepted as essential practice throughout New Zealand forestry circles. It involved a radical departure from the planting and protection that had hitherto constituted exotic forestry; it was costly, apparently wasteful of good material, and converted orderly stands to an impenetrable jungle of slash. But it was Roche, ever the philosopher, who would comfort those appalled at the sight of a newly thinned larch or pine stand by emphasising its tidiness and its promise for the future, in comparison with the logged-over rimu