

COLIN ANDREW

An Appreciation

Dr. Colin Sidney Andrew, Assistant Chief of CSIRO's Division of Tropical Crops and Pastures, died on Christmas Eve 1979, at the age of 59.

From his earliest years, Col's main interest was agriculture. He was raised on a farm at Crow's Nest in south-eastern Queensland and trained initially at Queensland Agricultural College. After distinguished war service with the 2/25th Infantry Battalion, he returned to continue his education at Queensland University, graduating Bachelor of Agricultural Science in 1950 and Master of Agricultural Science in 1957. Twelve years later he returned to receive one of the University's highest awards—a Doctorate in Agricultural Science—for his outstanding research on the nutrition of tropical pastures.

Col joined a CSIRO team in Brisbane headed by the late Dr. J. Griffiths Davies in 1950, a time when only a few visionaries believed that it was possible to develop productive pastures for the drier tropical regions of Australia and elsewhere in the world. His initial research was on the nutrient status of the infertile "Wallum" soils of south-eastern Queensland. However, his interests soon broadened into comparative nutritional studies on a wide range of tropical legumes and grasses, many of which had been only recently introduced into Australia. Another interest which he developed revolved around the influence of acid-soil factors on plant growth, and the ways in which various plants coped with these adverse conditions. Almost all his publications were within the broad field of soil fertility and plant nutrition, but they included such diverse subjects as the mechanisms of nutrient uptake by plants, the diagnosis of nutrient deficiencies and toxicities using foliar symptoms and chemical analysis, and the maintenance fertilizer requirements of grazed pastures.

Col Andrew set the infant field of research on the nutrition of tropical pastures on a firm foundation. His findings were applicable to all parts of the tropics and sub-tropics, with the result that he was frequently called on for advice on agricultural research and development both within Australia and overseas.

In recent years, Col became increasingly involved in the direction and administration of research, and in the training of agricultural students both at the Queensland Agricultural College and at the University of Queensland. He will be remembered for the breadth of his knowledge of agriculture, his abilities as a conciliator, and his wise counsel.

Col Andrew was an accomplished scientist, an esteemed colleague, and one of the principal pioneers of Australian research in tropical agriculture.

R. K. JONES