

IAN CRABTREE

(as told by Annette Goldsmith)

Ian Crabtree would be delighted to be helping future Electrical Engineers with their studies. His long career as an Electrical Engineer provided him with many challenges, rewards and much satisfaction. In December 2001, just 6 months before he died aged 73, he was presented at Transpower with a special award from the Electricity Engineers Association of New Zealand for 50 years of meritorious service to the industry.

For many years Ian was Principal Supply Engineer with New Zealand Electricity and was very involved with the use and maintenance of the Cook Strait cable, which, when it was commissioned in 1965, was the biggest of its kind in the world. It was vital for New Zealand's continuous supply of electricity and maintenance was not always easy. Specialist overseas contractors were often required, involving lots of organization on Ian's part.

Supply included transmission of power along the lines from towers of the national grid and I can remember Ian's concern over 30 years ago when he discovered while on holiday in Central Otago that someone had been shooting out the insulators on the towers over Dansey Pass. Something was soon done about it. A model he set up for transmission maintenance 45 years ago was still used by Transpower in 2002.

Safety of workers was one of Ian's main concerns and responsibilities. Accidents on towers and transmission lines really distressed him. He put in place processes and standards which saved many lives and was largely instrumental in improving the industry's safety record during 1970-2000.

In his post-official retirement years, he was a consultant for Transpower, largely working on Safety Standards for the industry both here and in Australia. He was also a Transpower representative for Civil Defence and spent the eve of the millennium in the Civil Defence headquarters, a pleasant occasion, it transpired, as nothing untoward happened.

His work took him to many conferences overseas which he greatly enjoyed and he was on a number of national and international committees.

Ian had wide interests- art, music, history, religion, film and travel, to name a few. If you visit the Morning Star gold mine at the Karori Sanctuary, you can read a small plaque in the tunnel entrance acknowledging Ian's generous gift to the mine's opening in 2002.

He believed in education and service to the community. His contribution was indeed significant during his long career and he would be very pleased to know that his legacy continues to enrich the lives of others.

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