

Golden Shears the bottom line for Pivac

In 1972 Rick Pivac hitch-hiked into Carterton with nothing but the clothes he stood in, about \$10 and a bag of shearing gear.

A few months before he had seen the truck he was driving for a carrying firm slipping beneath the incoming tide at a beach near Kaitaia.

"It was Friday night and I decided to take a short-cut back across the beach. The tide was coming in and I never made it. An hour later I was sitting there watching my truck floating away.

"I was politely told to come in next Thursday and pick up my wages."

Pivac had a friend who was shearing in Alexandria. Pretty soon he was there working as a presser — the person who presses the wool into bales.

By the end of the season he had learnt the basics of shearing and so headed to a shearing school in Palmerston North.

After the course he hitched to Carterton and started work with shearing contractor Neil Scott.

Now he owns the run and is one of the leading shearers in New Zealand.

This year he came a close-second in the Masterton Golden Shears, the most prestigious shearing event in the world.

In taking second place he won \$850, numerous prizes and a place in the New Zealand shearing team which travels to Australia in October.

Pivac was beaten into second place by the young Taumarunui shearer Alan Donaldson. Pivac lost by 0.3487 of a point, which he says is equivalent to about four seconds or two second cuts — points are deducted when a shearer lifts the shears during a blow and has to re-shear.

The cutting comb final was held on March 5 in the Masterton War Memorial Stadium. The six finalists shored 20 sheep in little over 20 minutes. Pivac, who was chasing Donaldson, finished his last sheep in 52 seconds.

A judge told several of the competitors after the event that the quality of the shearing was the best for several years.

The finalists were a combination of established competition shearers and relative new-comers.

Roger Cox, of Hawera, came third. It was his seventh final.

Martin Ngataki, of Mercer, was fourth. He won in 1979.

The king of shearing, and current world champion, Brian "Snow" Quinn was a judge.

Pivac is a naturally competitive per-



son and he is most competitive about shearing.

"I wanted to be fast. That's what really got me going. I wanted to win the Golden Shears that bad that I got good at it.

"If you want to do anything you do it. It's the big one and until I get it I'm still not at the top.

"I have beaten all the top guys at some stage. The only thing is to beat them all in the Golden Shears.

"That's the way it is going to be. I can't really say I'm brassed-off about coming second — it's good. But it's bet-

ter to be first. I just felt I'm going to have to try a bit harder next year."

In the competition youngsters bring the sheep to the pen door for the shearers. The youngster let Pivac's first sheep go before he had it and he had to swing round to grab it. "It ran along the board — that upset my rhythm."

In a way the build-up for the Golden Shears starts for Pivac in about October with the start of the main shear and the first of the shearing competitions at shows. There are about three shows before Christmas.