

# 100 Years of Co-operation

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A History of the Victorian Dairy Industry

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# Little gods, good blokes ... and larrikins

Deep shadows had etched their way across the Western craters and plains. A weary Robert Crowe began pacing the worn boards of his Koroit and Tower Hill Butter Factory manager's office.

A renowned fighter, Crowe seldom allowed himself a negative thought. Tonight, he was deeply troubled. His instinct picked at his thoughts. Economic indicators were positive but his black foreboding saw beyond the rosy reports to financial disaster as sudden and devastating as a bushfire.

No one worked harder at Koroit than Crowe. His staff had departed hours earlier. It was approaching 9pm. Crowe's day, begun before dawn, was nearing its end. There were only the ledgers and the day's cream test results to file.

Crowe stepped from his office and its veil of stale cigar smoke into crisp night air. He shook stiffness from his legs to stroll to the fence that bordered the factory. He leaned against the pickets to light the last of his cigars - the "factory manager's badge".

The clatter of a horse's hooves cut through the gloom. A dark silhouette materialised, just feet from where Crowe rested. Swaying in the saddle was a farmer, a well-known Koroit supplier. Even through the darkness, Crowe could see fire in the man's reddened eyes.

"Ah, the bloody 'manager'," he sneered. "Do-nothin' bludgers who sit around smokin' cigars all day while robbin' us poor cow cockies with your bloody crooked

cream tests.” He wheezed and spat into the dust at the manager’s feet.

Crowe’s mouth dropped open, too stunned to speak as his adversary teetered into the night. Throughout his career he had been a champion of the farmer -encouraging technology and legislation for greater returns to suppliers.

He shook his head in anger and disbelief, uncoiled his lean frame and strode back to his office. This was surely a sign. Dawn reappeared before he had finished a stack of letters to fellow factory managers calling an urgent meeting.

Drained, Crowe leaned away from the desk, allowing his thoughts to meander back over five years. So much had been accomplished, yet ...



Crowe had been propelled into a whirlwind dairying career in 1888 as protege to the incandescent David Wilson. He was lucky. Wilson, the first Dairy Expert of the Colony of Victoria, is generally credited with guiding Victorian dairying from a rural ‘dark ages’ to a modern, viable industry.

In around-the-clock activity, Crowe helped Wilson organise the pioneering dairy exhibits at Victoria’s centenary celebrations. They mounted a travelling dairy exhibit which provided the ‘hands on’ experience needed to teach up-to-date dairy farming methods.

Crowe had quickly become a beacon for Victorian dairy farmers. Plucked straight from the Warrnambool district, he was barely 21.

He was captivated with the vision of an ultra modern, unified industry, spearheaded by a co-operative factory system - of vastly improved dairy products, increased profits - and higher profits for every farmer.

Wilson harangued the Deakin-Gillies Liberal-Conservative coalition to gain the government’s ear - and

wallet. Funds were released to teach contemporary dairying techniques and to offer incentive programs and bonuses for export quality butter. His strategy was to establish a network of supervised creameries to produce outstanding dairy products.

Their vision resulted in the opening of the first co-operative at Cobden that very year.

Farmers watched with traditional scepticism that turned to fervour at Cobden's success. With continued encouragement by Crowe and Wilson, co-operatives would open at Warrnambool, then at Koroit on February 25, 1889.

Little could Crowe imagine that he would become Koroit's leader. His future seemed inexorably linked with Wilson. Together they wrote hundreds of articles, a regular column in the 'Chronicle', educational booklets and 'Modern Dairying', the definitive dairy manual of the times.

Crowe travelled 30,000 miles around Victoria in the next three years, conducting classes, practical demonstrations, bringing the latest dairy equipment and techniques into farmers' sheds. His travelling dairy became as popular as circus visits.

The benefits were soon evident in efficient, hygienically operated farms, higher profits - and a 27% increase in milk yield per cow.

At Koroit he became the first to introduce the Babcock tester. At the outset, Crowe knew that unequivocal cream testing would put an end to suspicions of cheating that plagued the farmers. He immediately ordered 15 testers. Yet now he was perceived as - 'the enemy'!



Crowe blinked back his reveries, marshalling his thoughts into a raw mosaic of the economy of 1893.

Wealth had fallen like hail upon Victoria during the gold

rushes, further pumped up during the affluent 1870s and '80s by excessive overseas borrowing.

These were extraordinary boom times. Victoria's population, fuelled by immigrants eager to gain their share of riches, had doubled in 30 years.

Australia was now producing more than half its own manufactured goods requirements. Railway expansion helped ignite a land rush that sent speculators scurrying as far from Melbourne as Laverton. These blocks would not be built upon for another 60 years.

The collapse sparked wholesale bankruptcies and foreclosures. British funds, representing a third of Victorian holdings, were withdrawn, triggering a run on the banks. International credit was denied. Within six months, 23 banks would fail or suspend trading, eight of them in Melbourne. Others shut their doors for weeks, only to reopen with depositors' assets frozen. Creditors would settle for as little as a half penny in the pound.

The breakdown of the building boom left 20,000 buildings empty. Many in central Melbourne remained vacant for eight years. The situation was devastating. Unemployment rose to 25% among skilled workers. No welfare structure had been established.

Melbourne's population drained away. Departures far exceeded the migration of the previous three decades. The population of New South Wales became greater than that of Victoria; Sydney's surpassed Melbourne. For the first time an Australian state would have a higher percentage of females than males.

Crowe's premonitions were materialising, nightmare became reality - 1893 was the worst year in Victorian history. The curtain had dropped on the glittering era of 'Marvellous Melbourne'.

In the Victorian country, a seemingly endless drought - compounded by overgrazing, overstocking and plagues of introduced pests and plants - crippled the rural

community. Wool and wheat prices crashed. Vegetable crops were failing. Farmers everywhere were walking off their land, some looking enviously toward dairying.

No wonder. Dairying was preventing Victorian insolvency. Rather than regression, the industry was enjoying a period of innovation. Pasteurisation, the cream separator, refrigeration and the Babcock tester had helped escalate growth.

“Why worry?” managers asked, pointing to record export figures and healthy bank balances. Victorian butter sales to England had doubled in each of the four preceding years, from £51,315 to £761,273; 220 tons of Victorian cheese had been sold in London. The British were clambering for more.

Everything **seemed** to be going well.

Townships had formed around Wilson’s statewide network of creameries and Fresh Food and Frozen Storage Company.

Crowe looked beyond the euphoria. Recession could well affect dairying, destroying its hard won gains. Some farmers in desperation were grazing indiscriminately. There was little ground cover left for the future.

There was also the shadowy spectre of the King Street selling agents. Many were highly suspicious of the margins returned to farmers following overseas sales.

Alarm bells went off as agents began infiltrating naive factory boards and eventually pirating co-operatives. Crowe urged a union. It had become imperative to retain ownership firmly within co-operative hands.



Despite widespread respect for Crowe, few responded to his call for a meeting. Perhaps there were already too many regional dairying associations.

Most who bothered to send regrets pleaded 'busy schedules'. So it was a visibly relieved Robert Crowe who had glanced anxiously from his office window. One of Victoria's most venerated managers had arrived.

John Weatherhead stepped down from the carriage that had carried him from Camperdown with agility surprising for a man so large of height and girth. Always impeccable in a fashionable vested morning suit, Weatherhead was said to have the 'bearing of a Russian prince.' He stroked a neat, massive beard which carried a smile of greeting for Crowe. No two men appeared more different, yet harmonious in their views and visions for Victorian dairying.

Weatherhead had been foundation secretary-manager at Allansford in May, 1888, and had proceeded to Camperdown in 1891 as its first manager. At both factories his word was law. His dynamism had ensured both factories of success.

Crowe and Weatherhead were joined by the mild, courtly James Goldie, a successful farmer-factory executive. Goldie shared Crowe's enthusiasm for modern technology and had written scholarly editorials and articles in support of 'new dairying'.

Crowe's usually Spartan office had been hastily made more comfortable for the meeting with the addition of several chairs and a small sideboard laden with drinks.

James Eccles, another resolute dairyman of the district, plopped into a vacant chair, followed by the fifth and final foundation member - a Mr Hassell. Little more is known of Hassell except that he was also from the Western District.

Although they were few, the meeting became passionate, almost evangelical. Crowe mentioned the 'cow cocky incident'. The others recounted similar confrontations. Each expressed great concern at droves of wheat farmers abandoning their farms. News that smaller dairy farmers all over Victoria were forming regional 'depots' was discussed, pro and con. The continuing distrust of the

King Street butter agents became an issue that would recur time and again. Brows furrowed over a lack of uniformity of standards and methods that prevented the production of consistently good butter.

There was formal business to attend to. Crowe nominated the urbane Goldie as foundation President. Weatherhead suggested that, as Crowe had convened the group, he should be the Association's first leader. It was a position Weatherhead would like to have claimed. Crowe declined. He felt his previous involvement with the government might be misread by other factory managers.

Crowe became the new Butter Factories' Managers Association's first Secretary before bowing to the industry's entreaties and accepting the presidency in 1895 and 1896. The jolly Weatherhead followed Crowe as President in 1897; Eccles had his turn leading the Association in 1900.

The five founding members stood and shook hands sombrelly. A bottle of scotch was opened to seal their bond. Small cut glasses were handed around.

As they hoisted a toast, Crowe raised a final item: a motto for the Association. He paused, then suggested the words that would symbolise the Association: 'Strive to Excel.'

Goldie piloted the fledgling Association energetically. Handshakes and verbal guarantees indicated they had won eager converts, but only a show of strength at the Association's first annual conference would ensure its success.



Parer's Bourke Street Restaurant, was chosen as the venue for the first conference of the Butter Factories' Managers Association. A popular bistro, it sat fewer than 60. Eccles and Weatherhead were hopeful of reaching capacity, but their optimism wasn't shared.

For many delegates who stepped from trains at Flinders Street, brushing dust from their suits, it was their first



visit to Melbourne. They had no trouble finding Parer's. Only three months earlier, Melbourne's central business district had been lit up by electric lamps!

Weatherhead arrived, happily jostling his bulk through the noisy throng that already filled Parer's, jammed the doorway and spilled out on the footpath.

Inside, factory managers squinted through a thick pall of cigar smoke and a sea of bobbing bowler hats, trying to locate colleagues. There was a din as 30 dairymen competed for a waiter's attention and a beer after the long trip.

Robert Crowe craned to see some of the Victorian dairy industry's most influential managers. He tried to conceal his excitement.

There was Korumburra's Jonathan Proud, Trafalgar's Ed Knox, and J.S. Graham from Great Northern. With relief he noted that the Victorian Agriculture chief Colonel C.E. Merrett had accepted his invitation.

It was a night long remembered by the founders. Their hard work had returned dividends. The Association was assured of success - at least for another year.

Goldie stood to welcome the throng. Those standing managed to flatten themselves against the tan walls of the little restaurant. The din dropped to an attentive silence. The keynote addresses, including an elegant speech by Colonel Merrett, were centred on a blunt theme: 'Responsibilities of the Factory Manager'. Managers strained to hear every word. There was talk of the unionism that was sweeping through the bush. Unrest between shearers had led to fighting and strikes. Would violence enter the dairy factory?

A new air of camaraderie, trust and confidence bolstered the Association's low profile genesis.

Despite Victoria's skidding economy and a lengthy drought, the number of butter factories rose from 32 to 174 and creameries from 65 to 284 in the five years to

1895. For the first time, more butter was being made in factories than on farms. In 1895, 39,760,994 pounds of butter had been produced in Victoria, 23,200,000 pounds of which had been exported to England. There it was so highly prized it sold for 3d more per pound than New Zealand butter.

The Association's success meant an expanding membership. Factory management Victoria-wide scrambled to join. The overflow at Parer's had hastened a search for larger premises. A supportive Perpetual Trustees group graciously offered their elegantly wood panelled boardroom for the next conference.

As the new members thronged to the 1895 conference, it became obvious that this new venue had also been outgrown. The cavernous Chamber of Commerce facility was large enough to allow Crowe, now Association President, to mount an impressive display of the latest dairying equipment, utensils and products from all over Victoria.

It was also the first year of an Association-sponsored cheese contest that would generate furious competition for generations.

The Royal Agricultural Society, scrutinising the Association's professional approach and success, offered its Flemington grounds for future conferences.

Crowe decided that he would be more valuable to the industry by returning to government service. The groundswell of federation was growing. A draft Constitution was placed before the people in 1898. Some months later Crowe became Victoria's Chief Dairy Expert, the position created for his mentor, David Wilson 11 years earlier.

The Association felt its foundations steadily expanding. A fickle press turned its attention to the annual conference and lengthily reported each industry pronouncement.

A photographer was hastily summoned to record the event. Twenty-eight bewhiskered factory managers

managed to tear themselves away from demonstrations, speeches, competitions - and the odd drink or two - to drape themselves proudly, if self consciously, before a hand-painted, bucolic backdrop. With the piercing stares of important dairying pioneers of grit and vision, they were immortalised in a flash of powder.

Unfortunately, we do not know today who they were.



Sadly, aside from a few yellowed clippings, the odd frayed minutes book or ledger, and crumbling, anonymous photographs, little remains of those early days. A state-wide glut of factory and creamery fires - both deliberate and accidental - early defaults, takeovers and amalgamations that would scorn the preservation of history, and a general carelessness for things past have lost forever the detailed annals of a vital industry.

No one can fully restore those vast chasms of lost annals.

Would-be chronicles were often hastily scrawled as notes on scraps of paper, seldom recorded, often committed only to memory.

Fortunately, memory does survive to fill some of the widening gaps - to revive the triumphs, the upsets and the grand, once vivid images of titans long gone to a dairying Valhalla.

In this booklet, five distinguished dairymen, whose careers in Victoria spanned more than a half century, have shared with us their rich recollections:

Four served as Victorian Division Presidents: **Bob McArthur** (1960, National President, 1967); **Ross Coulthard** (1966, 1976, National President, 1980), **Joe Ford** (1968), and **Russ Holyoak** (1977). The fifth, **Frank Vale**, at 84 is the Association's oldest living Life Member.

Bowing only slightly to the rigours of an endless line of milk cans, cheese troughs and packing - as well as disease, drought, takeovers, collapses - their collective ballad is of surviving, rising, winning and exulting. These are memories of centuries of collective experience etched in the mind and spirit.

Through whey-like mists tumble tiny fragments - shards of a 100-year-old puzzle that begin to recreate a shattered collage of the Association's history.



By the turn of the century, Association conferences were imbued with cautious optimism. Although Victoria continued to lead the country in London butter sales, there was constant prodding for better quality from factories.

The Association's undenied resolve paid new bonuses. Other Australian states were showing interest. New South Wales became associated in 1906, Tasmania followed in 1911 and Queensland in 1919.

The Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries meetings

began to probe for answers to industry problems.

In 1918, a hue and cry was raised over 'butter substitutes'.

A delegation strongly urged the Victorian government to establish a dairying school at Werribee. Although Spring Street coffers were all but empty, the government was shown the wisdom of assuring Victoria's dairying future. Seed monies were quickly pledged from Victorian factories to ensure the government would not renege.

It was a timely success. With war clouds gathering over Europe, Korumburra's Jonathon Proud and Robert Crowe had increased the pressure on producing better product, becoming almost shrill at the conference of 1914.

After four gruelling years of deprivation at home, the 'War To End All Wars' was grinding to a halt. With peace on the horizon, attention was turned to returning to 'normal'. Once again, delegates could enthuse at grand displays of cheeses and lavish machinery exhibitions that would be the hub of the 1918 Agricultural Show.

The men returning to the farms and dairies expected things to be much as when they had left. They were greeted with a recession, few jobs, little money and a severe national drought. Resettling the men on the land became a prime objective of the dairy industry.

Understandably, the milk yield had dropped slightly, but within 21 months, butter production levels would reach new, all-time heights. As they gathered again in Melbourne in 1920, Association leaders applauded butter producers for their great efforts. Industry optimism was palpable.

Strangely, war generates the beneficial by-product of advanced technology. The advent of affordable motorised trucks, tractors, improved refrigeration, milking machines, production of casein and refined lactose and the demand for condensed milk forever changed the face of Victorian dairying.

There was now more to deliberate on at Association

conferences.

In 1919, a dairying innovation was brought enthusiastically before conference delegates: herd testing. Once again, it was Crowe who pioneered the practice, introducing it at Koroit in 1897. By 1919 herd testing was becoming standardised at leading factories such as Colac.

Crowe missed only one conference. In 1924 he led the Australian mission at London's Empire Exhibition. He personally supervised the construction and operation of the sprawling three-acre Australian Pavilion, designed after the Government Pavilion at Flemington.

The annual conference became a major media event. Australian and international dignitaries vied to officiate at conference functions. Lord Brassey, Victorian Governor from 1895 to 1900, opened the 1925 conference at Flemington. Sir John Taverner was an honoured guest and speaker.

At its 34th Conference, at the Showground's Agricultural Hall, the Association officially became 'The Australian Butter and Cheese Factories' Managers and Secretaries Association'.

Despite firm resolve in most areas, the Association had more than a little difficulty in deciding what to call itself. Name changes became as frequent as conference venue moves. In the six years to 1929, the Australian Butter and Cheese Factories' Managers and Secretaries Association switched to the extended 'Australasian', returned to 'Australian' and, finally, the Victorian Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries Association.

Perhaps the identity crisis was fostered by the first 'official' meeting of four states - Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland - to form the first Australian Association on May 25, 1927.

The meeting was monitored by curious dairymen representing Western Australia and South Australia who wanted to form their own state organisations. It led, in

1936, to the foundation of the first truly federal association with state divisions.

Robert Crowe's thundering oratory in a 1927 keynote address returned the collective focus to the essence of the Association. As he was introduced, several hundred factory managers stood, offering a rousing ovation to this ageless dairying legend. The title of Crowe's speech? 'Strive to Excel.'

*Crowe had patterned his life and works after that early Association motto. In 1905 he had been appointed Superintendent of Victorian Dairy Products and, in 1907, Superintendent of Dairy Exports for the Department of Agriculture. There was no better - or more popular - choice than Crowe's appointment as Director of Victoria's Department of Agriculture in 1931. Crowe remained a mainstay of the Association until his late 80s.*

It seemed a great time for rhetoric. Association President-elect D.V. Evershed settled members comfortably in their seats at the Federal Hotel on Collins Street. Candidly, he confessed his happy amazement that members could continue to be "competitors in the same market, rivals in trade and competitors for both the raw produce and the finished product - but gave of experience and experiments to help each other".

Never one willing to allow even a moment's smugness, the aging Crowe brought delegates to the edge of their seats, lambasting the "various councils, boards and committees appointed with a view of meeting the conditions of the industry ... and everything (that) goes through the Australian Dairy Council ... But conditions vary state to state. Single states are hampered." Giving full vent to the moment, Crowe then roundly criticised the Butter Export

Board as a “failure”.

That off his chest, Crowe smiled, his timing impeccable. Reminiscing, he gently carried his rapt audience back to early times. He recalled days of ‘hit-or-miss’ dairying, when it was difficult to find an answer to a problem as simple as cooling fresh cream: 1) a can placed into a pan of water and refilled when a certain temperature was reached. 2) lowering cream into the cool recesses of a well or 3) in some new factories, digging beneath the foundations to create a tunnel where wind could blow gently across the cream. It was a masterful performance. The lesson was not lost on the delegates. They knew it was going to be a hell of a conference.

It was. Both Evershed and Proud (unnecessarily) reminded members that every conference since 1920 had stressed that inferior butter sent to England was tarnishing Victoria’s reputation.

Proud was by then representative to the Australian Dairy Council, the Victorian Dairy Products Advisory Board and the Milk and Cream Grader’s Board. As much as the Association reviled these groups as ‘do nothings’, its leaders felt Proud’s involvement could only promote positive action. As usual, they were correct.

The exhortations must have worked. For all the changes and industry concerns, the atmosphere of the conferences remained vibrant, attracting international attention.

At the 1928 conference, the renowned American butter scientist, Dr O.F. Hunziker came from Minnesota to address the Australian industry. At every appearance, the gracious, erudite doctor was roundly appreciated.

Through the 1929-30 fiscal year, 40,000 tons of top quality butter was manufactured despite dreadful weather through late summer and autumn. However, there was a threat far more daunting to be faced - The Great Depression.





The popular image of the '20s had been wealth, flashy cars and flappers dancing away a jazz age. In reality, it was a period of deep economic woe and unemployment in Victoria which contributed significantly to the Great Depression of the '30s.

As the crisis deepened, dairy farmers and creameries feeling the pinch were urged to amalgamate. Again, quality was emphasised as the only answer to “a spread of benefits” back to farmers.

Simple economics were espoused: “The factories that make the best butter are those which have secured the

highest returns and were thus enabled to pay the highest prices to suppliers.”

Victor Stafford, in his first term as Association President, had the unenviable task of unfurling details of the disastrous 1930 collapse of the London market. Victorian dairymen, he pointed out, would have to face a trade deficit of £800,000.

Times were particularly tough for aspiring dairymen.

Frank Vale's story is typical. His father was a hard pressed school master at Toora. To feed his family of 12 children, he took on a share dairy. Even so, there wasn't enough money for young Frank's schooling in Leongatha. He milked cows for two years then left home at 14, moving to Woodside where he stripped wattle bark for two years waiting for a dairy job.

Finally, an opening for a 'keen lad' arose at Tarwin Meadows under Eric Heard. The spirited youngster became the protege of 'The Great Dane', Dick Hansen. By 1927 he had gained both grader and tester certificates for milk and cream - each signed by Jonathan Proud and Robert Crowe, then chairman of the board.

Now 84, Vale still vividly remembers the pungent, dizzying odour of ammonia that wafted in dank clouds from the old 'Humble' horizontal refrigeration compressors.

*It must have had a momentous effect. In 1952 he left Hamilton to go on to become a pioneering leader in Australian refrigeration!*

Vale looks back on those tough times without rancour. His philosophy is exemplary: "I've led a charmed life, you know. It was wonderful being brought up poor. There was no jealousy - everyone was poor. It teaches you to battle for what you want."

Joe Ford waited 18 months for his break in 1932. Again, it was Heard - then at Shepparton - who spotted the youngster's potential. Ford fondly recalls the 'patriarchal'

environment at Shepparton and the patient lessons in grading given him by Charles Naismith.

Bob McArthur's persistence paid off with a job at Glenormiston. "It took two and a half hours on a bicycle to get to the factory - seven miles each way down a dirt track to wash milk cans!"

"The difference in those days was that we started washing cans - because we **had** to have a job!"

Ross Coulthard was barely 15 when he went to work for Tom Whitney at Yarram. Whitney proved to be tough, but caring. He encouraged his youngsters to study, no matter how arduous their day.

Whitney didn't lay anyone off in winter as most factories did. Instead, he had his troops "cutting wood or gathering charcoal for the suction gas engines that often supplied a town's energy in those times".

If you had a job but were looking for work at a larger factory, Russ Holyoak says: "You got in early and looked over the paper - the Gippsland and Northern Co-operator - before the boss saw it. It detailed all the industry jobs."

Neither job nor salary was taken for granted. Coulthard once dared to ask if his job was "permanent". Whitney glanced up in astonishment and boomed: "**No** bloody job is permanent!" Such were the times.

A.E. Jarvis had begun his career in 1893 at Kergunyah and Gundowring, thrilled to be offered the munificent sum of £2/5/0 a week. The next year the factory arbitrarily dropped his wages by a whopping 10 shillings. There was nothing he could do about it. Jarvis, hung on to become the Association's oldest living manager, attending an Association conference in 1969 at the age of 100!



Despite the gloom of depression, 1930 conference delegates managed to get the job done and still have a grand time. There wasn't much money around, but this

was their only chance to both learn and let their hair down. There were copious drinks shouted when Cobden won the Class #1 Cheese award.

The following year, President Victor Stafford arrived early from Orbost for the conference. He had expended an enormous amount of energy preparing for the event. Funds were still low, but Stafford glanced with satisfaction at the turnout.

The line-up was prodigious and included M. Wallace of Alvie, Tom Whitney from Yarram, 'Old' Salt from Allansford, Eric Heard then at Lower Tarwin, Peter Mathieson from Tallangatta, Don Cameron from Cobden, A.J. Cook representing South Australian farmers and Cyril Callister from Kraft. and a host of MacKenzies - 'R.A.' from Korumburra, 'D.L.' from Kyneton, 'J.O.' from Maryborough and 'K.' from Glenormiston.

Handsome, popular and selfless, J.F. Kittson was elected President in 1935. A long time business manager and secretary at the Wallace Dairy Factory, he guided the Association's skimpy funds through perilous financial times. Kittson served Association Secretary for a total of 18 years. Only Stafford would serve longer - a total of 24 years as Secretary and as President in 1930 and 1941. Others who gave an inordinate amount of time to the cause included Ernie Knox, Secretary for 14 years and President for three years; A.C. Wilmhurst, President for two years and Secretary for nine; and Dick Cooke, Association Secretary from 1969 to 1978.

In 1936, another memorable change in name and status occurred - one that would become lasting. The Victorian Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries Association became established as a registered company - the Australian Institute of Dairy Factory Managers and Secretaries Incorporated. A.J. Fraser, the factory manager at Foster, was a dignified and forceful President that year, showing qualities that would lead him into politics and to become a Victorian cabinet minister.

“The cigar smoke was so thick you couldn’t cut it.” Frank Vale never forgot it. The year was 1937 and Vale, then a very green but ardently enthusiastic freshman manager at the Hamilton factory, recalls his first AIDFMS Conference.

It was the ‘Smoko Night’, and “a hundred or so ... and a few cheese makers” jammed Myers Mural Hall. Vale tingled as he threaded among the colourful titans of the industry including A.J. Cooke, who had monitored the 1927 conference for South Australian farmers. He had become a human dynamo in that state and was creating history at Colac.

Vale was welcomed by others considered by their peers as ‘living legends’ - Foster’s A.J. Fraser, the Association’s dynamic President Wallace Graham and, of course, Robert Crowe and Jonathan Proud.

That night, Proud spoke in firm, precisely rounded prose. He pleaded “better export butter quality”, a theme that continued to obsess the Institute. Old timers remembered that this was, in fact, a theme first initiated by David Wilson in 1889.

Another theme that would remain close to Proud’s heart and drove many fellow factory managers apoplectic at its very mention was - ‘The Margarine Menace.’

There were dark utterances of the King Street butter agents - already involved in oleomargarine production. It was also strongly suspected that butter grades were switched so that they gained higher profits at the expense of farmers and factories. Agents’ names were often spoken in whispered tones, sometimes with open scorn and referred to as the ‘King Street Snakes.’ That the agents had to be relied upon for overseas butter sales, was “one of the great weaknesses of our industry”, Joe Ford later recalled.

“Proud despised the selling agents - he called them ‘parasites’ -but he had to be tactful ...” Vale remembers. Agents still represented the vital link between Victorian

butter and London sales.

“Proud had an ‘English’, military sort of bearing. They say he even wore spats at Korumburra,” Vale smiles. “He had a very high profile.” Proud’s presence was indeed felt at every level - from factory floor to national level. He served as Federal President of the Association for a total of 11 years and as Victorian President in 1909, 1931, 1932 and 1946.

Proud was held in awe by the majority of the industry. It’s said that wherever he made an appearance “forelocks were tugged, doors opened and chairs pulled out - he virtually had everything done for him”.

Some saw the management style of Proud and some of his early Victorian colleagues as “virtual dictatorships”.

Ford explains: “The board of directors of most factories were made up of farmers who didn’t know the first thing about running a factory. This elevated a manager to a position of being totally in control.”

“The farmer with the most cows became chairman,” adds Holyoak. “They knew nothing about management and left it to the manager.” The authority often remained there and was seldom delegated.

On the odd occasion, though, a factory secretary and chairman held the whip hand. Ross Coulthard remembers Peter Mathieson, who managed at Tallangatta from 1917 to 1955 and was Association President in 1933. “It took 19 years for him to get admitted to a board meeting.”

“They thought they were gods,” McArthur, who managed at Corryong for 16 year, muses. “And you know, they **were!**”

“These men put the fear of God into employees. The pre- World War II factories were small. They were little gods in their own sphere,” remarks Coulthard.” One such man was A.J. Fraser of Foster.

“Authority was not spread around in those days,” Ford says, then pauses. “It changed after the war.”

Ford was dazed at suddenly being thrust among the dairying royalty at his first AIDFMS conference. "I was just a young country lad doing a course in Melbourne when (Eric) Heard asked me to go along. It was like meeting the prime minister!"

*Ford himself went on to enjoy a long and successful career, managing at Tatura from 1960 until his retirement in 1983, also serving for 13 years on the Victorian Dairy Produce Board.*

Holyoak's first conference was similar. "I was about 26 and walking into a conference attended by what was considered the heads of industry was frightening. Kraft, Heard, Hergstrom, Cooke and Gleeson were only names to me. Most of the towns where they were located literally revolved around their factories. I made sure I stayed out of sight at the back of the room!"

*His fear was short lived. Holyoak became manager at Myrtleford, manager at Grassmere and an executive with Murray Goulburn.*

Young McArthur, along with Bairnsdale's Jack Watt and Jack McGuire from Cobram, felt that "the only way to learn was to rub shoulders with the 'greats' at the conference". The first he attended was at the Melbourne Lower Town Hall - smoke filled rooms brimming with factory executives. "It gave me an opportunity to view first hand, the 'free goers'."

Those considered the elite were, of course, the top producers. Holyoak explains: "At Myrtleford, we were turning out about 300 tons of butter. These guys were turning out 1000 tons or more. They were **big!**"

"You used to have to call those blokes 'sir' before speaking to them." It was 1951. Holyoak pauses and shakes his head in reverie. "There was a certain amount

of snobbery and some treated the Institute as though it were their private club. Apart from 'the top of the tree', the rest of the managers were down to earth. They had all worked their way up from the factory floor, washing cans, whatever ..."

By now the scope of the conferences was enormous. With hundreds of statewide and national issues to contend with, the Institute decided to commence quarterly Council meetings. They were held in Melbourne at the Western District Co-operative Butter Factory at 49 King Street.

Some of the younger staff were seconded to attend these meetings. Bob McArthur, remembers: "I was only a kid, but because of (Victor) Stafford, I joined the Institute. To make the (quarterly) meetings, I had to get up at 3am to catch the 6:30 'Spirit of Progress' to Melbourne, just make it back on the 1am, shower and go straight to work. There was hardly any point going to bed."

Stafford was an odd mixture for a leader of that period. Described as "small, tough but very genuine", he was undeniably authoritarian, but with a difference.

In an age where factory managers remained aloof from their staff, Stafford passed the baton to his eager young lieutenants. Coulthard, McArthur, Jim Gleeson, Joe Sharkey, Arthur Hacquoil, Roly Harbinson and Stan Farmer were among those who learned their lessons well enough to emulate Stafford's success.

Joe Ford knew Stafford well. "To him, butter fat prices were secondary to grooming good men. He trained men to accept responsibility."

Sharkey, once simply confided: "Without Stafford ... I'd have been stuffed!"

*Sharkey went on to invent the cheese trommel, a world first that led the thrust into mechanised cheese manufacturing. He was Institute President in 1965.*



“Stafford would bail you right up. He didn’t like people who didn’t stand up to him. He came across sharp but fair ... a man who counted the pennies but had a big heart. I trusted him implicitly,” asserts McArthur.

“Stafford went to Wallace after the war. He could have had a bigger job, but his daughter had polio and he could get better treatment for her in Ballarat. That’s what kind of bloke he was.”

Stafford’s lessons became etched upon McArthur’s own management style. “I was always a ‘tomorrow man’, never a ‘yesterday man’.” McArthur implored staff and delegates to “think of the **industry** - not the factory, the state or the individual”.

Coulthard, who had assisted Stafford at Wallace, declares: “Stafford undid everything I had previously learned. He called it a ‘transfusion’.”

*Apparently, the ‘transfusions’ worked.*

*Coulthard became manager at Kiewa for 11 years. He is the only holder of both the Jack Scarr and John Bryant Medals, awarded by the Institute.*

*McArthur managed at Corryong from 1951 to 1968 when he left to head United Milk in Duck River, Tasmania, a post he held until his retirement in 1983. There he served as Tasmanian President.*

A new generation, or second tier, of dairying giants whose casebook included an odd mixture of democracy and authoritarianism was emerging.

While names of leaders such as Don Cameron and Jim

Gleeson (President - 1954, 1956) from Cobden, the Colac duo - Hergstrom and Cooke (1942, 1943), Bill McCarthy (1957) of Mirboo North, Shepparton's Don Gardiner (1969) and Ian Patience of Yarram (1970) are raised in praise, the exploits of two stand out:

'Mr Dairyman', Eric Heard, one of the truly legendary Camperdown managers, and Bill Kraft, who carved himself a glittering niche over 50 years as leader at Drouin.

*Heard was Victorian President in 1947 and 1961 (he was also Australian President in 1961); Kraft in 1949.*

Both accomplished much, though personal styles varied greatly.

"Eric Heard tended to be autocratic while Bill Kraft was flamboyant and always the life of the party."

Heard is said to have left visitors standing outside his office for at least a half hour - just to show who was in control! Yet he was fiercely loyal to his staff.

For all of Kraft's supposed playboy dash and party boy reputation, his business credo was succinct: "My approach to Drouin was a personal commitment. It was a public company."

The usual concerns voiced at the annual conferences were put aside with the onset of another World War. Membership was decimated as dairymen marched off to war.

Colac's great A.J. Cooke found himself Institute President in 1942 and 1943. He faced a daunting task.

War had helped diminish the Institute's profile and influence. To bolster sagging legions, membership was enlarged to include creamery owners. Institute influence remained depressed. Holyoak feels the Institute didn't really get going (again) until the late '40s and early '50s.

On the positive side of the ledger, there were some small but heartening gains.

The Institute's official journal - 'Butter Fats and Solids' - was launched in 1942 by editor, Percy Turk.

*In 1959, the Institute took full control of the magazine under editor Stanley Green. Coulthard submitted a "questions and answers" column that ran for some years.*

The Victorian government had been constantly pressed to assume funding of The School of Dairy Technology at Werribee. In 1939 the Institute roused the government to upgrade industry training. Again, the Institute prodded factories to establish a small funding pool for students.

From this catalyst of improving education emerged a new breed of dairyman to change the face of Victorian dairying. The timing could not have been more critical.

The Institute was not yet 50. It was teetering, and there was some competition. Numerous attempts were made throughout the state to form 'alternate' associations, eager to promote dairying education and to standardise techniques and criteria. These efforts reflected personal loyalties and strong regional polarity. Most were short lived.

The most successful was a group that met at the South Gippsland Creamery and Butter factory at Yarram. Enough funding was generated to hold a rival conference in Melbourne. More auspiciously, they produced a correspondence course under the guidance of Lou Scharp and Tom Whitney that became very popular through the 1940s and '50s.

It became an alternative. The school at Werribee was then still beyond reach of many aspiring dairymen. But changes were afoot.

"Previously they went away to study for four months on a voluntary basis and were not paid a thing. It was especially hard on married students," Holyoak explains.

“After the war, trained dairymen began to come through. The schooling experience brought students (who would eventually become managers) closer and broke down the traditional barriers.” Centralised authority began to decline.

It was a familiar story. When Joe Ford first became manager at Tatura, he had to oversee every facet of factory operation until staff could be trained to accept leadership.

Coulthard found changes rife after the '40s. “There were much better relationships with staff.”

Remnants of elitism lingered on until about 1970. As McArthur banters, “We ran the businesses from the factory, they ran them from home.”

Some of the ‘old guard’ were being phased out, victims of amalgamation, others simply retired. Coulthard felt it healthy that trainees from Werribee were being invited to attend the conference.

The Institute had its flaws, but power politics were rare. Frank Vale recalls that the milk, cream and cheese grading titles were more tensely contested than the presidency.

Some factories went so far as to use the conference as nothing more than a forum in which to parade and contest their products, Ford says. Great company rivalries would grow from these contests, with Colac and Camperdown remembered as fierce competitors. The results - particularly the butter and cheese awards - were always anxiously awaited.

“Heard was a consistent winner and it meant a great deal to him.”

Unlike the jealously guarded centralised power at the early factories, Vale says the presidency was never monopolised, rather “shared around pretty well”.

While there was some inevitable jockeying for the top post, and although it certainly benefited some, everyone had a go at being President, McArthur agrees.

This magnanimity lessened the Institute's potency, Holyoak thinks; a single year in office didn't allow implementation of his ideas. "The Institute depended so much on a President's output ... only a few forceful men managed to accomplish a lot ..."

Holyoak, chuckling, recalls a cynical side to campaigning. "Council members would only speak to you just before an election!"

Ford adds that often Institute problem-solving meant an expedient of "yet another committee". "It was ridiculous. The same members - those that loved to hog the spotlight - were on **every** committee!"

While there was a general sharing of information at conferences, Holyoak says "it was okay if you were talking to a factory at the other end of the state, but not the (competitor) factory next door!"

Some shared less. "Some joined...just to keep an eye on each other. Selling agents were particularly good. Telecom couldn't have shifted the information as quickly," Ford says.

Most felt that the proprietary companies were least forthcoming. "The proprietaries were there to keep an eye on things and certainly didn't exchange any information."

"The bigger ones used the Institute more effectively. The co-operatives, you see, were too open in their exchange. A proprietary's sole interest was in looking after its own," Coulthard says.

"Nestle's was like a 'secret society!'" adds Holyoak.

There was another brand of politics - the art of turning Canberra's focus towards the industry needs. Presidents like Joe Ford constantly involved the likes of Peter Nixon, Doug Anthony and Ian Sinclair at conferences to gain support for dairy farmers and the factories. Occasionally,

an invitation could backfire. Ford invited Bob Hawke, then Trades Hall boss, as guest speaker. “He nearly caused wholesale heart attacks” in proclaiming to dairying delegates the new wage conditions he would be seeking!

The politics of religion was apparently once considered a force in the industry. Russ Holyoak suggests that a man’s beliefs often dictated where he could work, the industry was generally polarised between Catholic and Masonic operated factories.

“Fortunately, religion didn’t come through into the workings of the Institute.”

Once politics and regional infighting was put aside, there was much to be gained by attending the conferences. They had become a centre of information exchange for many geographically isolated dairying executives.

Often the conference doubled as a holiday for hard pressed managers and secretaries. “In those days managers and secretaries didn’t come to the city very much,” Holyoak remembers.

By now, dozens of events were crammed into five days.

Day one of the conference was normally a golf day, usually sponsored by the machinery manufacturers. There would be a day of lectures and another dedicated to visiting the school at Werribee where the latest technical advances were demonstrated. The CSIRO displayed its latest dairying developments.

Dairying education was always stressed, but Holyoak remembers that most of that was dispensed via CSIRO, Department of Primary Industry or the Department of Agriculture pamphlets. “Life was very simple.” Today he applauds the “hands on” approach of “integrated business sessions and luncheons all directed toward learning”.

For years, the older factory managers strongly resisted attempts to include wives at the male-only domain of the conference. Gradually, they were worn down. During Joe Ford’s presidency, he organised activities for female

visitors. Ford even suggested that factories take women on their boards. His 'liberation' efforts had gone too far. "They nearly went into orbit when I mentioned this!"

Ford's wife, Joanne, recalls that these were entertaining outings - a trip to the Dandenongs, the art gallery, theatre, lunches and finally the dinner dance which replaced the 'Smoko.' She can only recall one scheduled event that misfired: a three hour tour of the meat market!

Most official sessions were held at the Chamber of Manufacturers and then the Federal Hotel, the Melbourne Town Hall and the RAS Showgrounds. They were usually well attended by the press who "found a lot more newspaper space for us in those days".

For younger delegates, a certain formality was imposed at meetings and lectures. "Even if it got to be 100 degrees in the shade, you daren't take off your coat," Coulthard recalls. With a little experience, they found a way to cope: "There was a watering hole on the corner of Collins and Swanston Street - some of the members would duck the sessions and go in for a drink."

There they would find selling agents leaning against a bar, all too eager to buy a young factoryman a drink.

"There were those who arrived on Monday and didn't leave the bar until Friday," laughs Holyoak.

"The agents had a lot of influence over co-operatives in those days," remarks Coulthard. He recalled agents, brothers Alf and Doug Barrow. "They knew everything that was going on. They hung out at the Federal and Kerry Hotels. It was there they got most of their information. Many a manager was poured out just in time to catch the last train home!"

"Everyone went their own way for lunch. The machinery or selling agents held luncheons and entertained the industry," recalls Holyoak. There was a keen rivalry to be invited to best functions. The highlight was the agents

dinner on the final night for 500 or 600. There was dinner, drinks and entertainment that went to 11:30pm ... “and we always found somewhere else to go.”

“I was at Werribee taking a course and was lucky enough to get a ticket for the final dinner. It became my job to find tickets for all the others ... most got in one way or another!”

There was, of course, a lighter side to the annual conference. Reputations of another sort were forged at these more relaxed moments.

Bob McArthur’s initiation to the dinner was long remembered. “These bastards could eat dozens of oysters. I was too green, too unsophisticated, so they ate all mine. But over the years I got the hang of it!”

None would forget the larger-than-life presence of Bill Kraft. Vale fondly recalls Kraft as a “great leader of men and a great factory manager, popular throughout the industry as well as overseas”. Kraft could break the ice in any situation with his vivid personality and keyboard talents. His favourite? ‘The Old Grey Mare’!

“Bill had an amazing capacity! He attended every party, a seven course dinner, supper and show and could still play the piano until the wee hours,” chuckles McArthur.

*Kraft’s capacity for living was undeniably Herculean. He began his career at Drouin in 1918, was awarded an OBE for his services to the industry in 1968 and was still a force into the ’80s. He died in 1992, aged 90.*

Machinery agents donated competition trophies and competed in holding the most lavish lunches and dinners. “Sessions after lunch were poorly attended,” Coulthard laughs.

At his introduction to the conference dinner in 1949, Coulthard watched in grudging admiration as Bill Kraft gleefully downed one course after another. He stared



gloomily at an entire duck placed before him, just the third of seven courses. "How the hell am I going to get through this?" he asked veteran Dick Oldfield. Oldfield shrugged. "Well, it's simple when you know how," he said, gesturing toward a bottle of claret. "See that? Get stuck into the red and just take your time."

Another delegate couldn't consume all of the courses put before him but wouldn't be separated from the lavish spread. McArthur watched in amusement as one prominent delegate carefully wrapped and pocketed the remainders, long before 'doggie bags' came into vogue.

Joe Ford was enjoying a drink at the Victoria Hotel and joined a group that decided to see racy comedian Roy Rene and the chorus line at the Tivoli Theatre. Rene's cast was tipped off and became a little more risqué than usual. One cheeky chorus girl stepped forward and said she had a girlfriend who worked at a butter factory. One of the well plied members leered at Ford. "She's a corker, too," he winked.

Ford was thoroughly engrossed in the show when Eric Heard nudged him roughly, jabbing a thumb in the direction of Maffra manager John Love. "Get a load of him!" Love, a Presbyterian lay preacher, had hands cupped over both eyes, lips moving in silent prayer at the cavorting of scantily clad girls on stage!

The final night of the conference was the 'Smoko', the precursor of today's dinner dance. It was an opportunity for the membership to let its hair down. They did just that.

Charlie Smith, Institute President in 1967, was a favourite. Ford affectionately remembers the inimitable Smith, as "one of the naughty boys" of the conferences. "To think that Bill Kraft used to lecture him on drinking too much!" Coulthard smiles at his recollection of Smith as a "great larrikin" who would delight in "taking over from the professional entertainers. He had a great sense of fun".

Holyoak still visualises the old time master of ceremonies,

Radcliffe Horley, “who kept things jumping,” - just as long as Charlie Smith didn’t get the urge to perform.

*Memories, images, flow like sweet wine:*

**Rollie Harbinson**, Springhurst manager and Victorian President in 1958 and 1972. “No one was more real than Rollie,” Coulthard asserts.

**Ray Quinn**, from Kilmore, President in 1964: “A great, great cheese maker and administrator. Few know he won an MBE for his community activities.”

**Lou Scharp**, Kiewa manager and 1950 President. McArthur remembers Scharp resplendent with cane and a bowler “A real bastard ... and a great salesman ... who could drink all night and come up like a show pony in the morning.”

**Arthur Hacquoil**, from Mid Murray, served as President in 1951. Few knew he had come out from England under the ‘Little Brother’ scheme

*and lived with Bob McArthur's uncle. "He went to Glenormiston on no pay ... but under Stafford's tutelage - he rode him hard - he went on to manage at Cohuna." Hacquoil would serve the Institute well as Australian Secretary for 13 years.*

*And who could ever forget this sight? **Joe Sharkey**, 1955 President, pants rolled up to his knees dancing an Irish jig on a table top ... Equalisation Secretary **Marden Trennery**, singing "Foggy, Foggy Dew" or smiling **Frank Patterson**, the "consummate mixer?" Memories ...*



An era of takeover and amalgamation had beset the industry, causing more than a little friction within the Association. The great marauder of the day was Murray Goulburn's Jack McGuire.

Joe Ford recalls that McGuire was "unerring in picking his marks for takeover". He aimed to set production records.

"He looked after himself but certainly left his mark on the industry - both good and bad," McArthur says. "He was never much of an Institute man." Holyoak remembers that despite his lack of participation, he never deterred his staff from joining the Institute.

Along with the times, the industry was changing rapidly. Institute leaders knew it had to stay ahead of industry trends to remain a viable force. There was no room for complacency. Problems were coming thick and fast.

A major headache was Britain's entry into the Common Market; the Association became the leading light in the

Victorian Dairy Industry Inquiry of the '60s.

It was again time to bring the School of Dairy Technology at Werribee in line with current industry - and Institute -thinking. In keeping with the tradition of all presidents before them, Ford, Coulthard, McArthur and Holyoak played key roles to ensure the school's excellence.

With the UK market lost to the Common Market, there was deep concern that butter would begin stockpiling in Melbourne.

Tom Atkinson from the Sunny South Laboratories, John Tarrant of Kraft, and McArthur put pen to paper to write strong articles on behalf of changing its base from cream and butter to milk and cheese.

Familiar problems reappeared. Margarine crept back onto the agenda. Coulthard strongly suspects that substitutes-producing companies paid for newspaper and magazine editorial space, influencing health organisations. "The public were being fooled." He urged launching a strong Association counterattack.

In 1968, the Werribee campus was reopened as the Gilbert Chandler Institute of Dairy Technology named in honour of Victoria's Minister for Agriculture. Ian Howey became the new school's first principal.

The rather formal grand opening was not without its moments of humour. Heavy rain clouds threatened the facility's opening. On the dais Victorian Institute President, Joe Ford, sat but a few feet from Victorian Premier Sir Henry Bolte. Sir Gilbert was only half way through a weighty diatribe when several drops of rain spattered Bolte. The Premier, glanced balefully at the sky and shifted restlessly toward Joe Ford. In a 'stage whisper' loud enough to boom through the microphone, Bolte thundered: "If Sir Gilbert doesn't dry up soon, we'll all get a wet arse!"

In 1970 Australia played host to the World Dairying Congress.

Longwarry manager, George Sadler, (Victorian Institute

President in 1962 and 1971, and Australian President in 1972), was brought back to orchestrate the event. His international dairying experience was considered unequalled. Sadler induced the distinguished Sir Paul Hasluck to become patron of the event.

“Sadler was one of the solid supporters of the industry,” recalls Ford. “He was a wonderful student of human beings. He seemed to be able to accurately assess individual abilities and prepare each for management.” “He was a team fellow,” agrees McArthur.

Meagre finances occasionally inhibited the presidency. The Institute was experiencing a financial trough when Holyoak became President. He moved the conference away from the ballrooms and out to Flemington for a couple of years. There were, of course, dissenters.

“The managers used to have a luncheon which began to look like a competition for the most lavish turn. In lean times, Holyoak had a simple luncheon of sandwiches and beer in his hotel suite, a far cry from export beef and fine wine served with silver service and linen.”

For a long while, the Institute had felt that its profile was diminishing. The pace of the times had surpassed it. A broader membership base was needed. Where once every town had a factory and both a secretary and a manager, amalgamation had reduced these ranks.

In 1979, the Institute underwent changes to its articles that saw it emerge as the Australian Dairy Institute. Machinery agents were welcomed as members. Its official journal became known as ‘Australian Dairy Foods.’

The Institute celebrated its 90th anniversary at the Southern Cross Hotel. I.K. Morton, Chairman of Rural Finance, officiated at the conference, which was co-ordinated by Joe Ford and Frank Patterson.

There was no avoiding politics this year: a young Victorian Liberal, Jeffrey Kennett, spoke on ‘The Role of Opposition in Victorian Politics’.

A 1985 merger between the Australian Dairy Institute and the Australian Society of Dairy Technology, founded in 1949, was heralded as a 'rationalisation of dairy industry bodies'. The move gave birth to the Dairy Industry Association of Australia.



Apart from technology, has much changed? Has the industry truly advanced?

The former Presidents, battle scarred from a lifetime in the industry's trenches, shake their heads in shared concern for a future they don't recognise. After all, technology could never replace a good man.

The days of 'hands on' experience that led to management seems to have evaporated. Coulthard was once told that his 'style of management' was redundant. He would need a university degree to succeed today.

"The hard physical yakka has been eliminated ... it's so much easier now. We started washing cans, leaning over cheese vats and doing the packing - the whole manufacturing process - we did it all."

Despite the ease brought by automation and innovations such as bulk delivery straight to the retailer "there isn't the money in it there should be".

Today, the DIAA is concerned with an uneven introduction of deregulation, a move that would allow the industry to 'manage' itself. The stated aim is a higher quality product and profitability for all "dairy farmers,

processors, vendors/distributors, retailers and ... most important, the customers”.

The words, the economy, seem vaguely familiar. As Robert Crowe sighed in 1893: “How times have changed. It’s been a painful past.”

Victorian Division Office Bearers

Year	President	Secretary	Year	President	Secretary
1894	Jas. Goldie	R. Crowe	1947	E.T. Heard	V. Stafford
1895	R. Crowe	P. Coghlan	1948	S.J. Farmer	V. Stafford
1896	R. Crowe	P. Coghlan	1949	W.L. Kraft OBE	V. Stafford
1897	J. Weatherhead	P. Coghlan	1950	L.R. Scharp	V. Stafford
1898	P. Coghlan	G. McKenzie	1951	A.E. Hacquoil	V. Stafford
1899	J.S. Ferris	G. McKenzie	1952	P.J. Fitzgerald	V. Stafford
1900	Jas. Eccles	G. McKenzie	1953	D.O. Oldfield	V. Stafford
1901	Ed. Knox	T. Coghlan	1954	J. Gleeson	V. Stafford
1902	G. McKenzie	T. Coghlan	1955	J.M. Sharkey	V. Stafford
1903	W. Irwin	T. Coghlan	1956	M.E. Ryan	V. Stafford
1904	I. Evans	E. Knox	1956	J. Gleeson, acting president***	
1905	L.M. Stanley	E. Knox	1957	W.T. McCarthy	V. Stafford
1906	W.J. Wilson	E. Knox	1958	R. Harbinson	V. Stafford
1907	Jas. Martin	E. Knox	1959	M.J. Bourke	V. Stafford
1908	A.C. Wilmhurst	E. Knox	1960	P.R. McArthur	V. Stafford
1909	J. Proud	E. Knox	1961	E.T. Heard	V. Stafford
1910	Jos. Lucas	E. Knox	1962	G.J. Sadler	V. Stafford
1911	H. Gray	E. Knox	1963	F.W. Patterson	V. Stafford
1912	E.C. Wilson	E. Knox	1964	R.E. Quinn	V. Stafford
1913	D. Cameron	E. Knox	1965	J.M. Sharkey	V. Stafford
1914	J. Keogh	E. Knox	1966	G.R. Coulthard	V. Stafford
1915	Jno. Powell	E. Knox	1967	A.C. Smith	V. Stafford
1916	C. Stoner	E. Knox	1968	J.A. Ford	V. Stafford
1917	A.E. Dalton	E. Knox	1969	D.J. Gardiner	R.P. Cooke
1918	Ed. Knox	A.C. Wilmhurst	1970	I.G. Patience	R.P. Cooke
1919	Ed. Knox	A.C. Wilmhurst	1971	G.J. Sadler	R.P. Cooke
1920	J.J. Ryan	A.C. Wilmhurst	1972	R. Harbinson	R.P. Cooke
1921	A.L. Graham	A.C. Wilmhurst	1973	J.C. Walton	R.P. Cooke
1922	W. Huffer	A.C. Wilmhurst	1974	F.W. Patterson	R.P. Cooke
1922	W. Huffer		1975	H.J. Tabley	R.P. Cooke
1923	J.J. Ryan*	A.C. Wilmhurst	1976	G.R. Coulthard	R.P. Cooke
1924	P.W. O'Brien	A.C. Wilmhurst	1977	G.R. Holyoak	R.P. Cooke
1925	L.W. Lucas	A.C. Wilmhurst	1978	T.A. Bartholomew	R.P. Cooke
1926	L.W. Lucas	A.C. Wilmhurst	1979	P.S. Morcom	J.F. Rigby
1927	A.C. Wilmhurst**		1980	R.W. Gilbert	J.F. Rigby
1927	A.L. Graham	J.F. Kittson	1981	D. Rootsey	K.R. Custerson
1928	F.G. Martin	J.F. Kittson	1982	S.C. Blyth	K.R. Custerson
1929	D.V. Evershed	J.F. Kittson	1983	R.H. Bray	K.R. Custerson
1930	V. Stafford	J.F. Kittson	1984	W.J. Lowe	K.R. Custerson
1931	J. Proud	J.F. Kittson	1985	K. Quigley	K.R. Custerson
1932	J. Proud	J.F. Kittson	1986	M. Suckling****	P.E. Hansen
1933	P. Mathieson	J.F. Kittson		P. Ford***	
1934	R.J. Morley	J.F. Kittson	1987	T.A. Bartholomew	P.E. Hansen
1935	J.F. Kittson	V. Stafford	1988	S.C. Blyth	P.E. Hansen
1936	A.J. Fraser	J.F. Kittson	1989	R.J. Hassett	R.J. Prince
1937	J.W. Graham	J.F. Kittson	1990	P. Ryan	R.J. Prince
1938	D.O. Oldfield	J.F. Kittson	1991	P.E. Hansen	R.J. Prince
1939	J. McGilvray	J.F. Kittson	1992	M.G. Seuret	R.J. Prince
1940	L.P. Ryan	J.F. Kittson	1993	W.B. McGinness	R.J. Prince
1941	V. Stafford	J.F. Kittson			
1942	A.J. Cooke	J.F. Kittson			
1943	A.J. Cooke	J.F. Kittson			
1944	D.V. Evershed	J.F. Kittson			
1945	J.J. Ryan	J.F. Kittson			
1946	J. Proud	V. Stafford			

\* Presided at conference owing to president's absence

\*\* Resigned to join Department of Agriculture

\*\*\* Presided at conference owing to president's death

\*\*\*\* Joint presidents in the first year of DIAA