OBITUARY

Charles Holden Brown

Charlie Brown died suddenly in Palmerston North on 22 May 1974, ending a distinguished career prematurely to the great sorrow of all who knew him.

This career began in 1940 when Charlie joined the Forest Service as a Draughting Cadet in Christchurch. It was interrupted during the war by service with the Fleet Air Arm. After the war Charlie studied for a B.Sc. degree at Canterbury University and eventually went to the Australian Forestry School at Canberra where he graduated with distinction. He and his family will be remembered as residents of “the Waldorf” in the early 1950s.

On returning to New Zealand, Charlie started his ten-year association with Southland Conservancy, working from Forester, Tuatapere, to Assistant Conservator in Invercargill.

In 1963 he and his family spent two years in Chile where he worked on an FAO silvicultural project. His fluent command of Spanish enabled him to contribute much to this project.

On his return, Charlie went to Head Office as Planning Officer where he contributed to the work leading up to “1969 National Forestry Planning Model” which was presented to the Forestry Development Conference. In 1966 he became Principal Forester and Deputy Conservator in Rotorua and in 1969 was appointed Conservator of Forests, Palmerston North.

Charlie’s particular knowledge of South America took him back to Chile and Peru in 1973 on a mission to assess potential aid projects. He was to carry this further with a six months’ stay in Peru later in 1974, but for his untimely death.

Charlie always took an active interest in the Institute of Foresters and its affairs, and held the position of Honorary Treasurer for three consecutive periods from 1966 through to 1972.

This successful career, both at home and abroad, shows only one side of Charlie Brown. Those who new him were aware also of his great interest in Maori crafts and language. His command of the language was such that on the occasion of
the first planting of Awahohonu Forest he spoke on the Marae in Maori, a gesture which was much appreciated by all those present. His contact with the Maori language and Maoritanga was also of help to him in the successful negotiations of afforestation leases of Maori land in the Lake Taupo and Rotoraira areas. Charlie was an accomplished carver and taught a class in Maori carving.

However, it is as a person that we most remember him, a kind and gentle man, full of quiet fun, unassuming and yet effective. His early death has deprived forestry of a most able and dedicated man. More though, all who knew him have lost a person they held in the highest esteem and affection. To his wife, Lucy, and her son and daughters, our sympathy is given.