HONORARY MEMBERS, 1974

Neil A. Barr

Neil Barr, the "cocky" from Kaukapakapa, has been a member of the Institute since 1954. From stockman on the family farm in Northland, his interests widened to include trees, especially eucalypts, as he coped with planting the wetter sites on the farm. This interest widened, and he rapidly became acknowledged as an authority on the performance and use of eucalypts, to the extent that he acquired the nickname of "Botryoides Barr". Neil decided that the farmers of this country were losing much, both materially and spiritually, by neglect of trees on their farms. His enthusiasm and leadership led to the formation of the Lower Northland Farm Forestry Association—the first such association in New Zealand—and subsequently other regional Farm Forestry Associations, prior to the formation of the national body in 1957 of which he was founder and president.

This proved to be only a beginning. Neil's articles in the New Zealand Farmer have a wide following, and as a thinker and practical forester he has been an "ideas man" at many Institute meetings, field days, symposia and research advisory meetings. His contribution is never fancy theories dredged from the literature, but always down-to-earth practical comment based on personal observation and experience. He has applied the common sense of the farmer to silviculture with remarkable success. A lover of debate as well as trees, his comments are sensible, entertaining, and spiced with farming anecdotes. Always the champion of the small-scale grower, he has pushed for a more competitive timber market and higher stumpages. He has also supported co-operative marketing to the same end, and has personally demonstrated that forestry is sound business for the small man.

Much travelled inside and outside New Zealand, his love of people is matched only by his love of trees. Everyone from cabinet ministers and directors-general to the newest recruit enjoys his friendship and, if passing through Northland, his hospitality. One of the genuine characters in the forestry world, it is fitting that his contributions to the Institute and to forestry in this country have been formally recognized by his elevation to Honorary Member.

J. R. Tustin

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