J. S. Stronge

I consider myself privileged to be given the sad task of presenting an obituary for Jack Stronge. It has been one of the attractions of my present situation to become acquainted with men of his calibre. Although I had met him earlier, it was not until the Forestry Development Conference in 1969 that I really got to know him well, when we co-operated on two papers for that conference. His clear and uncluttered mind, and his ability to concentrate on the points that mattered, made it a pleasure to work with him.

The old saying: if you want to get a job done, ask a busy man—was certainly true of Jack Stronge. Mention of the organizations with which he was connected will give a measure of the concern and interest he had in the well-being of the community in which he lived, and of his willingness to be of service to that community:

Past President of Opunake R.S.A. and holder of the Certificate of Merit and Gold Star.
Chairman of West Committee of Egmont National Park Board.
President of Taranaki Savings Bank Board of Trustees.
Deputy Chairman of the Regional Committee of National Historic Places Trust.
Chairman of Taranaki Farm Forestry Association.
Member of the Forestry Development Council.
Deputy Chairman, Egmont County Council.
Deputy Chairman, Taranaki Patriotic Council.
Member, Taranaki Reserves Committee.
Chairman, Oaonui Dairy Company.
Member, N.Z. Federation of Dairy Factories.
Taranaki Ward Delegate to the Dominion Dairy Conference.
Member, Cheese Produce Advisory Committee of the Dairy Board.
Chairman, Taranaki Bobby Calf Pools Association.

His interest in matters concerning the land is obvious from this list—indeed it was his basic interest. He gave up a career in journalism after his marriage in 1933 to return to the land. Anyone who lived through that period on a dairy farm in New Zealand will know what a back-breaking and soul-destroying job that was.

His main concern in forestry was to see that the grower obtained a fair price for his timber, and he wrote several papers for Farm Forestry dealing with this subject, but he was also keenly interested in other aspects of trees on farms, including the beauty of the countryside. He was therefore an obvious choice for farmer delegate to the FDC, where he lent his strength and experience in developing the new policy on stumpage assessment.
Throughout his latter years he resumed his earlier love of books and of writing. He had collected a valuable library on early New Zealand history, and was working hard to the end on producing a history of the Opunake district of Taranaki.

Jack was the best type of New Zealander, willing to serve his community and his country in peace and war; to get in and do something rather than sit back and criticize; to be modest in achievement and completely egalitarian in his attitude to others. We have lost someone of true value; forestry has lost a staunch advocate, and I have lost someone whose friendship I greatly valued.

I know all members of the Institute will join me in extending our sympathy to Mrs Stronge and her daughters Jennifer and Berri.

I.A.F.