

Jim McRoberts

Late in 1947 it was decided, by those in the know, that any further attempts to educate Jim were likely to prove futile, consequently at the end of that year Christchurch Technical College and Jim parted company! He then obtained a 'hydro-electric' apprenticeship in the Christchurch District and was sent to Lake Waitaki powerstation on 9 February 1948 where he remained for the full year.

His second year was spent in the workshops at Addington Depot; the third year was divided between the Test Room at Addington and the Draughting Office in town. The first half of the fourth year was at Lake Coleridge on turbine maintenance and the rest of that year was at Halfway Bush substation with the construction team.

Because Jim had opted to finish his apprenticeship by specialising in mechanical work on turbine machinery he was sent to Maraetai to work with the erection team. On completion of his apprenticeship early in '53 he was sent to Cobb River to work on machine installation there. Having completed all stages of the requisite technological exams Jim was keen to continue study for I.E.E. papers and with marriage in the offing he was looking for an operating position that would provide him with accommodation as well as the opportunity to study while on shift work.

At the end of '53 Jim was appointed operator-fitter at Lake Waitaki and over the following years moved through various operating positions ending up at System Control, Whakamaru in February '67.

Later that year he was offered a position in System Control section, Head Office and in September '69 was appointed Distribution Engineer, Khandallah. He transferred back to H.O. in '76 and in December '79 took up the position of Inspecting Superintendent, Operations H.O. Upon retirement in 1998 Jim was offered a contract to work for Electricorp on establishing a museum and in assisting with the production of the book "People, Politics and Powerstations". After about 18 months, work on the book had ended and Jim had assembled and catalogued a significant collection of artifacts.

Electricorp then terminated Jim's contract and he was asked to vacate the premises on Thorndon Quay as the building was to be sold. This resulted in a hurried transfer of the collection to Haywards for temporary storage in the care of Generation Division.