ANNUAL REPORT 1979-80

The 32nd Conference of the New Zealand Weed and Pest Control Society was held at the Southern Cross Hotel, Dunedin, from 7th - 9th August, 1979. The Conference was opened by Dr John Troughton, Assistant Director of Agricultural Research, MAF, who stimulated members with his thought-provoking address, especially in regard to cost benefit aspects of weed and pest control in the N.Z. agricultural scene.

In contrast to 1978 the 1979 Conference attracted a record 66 papers. Weed control and biology accounted for 32 papers, and pests and their control 28 papers, with 5 papers on diseases and 3 on no-tillage aspects. Despite the distance delegates had to travel, the daily and total attendances of sessions was high, ranging from 70 to 105 per session.

A stimulating evening session was held on aspects of aerial application of pesticides. The principle speaker at this session was Mr J. Watt from Australia who stimulated considerable discussion from both panel speakers, delegates and visitors from the floor.

The A.G.M. was attended by 60 members with some discussion on type of venues and editorial matters.

Membership of the Society is 321 and the financial position reasonably satisfactory but, unfortunately, the escalating cost of publishing and postage has necessitated a rise in subscriptions for 1980. There is a growing feeling among members that the Society should become more actively involved in controversial matters as a pressure group. Once again the NZIAS has approached our Society asking us to join them in their Annual Conference.

The Society’s Executive has had an active year with main activities involving preparation for the 3rd print of “Identification of Weeds and Clovers”. Satisfactory progress is being made on the weed identification field book but more pictures are still required.

Local branches of the N.Z.W.&P.C.S. have been more active this year. Hawkes Bay have been active with several field days and one dramatic event where safe storage of pesticides was graphically emphasised. Dunedin, Christchurch and Manawatu groups have all held meetings and field days.

Due to the Abbotsford Disaster coinciding with our Conference, a collection was made from Members and forwarded to the Abbotsford Disaster Relief Fund.