

Chapter 9

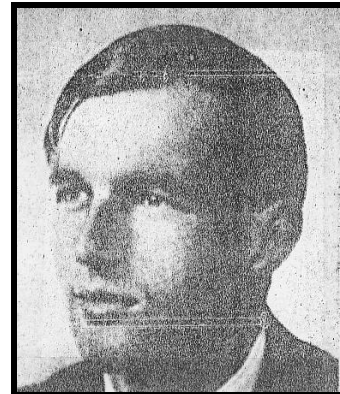
GEORGE HAMISH ORMOND WILSON

Member of Parliament for
Rangitikei 1935-1938
Palmerston North 1946-1949



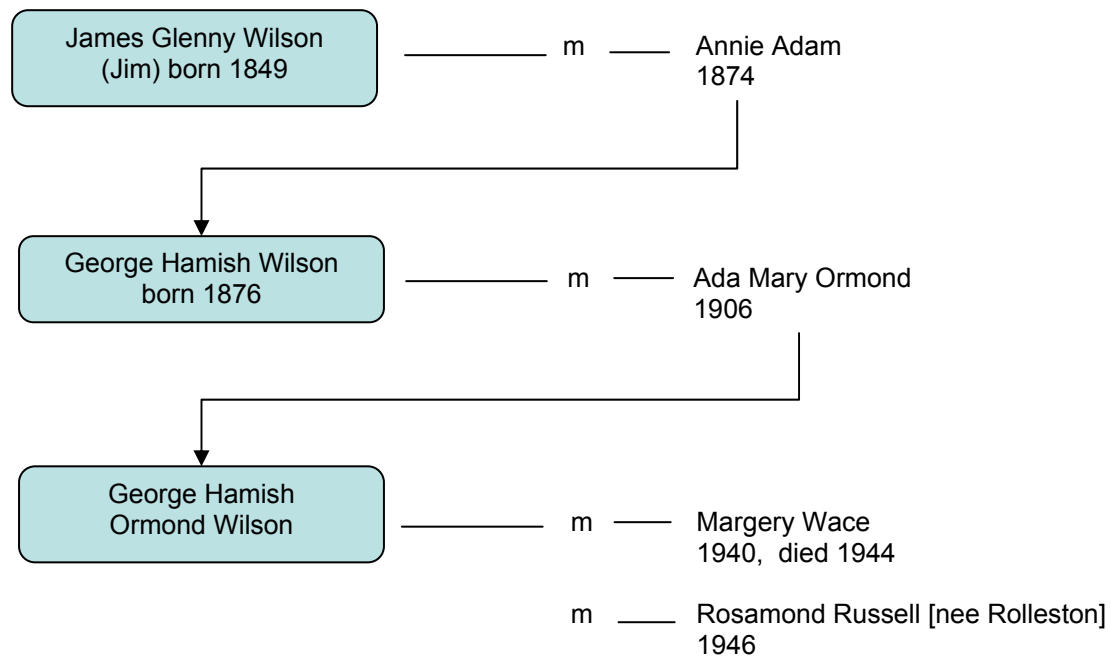
Ormond Wilson the subject of this lecture was the grandson of Sir James Wilson whose life and work was discussed in Lecture 3.

P9-1 : Ormond Wilson
aged 28 years



He represented Palmerston North as its M.P. between 1946 and 1949. Ormond Wilson's father was Hamish Wilson, J.G. Wilson's eldest son who had married Ada Ormond from Hawkes Bay.

P9-2 : A three generation chart showing the male line from James Wilson to George Hamish to G.H. Ormond Wilson.



School and Education

In an urbane and scholarly book published in 1982 Ormond Wilson outlined and reflected on his education.

“It is probably apparent that our household was typically of the English middle class gentry.

I was the eldest of a family of four ... the boundaries of our lives were the homes of relatives and friends like ourselves.

... in the earliest years the elements of education – the three R’s – were taught us by our parents. ... Later we joined the youngest of our neighbours family who had a governess to whom we rode across the paddock each day for morning lesson ... later a young man was engaged to prepare us for boarding school.” (O. Wilson, 1982).

The boarding school chosen for Ormond was Christ’s College in Christchurch where he was resident in 1922-24. It was not always a happy place for him. The family decision was that he should proceed to Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

He was not quite ready for that and spent nine months preparing particularly for it at a cramming school in the south of England. He then entered Lincoln College Oxford in 1926 and remained until 1929. He made some permanent friendships.

Work

Ormond was a farmer, a journalist, social commentator and author.

When he returned home to New Zealand in 1930 he came as the owner of a thousand acres of land. He had to learn to farm and manage it. He had been gifted, as had his brother and sisters, with the farm.

He has this to say about taking an inheritance from his grandfather “... duty demand (ed) acceptance of the responsibilities imposed by the bequest of a grandfather ‘my fate in the depression years was not unemployment ... Unencumbered freeholders need not fear the mortgagor’. My particular hardship was simply that induced by the incongruity between the ideas I had been shaping and the practicabilities of a task for which I was wholly unprepared ... judgement and handling of stock ... Land development (however) became a worthwhile task” (O. Wilson, 1982).

Journalist and Social Commentator

Following his defeat in the election of 1938, referred to later, Wilson early in 1939 visited the United States where he had exchanges with

Congressmen and Senators and others on the comparison between New Zealand's Social Security and the U.S. New Deal.

He also set out to visit the Soviet Union. It was an important visit as it alerted him to the dangers of totalitarian communism which remained with him all his life.

He wrote and published about his travel experiences.

Editor/Journalist

With the outbreak of World War II Ormond Wilson returned to the United Kingdom. After finding his grading for recruiting into the New Zealand force was low, he opted for essential work and was employed by the BBC as Editor/Journalist for the Overseas Service. His account of these years in *An Outsider Looks Back* is full of interest and gives a vivid picture of London in wartime.

Marriage and Family

When in London Ormond Wilson met at work in 1940 at the BBC – Margery Wace. She was his superior.

However they decided to marry and did so in 1940. Cecilia, a daughter was born in 1941. Tragically Margery died in labour with their second child.

Ormond Wilson in 1944 decided to return to New Zealand and did so, with Cecilia aged 3 years, by ship – a dangerous journey.

On his return in 1946 Ormond Wilson married Rosamond Russell (nee Rolleston) a war widow left with a son and two daughters. They lived at Mt Lees from 1946.

TOC-H

A major emotional influence on Wilson came from his participation in the community organisation known as TOC-H.

Ormond Wilson first had contact with TOC-H when the Rev. P.T.B.C. (Tubby) Clayton, an Anglican priest who pioneered the organisation, came to visit New Zealand from the United Kingdom in 1922 and made a speech to the boys at Christ's College. He was a charismatic speaker. Ormond Wilson remembered this and on entering Oxford University joined a TOC-H Club.

The club provided regular inspirational meetings embodying Christian fellowship but in particular transcending class barriers and promoting brotherhood for all. Because of its World War I origins it has always included a ritual involving the Lighting of a Lamp and at the end reciting

the well known line “At the going down of the sun we will remember them, we will remember them”.

The club also encouraged participation in social service projects.

The origin of the name TOC-H sprang from a compilation of the initials of Talbot House. This was a rest home and club for soldiers at Poperinghe established in 1915 in memory of Gilbert W.L. Talbot killed in action that year in France.

Ormond Wilson founded a TOC-H group in Marton when he returned home in 1930.

Mountaineering and Tramping

Ormond Wilson’s German experience in the twenties left its mark. He had become interested in the Youth Movement and tramping and mountaineering.

He continued these in the 1930’s back in New Zealand in tramping and skiing in the Tangariro National Park and the Ruahine and Tararua mountains.

Political Career

Political Philosophy

Ormond Wilson was a moderate, democratic socialist. “I based my argument for state intervention in economic and social affairs on the trend of the world at the time. Even the United States, the epitome of free-enterprise had during the depression accepted the need for more governmental action and in a similar crisis might do the same again. Therefore I contended that for tiny New Zealand to allow free reign to unfettered capitalism, with its concomitant extreme wealth and poverty was a mirage” (Wilson, 1982) (NZPD 1947, vol. 278 p.97).

“But if it had been Cambridge it might have been drink’. This was the reported riposte of my mother to a visitor who made some suitably sympathetic remark about the politically corrupting influence of my four years at Oxford (University). In fact, I had returned home with my mind occupied by the thoughts of Kant, not Marx. My ambition was to elucidate the significant traits I believed Kant had striven to express (Wilson, p.1).

Personality

Janet Paul in the DNZB wrote Wilson was “A spare energetic man with a robust voice, brought his blend of enthusiasm and scholarly skepticism to a life of active civic responsibility”.

Ormond Wilson, Candidacy and Election as M.P. Rangitikei 1935

Ormond Wilson's return from Oxford University to his farm in Northern Manawatu in 1930 made him focus on land development and improvement. A housekeeper ran the house for him and from time to time he entertained guests – New Zealand friends – e.g. D'Arcy Cresswell and Rosamund Rolleston from Timaru and from overseas, Bernard Shaw. He also was host to the Governor General Lord Bledisloe who "came up for the annual duck shooting".

In curious twist of fortune Ormond Wilson was invited to spend a weekend at Government House during which time a luncheon was hosted by Lord Bledisloe in 1931 for the Consultative Committee of each of the political parties: Reform, United and Labour. It was here that Wilson met Harry Holland, Joe Savage and Jim McCombs.

McCombs remarked to Holland about Wilson "I think I've found a comrade" (*Outsider*, p.42).

During the depression which O. Wilson described as a period of "menacing uncertainty" Wilson built his links with Labour and was accepted as a candidate for the Rangitikei Electorate.

"With social credit ideas of Major Douglas about, with John Maynard Keynes being read there was a common sense feeling abroad that money should be our tool and not our master, and that with food and goods abounding it was senseless for traders to go bankrupt and people go hungry merely because the medium of exchange was lacking. This was the theme, with variations Labour preached up and down the country, and this was the music to which the electorate responded" (*Outsider*, p.44).

The Party President, Tim Armstrong and Walter Nash became firm friends.

Wilson won and the result is as follows.

P9-3 : 1935 Election result
(Rangitikei)

Majority	907
Informal votes	44
Number on Roll	10,202

RANGITIKEI.				
Polling-places.	Candidates.			Total.
	Crawford.	Stuart.	W. Lewis.	
Aberfeldie	8	18	22	48
Durie Hill	116	78	114	308
Fordell	33	85	49	192
Hibitahi	2	14	10	26
Jerusalem	6	7	3	16
Kaitoke	18	62	28	108
Kakatahi, Glenn's Junction	8	12	19	39
Kakatahi, Public School ..	1	18	5	24
Kunangaroa .. .. .	..	44	50	94
Koeke Sawmill	4	29	36	69
Long Acre Valley	11	20	2	33
Makirikiri South	3	88	10	101
Makohan .. .. .	..	63	11	74
Mangahoe Road .. .. .	..	19	4	23
Mangamahū	7	52	35	94
Marton	215	667	532	1,414
Marton Junction	53	146	223	422
Matahiwi .. .. .	..	16	11	27
Mataroa	14	39	35	88
Mount View	16	50	28	94
Ngamatea, Mr. Hine's House	..	15	11	26
Ngamatea, School	1	24	22	47
Ngaururu	3	8	6	17
Ngatūri	4	15	16	35
Okia	12	63	50	125
Papanui .. .. .	..	27	17	44
Parihauhau	3	5	4	12
Pirikino	2	7	8	17
Pohorua	4	6	8	18
Pukeroa	3	17	18	38
Rangiwaea .. .. .	..	39	31	70
Ruanui	5	13	6	24
Taihape	149	406	699	1,254
Taylorville	208	165	237	610
Tiriraukawa	9	33	26	68
Turakina	11	143	102	256
Upokongaro	12	99	61	172
Upper Tutaenui	14	118	53	185
Utiku	8	16	40	64
Wangahū, Mr. Donovan's House	5	30	11	46
Wangahū, Public Hall .. .	4	73	34	111
Wanganui East, Mr. Keast's Store	96	26	252	374
Wanganui East, Town Hall	540	245	880	1,665
Absent, declaration, postal, and seamen's votes	66	209	306	581
Totals	1,679	3,329	4,256	9,244

Source: AJHR 1936 H33

P9-4 : The crowd in Willis Street in Wellington watching the result being posted.

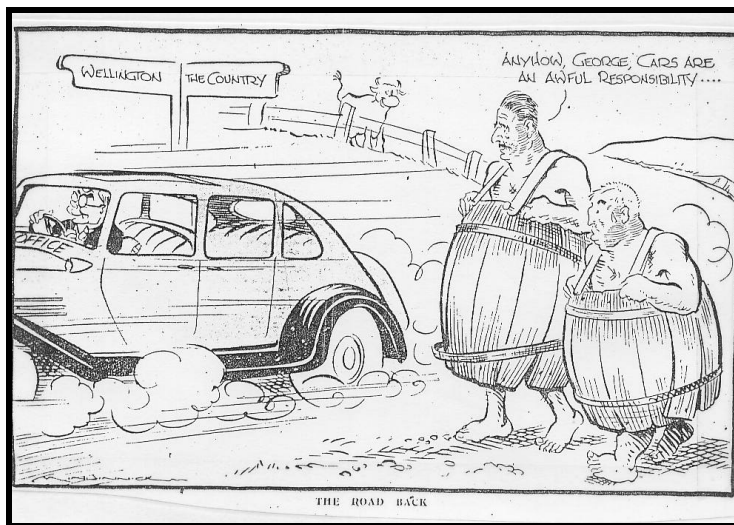


Wilson was 28 years of age when elected. He had said “It is of the essence of youth to demand urgent remedies and to back radical politics” and it was to be so as a review of his first term reveals.

First Term 1935-38

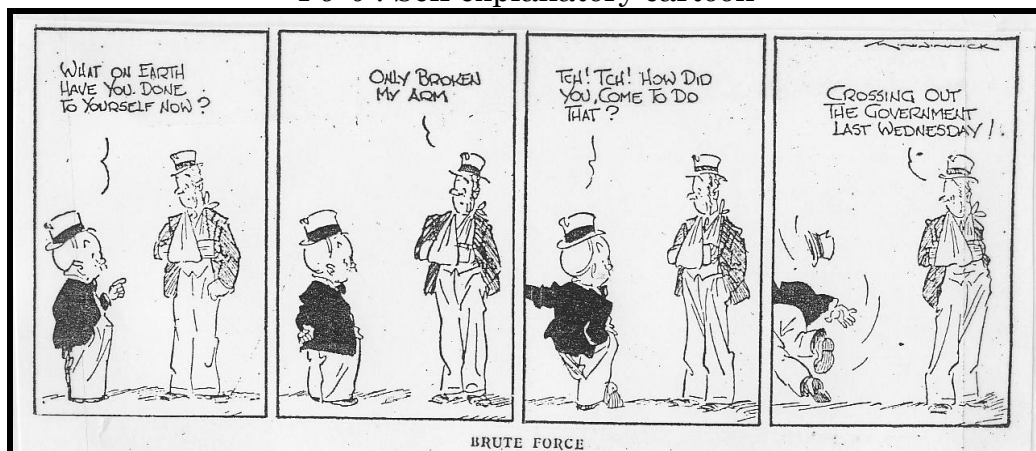
The First Labour Government in Power

Labour began its first term in office with enthusiasm and undertook a number of significant symbolic actions which confirmed its popularity. Three cartoons from the December issues of the *Auckland Weekly News* catch the flavour of the time well.



P9-5 : Savage at the wheel of a fast car while Coates and Forbes without clothes, reflect on their plight.

P9-6 : Self explanatory cartoon



P9-7 : The cartoon expresses the criticism of the Labour Government's first action and the suspicion that it will distribute too many political lollies.



Maiden Speech - 2 April 1936

Ormond Wilson stated his position in this way: “Although I entered the labour movement comparatively recently I am very conscious of traditions and ideals in which it is steeped – traditions and ideals that have existed for the last hundred years. ... labour aims are not merely for the benefit of one class against any or all others. ... in the past Governments have represented in the main one class which was a dominating class. ... This Labour Government is much more representative of the whole community it was inevitable one hundred years ago that the owners, the capitalist class should have the greater power (but). ... retrogressive steps have to be reversed ... My argument simply stated is that in view of the wastage that is going on in labour and materials and resources it is definitely uneconomic not to develop industrial activities in every possible way whether by public works or otherwise ...” (NZPD vol 244, 1936, p. 85-86).



P9-8 : Prime Minister Savage,
1935

Education

One of Ormond's early speeches in Parliament concerned education. He was criticising the failure of the education system to "help us think better" and its preoccupation with the "drumming facts into children". His cause was to promote child/student centred learning using examples from his travels in Germany and England. Ormond Wilson spoke of the need to reform the examination system and the need not to press too early with vocational based education. "The longer we can keep children on general subjects the better for them as individuals and as citizens for their future life. I stayed at school till I was 22 years of age. Possibly that was too long but the difference between that and 13 years of age is very great. ... surely of vital importance (is) the economic and political theory of the world we live in ...

"Maximum of opportunity for every one. That must start, in the economic sphere with decent living conditions, and then, second what is probably not important – it means the best possible education ...". (NZPD 1936, vol. 245 pp.519-520).

Consistent with his interests Ormond Wilson contributed an important speech on the two forms of taxation, Income Tax and Land Tax. He was hotly challenged by two opposition speakers .

Wilson argued "There is no doubt, and it is simple economics that taxation that results in a redistribution of the national income increases the national income by bringing about stability, and by giving the opportunity we all want of further production and a generally higher standard of living" (NZPD 1936, vol. 247, p.434).

Wilson criticized the opposition for viewing slumps "as a law of Nature" but "we in New Zealand cannot prevent slumps and booms from taking place overseas but we can minimize their effect in the Dominion (NZPD 1937, vol. 248 p.558).

In speeches of the period Wilson quotes widely particularly J.M. Keynes "The policy which we are carrying out is not only humane and just but is – sound economic policy (p.560). He spoke on the Trade Agreement with Germany a "support for the principle of Conciliation and Arbitration", NZPD vol. 248 p.435).

Communism

"I am a member of the Labour Party. I want to say that I ... absolutely opposed to the Communist Party ... and insinuations contrary to the facts ... (NZPD vol. 249 p.490).

1938 Session

Wilson spoke vigorously and at length in the Address in Reply speech in July 1938 and responded to the Opposition attacks on the Labour Government “for fostering a servile dependence on the state, which is not in keeping with our natural character (NZPD vol.251 pp.176-7). Wilson replied “The issue is not whether we shall have freedom and individuality, on the one hand or socialism on the other, but whether the control and direction should be a small group, whose concern is only for themselves, or shall be directed in the interests of the community at large through its representatives in Parliament, and the Bureau of Industry, and representing the people of New Zealand through the Minister of Industries and Commerce and through Parliament which has a responsibility to the people and will preserve the rights of the people to an extent that private monopolists control never will ...”

Mr Bodkin, an Opposition M.P., in the following speech criticised Ormond Wilson “because in the past he has been outstanding in the advocacy of the socialist cause. He has contributed many newspaper articles in the interest of socialism in this country ... ‘socialism by degrees’ as the Hon member described it in an article contributed to the magazine *Tomorrow*” (NZPD 1938, vol. 251 p.178).

Capital Flight

Ormond Wilson argued on capital flight that “People should be ashamed to take their money overseas” for exporting capital from New Zealand today (NZPD vol. 251 p.903).

Political Defeat

In 1938 there is a landslide victory for Labour – but due to unfavourable boundary alteration Wilson lost by 300 votes.

1939-1944 Overseas

1939

Wilson decided to travel after his parliamentary defeat. He wanted to reconnect with his European contacts.

U.S.A.

But first he decided to visit the United State of America. In Washington he met Labour leaders, Congressmen and Senators and columnists. To his great surprise they all evinced considerable interest in this Labour politician fresh from a busy three years 1935-39.

Britain

He then went to the United Kingdom and met old friends and political journalists Kingsley Martin and Dick Crossman.

He gained admission to the gallery of the House of Commons, met British Labour Party leaders and attended their 1939 Conference.

Soviet Union

Travelling via Scandinavia he obtained a visa to the USSR. The visit confirmed his critical view of a totalitarian socialist state and such views remained with him for the rest of his life.

Germany

He spent four days in Berlin hoping to see many old friends from the year 1926 but war was coming and he returned to the U.K. on 26 August 1939.

B.B.C.

On his return to London he prepared an informative broadcast on his travel for the B.B.C. This led to his acceptance of an invitation to join the Overseas Service. He was to remain in this work until 1944. In 1940 he married the Director of the Overseas Service, Margery Wace.

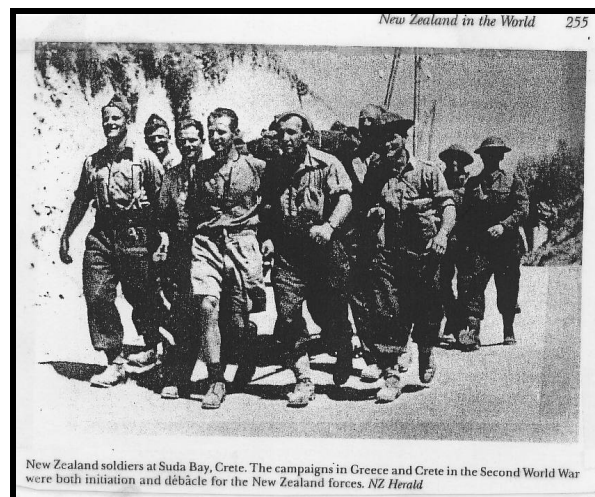
This four years with B.B.C. was to prove influential in encouraging his interests in broadcasting journalism and international affairs.

War in Palmerston North

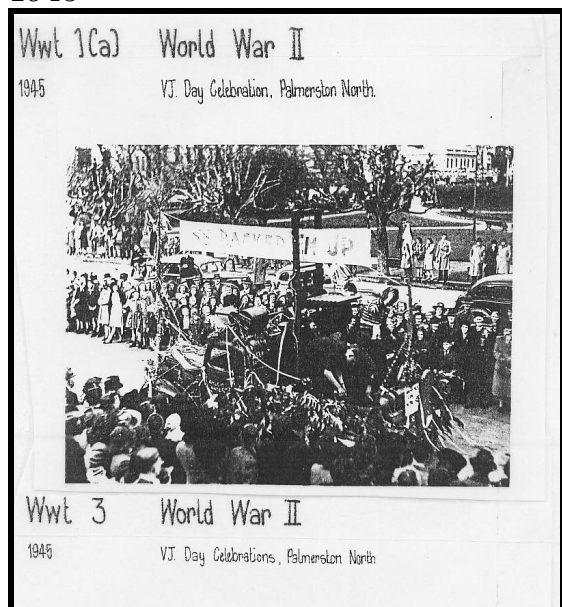
Palmerston North was profoundly affected by World War II, not only because of the contribution to service of its sons and daughters in the Armed Forces, but because of the development of Linton Military Camp on its borders and Ohakea Air Base but 15 miles away. The Maori Battalion was resident in the city for its initial training.

The economy grew in the period.

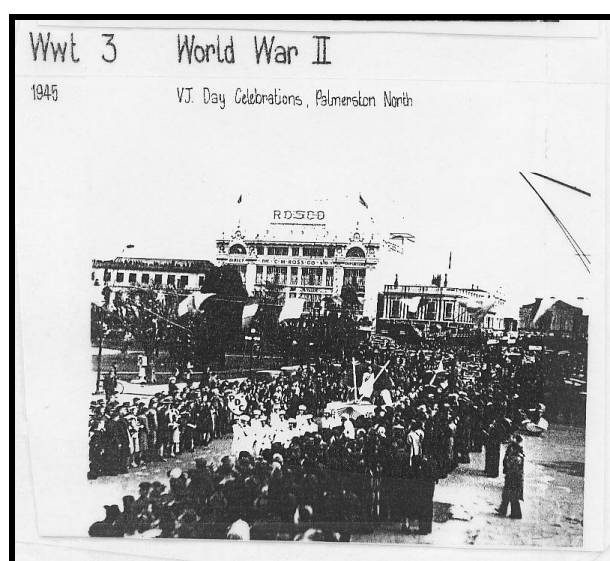
P9-9 : New Zealand troops in Crete in 1941.



P9-10 : The V-J Day celebrations in 1945



P9-11 : The V-J Day celebrations in 1945



Return to Politics

Upon his return home Wilson resumed residence at Mt Lees and devoted himself to the care of his daughter. Two years later he married Rosamond Russell, a war widow with three children. Ormond had known Rosamond Rolleston from Christchurch from before the war. Indeed he had asked her to marry at that time but she declined. Meeting and corresponding in 1945 they married in 1946. Mt Lees was their home now with four children.

Massey Board of Governors

In 1945 Wilson was appointed a member of the Board of Governors of Massey Agricultural College. He followed in his grandfather's footsteps.

In 1947 he was active in support of a fifth Training College.

In Parliament as you might expect he "supported the pleas for the fifth college and the logical place for the new college was in association with Massey Agricultural College (NZPD 1947, vol. 278 p.790).

Wilson remained on the Board at Massey until 1950.

Palmerston North Seat 1946

In 1946 Wilson decided to return to national politics.

By 1946, Joe Hodgens, member for Palmerston North since 1935, decided to retire from politics. Ormond Wilson was nominated to replace him. Joe Hodgens and Wilson had of course been caucus colleagues between 1935 and 1938 and Hodgens supported Wilson's nomination.

In this immediate post-war period stringent controls, rationing and shortages still prevailed. Public support for Labour was moderating and the National Party Leader S.G. Holland had welded together a very strong opposition. He had insisted National support the Social Security measures of the thirties.

1946 however was not the year for National in Palmerston North.

The National Party since 1935 had a strained relationship with the Mayor of the city, Mr A.E. Mansford. He had stood against the Coalition Reform Member, J.A. Nash in 1935 and contributed to his defeat by Joe Hodgens. In 1938 and 1943, Mr Mansford wanted the National Party nomination but was unable to secure it. Mansford became an Independent. In 1946, the National Party decided not to contest the seat and allow Mr Mansford to stand as an Independent National Candidate. In a straight contest between Wilson and Mansford, Wilson won by 928 votes.

P9-12 : 1946 Election results

PALMERSTON NORTH			
Polling-places.	Candidates.		Total.
	Mansford.	Wilson.	
Broadway Avenue	204	130	343
Church Street East	776	722	1,498
Church Street West	178	319	497
College Street East	594	407	1,001
College Street West	229	449	678
Cook Street.. ..	177	250	427
Cuba Street, Methodist Church Hall	173	215	388
Cuba Street, Oddfellows' Hall	487	906	1,393
Ferguson Street	276	379	655
Fitzherbert Avenue	203	184	387
Grey Street, Marist Brothers' High School	382	207	589
Grey Street, Y.M.C.A.	224	192	416
Hokowhitu	360	278	638
Main Street East	304	398	702
Takaro	224	333	557
Terrace End, Knowles Street ..	149	126	275
Terrace End, Main Street	408	692	1,100
Terrace End, Ruahine Street ..	339	379	718
Absent. declaration, postal, and seamen's votes	590	597	1,187
Members of Forces' votes—			
Australia .. ..	..	..	..
H.M.N.Z.S. " Bellona "	2	5	7
Japan	17	29	46
New Zealand	8	28	36
United Kingdom	5	3	8
Totals	6,309	7,237	13,546
Informal votes .. ..	..	91	
Number on roll .. ..	..	14,465	

Parliament 1946-49

On his return to Parliament in 1946 Wilson regained the caucus. But there had been many changes since 1936. Michael J. Savage had died. Wilson had never been close to Savage. Indeed his writings reveal that he was closer to Walter Nash and John A. Lee. Nash remained a friend and Wilson enjoyed the resumption of their relationship but there was divergence in the relationship too. John A. Lee had left the Labour Party and had been defeated at the polls in 1943. Peter Fraser was now Prime Minister.

Ormond Wilson was very willing to defend the Labour Government but he also wanted to see further change and development and so he associated himself with a Labour Party ginger group.

The Fabian Society

During his period in Parliament 1946-49 Wilson and Dr Martyn Finlay revived or contributed to the revival of the Fabian Society. Its link with the United Kingdom Fabian Society was obvious.

In New Zealand after the desire to create as Olssen argues (Olssen, 1996, p.231) “a better world, ... permeated New Zealand society. The young especially were filled with brave new ideas about a brave new world. Although the welfare state was fully accepted, many people wanted to move on”.

Wilson totally shared these aspirations and his speeches in 1946-49 reflect this. The Labour Party initially warmed to this enthusiasm. The Bank of New Zealand was nationalised, the Family Benefit introduced and a minimum wage for all workers established. These moves to the left within Labour did not last.

Community Resistance 1947

The Government was faced with problems generated by rising expectations in a time when controls from war-time remained (rationing) and the consequence of economic stabilisation – wage controls, land sales control were further increased.

Unions became restive and critical.

People disliked government regulations which seemed to determine everything. Denis Glover a poet caricatured the bureaucratic interference in the life of ordinary citizens. It was the novelist Bill Pearson in ‘Fretful Sleepers’ – an essay in New Zealand culture that best caught the mood. He described “a busy body state which institutionalised the noseyparker tradition of tight religious communities”.

Wilson found himself both in a defensive mode in Parliament yet he sought a way forward.

Parliament Speeches 1947-49

He made a major speech in the Address in Reply Debate in 1947. It followed J.R. Marshall, a new National member who contributed a defining speech on modern Liberalism as represented by National. It was a defence of social individualism.

Wilson in response averred in his speech “... socialism has come to stay and we cannot go back on socialism in the progress of mankind We have accepted socialism whether we belong to the National Party or the Labour Party ... the only way of dealing with our troubles - and we have many in the country - is by better planning and more adequately, by more socialism not less.” (NZPD 1947, vol. 276, p.297). “It is not a question of whether we have community responsibility and community planning but whether there shall be decline in a democratic way or whether it shall be done through dictatorship ... the issue is can we have the security people demand together with democracy?”

“... we have to carry democracy further”

“independent foreign policy”

“only a socialistic, radical, progressive democratic Government ... is capable of dealing with the problems that will be facing us in the years to come.”

In a reflection in his book, *An Outsider Looks Back* Wilson states “I suppose at the time we delivered our speeches, Jack Marshall and I were at the opposite poles in the political spectrum”. “I was conscious of the need in a democratic society to weld socialism with liberalism not to regard them as opposites”.

International Affairs

Ormond Wilson’s experience since 1926 in travel and work overseas equipped him particularly for some understanding of international trends and the continuing globalisation of that time.

His speeches on international matters focussed on the United Nations and on international trade and aid to Britain.

Power Politics and the United Nations

Wilson made a major speech on the United Nations when discussing a report of the New Zealand delegation to the United Nations, 14 August 1947.

The root cause of present day troubles “lies in the question of power politics”, “There is no stability about the balance of power today”.

“The obvious thing for the nation to do – it is quite simple and apparent to us all – is to try to work together on practical projects ... the various international agencies must be supported (NZPD 1947, vol. 277 pp.368-69).

A New Zealand Independent Foreign Policy

In his first term Wilson strongly supported the emerging Labour Party’s new stance toward the League of Nations. Support for the League was never in doubt but one anticipated its dissent to Britain and French approaches to sanctions over Ethiopia.

In 1937 there was criticism of appeasement and isolationism but an awareness of the totalitarian threat.

Wilson also was strong on this move from Empire – dependence on Britain to Commonwealth (interdependence) mirrored in that period.

In the second term 1946-49 Wilson’s speeches contained many references to the New Zealand and Australian relationship with the U.S.A. After he left Parliament he continued his interest, criticising the ANZUS Alliance.

Trade

With his interest in international affairs Wilson began to re-engage his attention on international trade. This had been important for him with family interests in the 1930s.

In 1948 in a detailed speech on a Tariff and Trade speech Wilson detailed his views on free trade protection and the role of GATT.

P9-14 : Wilson on Tariffs and Trade Bill

SE]	Tariffs and Trade Bill	[JUNE 25	1948]	General Agreement on	[HOUSE]	Tariffs and Trade Bill	77
	thing on one page and another thing on another page. We all would wish that it had been possible to achieve a greater clarity in what the Agreement really sets out, but the important thing is that there has been this real effort to do something towards planning and organizing international trade. I, for one, am glad, although it has got only a little way, that a start has been made, and that we are giving it our support in this country, because this country, above all others, depends on, and lives by, overseas trade.			at that time she was the most powerful industrial country in the world, and it was to her advantage that there should be the maximum amount of trade—free trade, as she saw it. No other country at that time thought it to its advantage to have free trade, and no other nation had free trade during that period. Britain was the only country that adopted free-trade principles, and the country that has now become the greatest industrial country in the world, the United States of America, was the last one at that time to believe in free trade. While Britain espoused free trade all the other countries adopted protection in order to develop their small and growing industries. It was inevitable that they should do so. Now the situation is somewhat different from a generation ago. Great Britain is no longer the greatest industrial country in the world, and free trade is not in her interests. Britain has abandoned free trade.		world. I, for one, do not. I believe that free trade would only be possible if all the nations were of equal size, equal development, and if there was complete free trade between equal nations. Free trade must go beyond the trade in goods; it must include complete convertibility of currency, which has never been the case. We have always been able to exchange our pounds for other people's currency, but we would not always take theirs in exchange for ours. The dollar is good to-day, but of course, one cannot get dollars for one's currency all the time, and there has never been complete convertibility of currencies, and there never will be between nations of unequal size and unequal industrial development. If we are to have complete free trade, we must also have complete freedom to move an industry from one country to another. That is the essence of it. If it turns out to be more profitable and more economical to start up industries in, say, Tibet, then we must consider moving our industries from Philadelphia and Wellington to Tibet. That, of course, is just ridiculous; it cannot happen: we cannot move industries of one country to another country. We cannot move populations from one country to another according to the most economic situation, but that is the underlying idea of free trade. It did operate at one time, when populations in the nineteenth century did move to the United States of America, which was built up in that way, but these movements are not taking place to-day, and will not take place in the future.	
	Overseas trade is much more important, for the purposes of expansion and development, to small countries than to large countries, and it is much more important to New Zealand than to any other country. But it is not sufficient merely that there should be a large amount of overseas trade and international trade; it is vitally important to see that that international trade should be orderly, that it should be organized and planned. It is not good enough that there should be the possibility of other countries swamping us with goods, while we might not be able to send our goods overseas. While that may be desirable in one sense, it would not be good for our economy. Nor, on the other hand, would it be any good for our economy if we were able to send large quantities of our produce overseas and get nothing in return. We need a large amount of ordered and planned trade. This Agreement sets out two conflicting ideas as to the goal. It states quite clearly in certain places that the goal is free trade in the old-fashioned sense—the sense which the honourable member for Renouera referred to as <i>laissez-faire</i> . To my mind, it is quite clearly implied in some parts that there should be no barriers in the way of tariffs, and no control by governments or in any other way, in the normal commercial practice of private enterprise. I am glad that the honourable member for Renouera said that nobody would support that now. I did not know that all his party had progressed so far, but I am pleased that they have.			The acceptance of Imperial preference at Ottawa was one symptom of the abandonment of free trade, because it is the opposite of free trade. That is something that every one in this House recognizes as valuable to the economy of the British Commonwealth. Now the boot is on the other foot. The United States of America is the greatest industrial country in the world, but she does not believe in free trade for herself. She takes quite the opposite attitude to that taken by Britain a generation ago. Britain, a generation ago, was prepared to accept free trade for herself, and despite the fact that other countries had tariff barriers against her, was very prosperous under free trade and with no protection on her own side. The United States of America, however, to-day the greatest industrial country in the world, does not believe in free trade for herself. She tries to get everybody else to pull down tariff barriers so that she may export to them, but she is very unwilling in return to give many concessions, although concessions are granted in the tariff agreements negotiated at Geneva. Nevertheless, we know how unwilling the people of the United States are to concede those concessions, and how unready they are to give power to the		If we had free trade, New Zealand, as a small country, would be at the mercy of technical and economic developments in the major countries. As an example, we remember that in the years before the war there was considerable fear that wool was a commodity which might find itself displaced by new synthetic products. Happily those fears have not been realized, but had it been the case that nylon, or some other development of nylon would prove as efficient and useful as wool, then the enormous resources of the United States could have capitalized the nylon or any subsequent industry to a far greater extent than we could have capitalized our wool industry.	

Source: Hansard, June 25, 1948

The resonance of the primary points compared with contemporary debate about World Trade Organisation (WTO) make the speech especially significant.

Broadcasting

Because of his experience in the debate 1936-38 about New Zealand broadcasting and his years with the B.B.C. Wilson maintained a close interest in radio and subsequently television.

In 1946 before his return to Parliament he wrote a pamphlet "What's wrong with Broadcasting? A Plan for Radio in New Zealand". In the

pamphlet he argued for separate networks, each geared to a particular audience. He considered that New Zealand radio programmes suffered from a fear of recognisable personality: a talk requires the speakers personality to shine through.

What would he make of the Radio and Television personalities of today?

In the 1947-49 Parliament he always contributed to debates in Broadcasting.

Parliamentary Reform

The reform of the Legislation Chamber, to any new form where members, would be selected in a proportional system on an occupational basis instead of a geographic one.

Parliamentary Squabbles

Ormond Wilson noting the tendency for Parliament from time to time to fall into petty wrangling commented once, that a century before his time, his maternal grandfather Sir John Ormond “a century ago deprecated the deterioration in the standards in Parliament because of personal abuses and petty squabbles”. Wilson wondered whether this was a feature of Parliamentary life.

1949

By 1949 Ormond Wilson was being portrayed as an arch-socialist in the Palmerston North electorate. He was being opposed in a straight fight by W.B. Tennent, a long standing Palmerston North resident and dentist. Tennent not only had strong professional standards but his work for the Presbyterian Church, the Terrace End School Committee and the Wanganui Education Board gave him real political traction.

The National Party under S.G. Holland was united and had attractive policies:

- make the pound go further
- purchase of the state houses by their tenants
- new education policies
- loans for building new homes.

After 14 years of Labour rule it was a winning approach. Wilson’s campaign in Palmerston North looked rather tired against the new proposed policies. In the event, Wilson experienced defeat at the polls for the second time in his life.

Ormond Wilson was still only 42 years of age but he was not to stand for Parliament again. He was about to open a rich thirty three year contribution to civic affairs and New Zealand life.

P9-15 : One of Ormond Wilson's campaign advertisements.

MES
29/11/49

VOTE—
WILSON
AGAIN!

A MESSAGE TO TRADES UNIONISTS

On November 30th, 1949, you will be called upon to elect your Representatives to Parliament. Before casting your vote weigh up carefully the progress you have made under a Labour Government.

What Labour has done for you.— Restoration of the Arbitration Court, and Conciliation as a means of settling disputes. Forty Hour Week. Annual Holidays of two weeks on full pay for all workers. Payment for all Statutory Holidays. Compensation. Weekly payments increased from £4 to £8. Payments for death from injury increased from £300 to £1750. Social Security benefits, not forgetting the 10/- per week child allowance. Full employment. Unemployment now non-existent.	What the National Party will do for you:— Price Controls abandoned. Forty Hour Week abolished. Election of your Union Officials will be taken out of your hands. Workers will be blacklisted to prevent them taking any work, thus hitting them through their wives and children. Compensation Insurance will be returned to private insurance monopoly. Reserve Bank and Bank of New Zealand returned to private enterprise. Railways to be again controlled by a board. Airways Corporation to be given over to private shareholders.
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THE MANAWATU TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL URGE ALL TRADES UNIONISTS NOT TO FAIL TO RECORD THEIR VOTE AND SAFEGUARD THEIR INTERESTS AND

VOTE LABOUR

VOTE WILSON

FOR PALMERSTON NORTH

Source: *Manawatu Evening Standard* 29/11/1949

P9-16 : Collage of the *Manawatu Evening Standard* coverage of the result (MES, 1/12/1949).

—MANAWATU EVENING STANDARD, THURSDAY, DEC. 1, 1949.

SOLID AGAINST LABOUR THE DISTRICT ELECTORATES FIRST TIME IN 17 YEARS

For the first time in 17 years the four electorates in the "Manawatu Standard's" circulation area have voted solidly against Labour. Neither Pahiatua nor Manawatu has ever sent a Labour representative to Parliament, and in view of its generally optimistic approach to this election the National Party can hardly have felt any shadow of uncertainty as to its prospects in these two electorates. It is in Palmerston North—a Labour stronghold since 1935—that the National triumph is most significant. Palmerston North, indeed, was regarded as a "key electorate," the general opinion (justified, as the event has proven) being that if Palmerston North fell to National the Labour Government would be ousted from office.

Rangitikei was won by Mr Ormond Wilson (Labour) in 1935, but he was defeated in 1938, since when the seat has been held by the National Party.

Mr Tennent, and although at one stage the totals to hand showed Mr Wilson leading, this Labour advantage was soon wiped out by returns from other booths. The first return to come in in the city electorate was that from the polling place at Hokowhitu School, this being received by the returning officer at 7.18 p.m. Well before 8 p.m. all returns but one were in, and electoral staff and the general public, while almost certain of the final result, were anxiously awaiting the return from St. Peter's Church Hall which would make the figures complete. Due to the fact that a Terrace End slot telephone was out of order, however, this return was not received until 8.23 p.m., the returning officer having had to send a special messenger to Terrace End to obtain it. Details of the voting at the various polling places in Palmerston North are as follows:—

	Tennent	Wilson
Broadway Av.	297	162
Church St. E.	1286	984
Church St. W.	256	401
College St. E.	528	280
College St. W.	423	526
Cuba St. No. 1	157	197
Cuba St. No. 2	687	896
Ferguson St.	205	341
Fitzherbert Av.	301	186
Grey St. No. 1	321	180
Grey St. No. 2	367	211
Hokowhitu No. 1	415	262
Hokowhitu No. 2	157	77
Realya	64	201
Takaro	238	273
Terrace End No. 1	517	987
Terrace End No. 2	131	172
Terrace End No. 3	368	388
Totals	6708	6358
Informal 63.		

ELECTION NIGHT

FOCAL POINT IN CITY.

RESULTS AND ADDRESSES.

Local point of public interest in Palmerston North last night was the big light result board outside the "Manawatu Standard" office, on which the first returns were displayed as they came to hand from all over New Zealand. From the time the polls closed an excited crowd began to gather in Broadway and Square gardens opposite the board. The numbers swelled rapidly as the evening wore on, and for most of the period during which results were being posted up the crowd was in excess of 2000. That the gathering was predominantly Nationalist in sympathies was clearly indicated by the reception given to the decisive results as they were announced and displayed on the board. Every time a National success was recorded there was a jubilant shouting of scores of car horns and a full-throated burst of cheering from the crowd—Labour victories being greeted with considerably less enthusiasm.

Shortly before 10 p.m., when the results of the election were known more or less beyond doubt, the four candidates who contested the Manawatu Palmerston North seats delivered addresses from the "Manawatu Standard" balcony. They were accorded a splendid reception, the crowd being in no uncertain manner its indication of the generous and remarkable fashion in which the candidates accepted their victory or defeat.

CONSERVATIVES JUBILANT NEW ZEALAND'S LEAD LAUDED "THROW OUT THE SOCIALISTS"

(N.Z.P.A.—Reuter.—Copyright.)
(Rec. 12.55 p.m.) LONDON, Nov. 30.

"The defeat of Labour in New Zealand is a sign of the times," said Lord Woolton, chairman of the Conservative Party, today. "Political issues in New Zealand are basically the same as those here. When the time comes the people of Britain will not lag behind their kinsmen in showing the world the right road to follow."

The result of the elections was sent into a private meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Labour's immediate defeat had no immediate effect on prices of New Zealand stocks quoted on the London Stock Exchange.

British Government securities at today's opening added further to the advances made in the past two days, but did not advance again when the Stock Exchange heard the result of the New Zealand poll.

The London Evening News and the Evening Standard prominently announced on their front pages the defeat of the New Zealand Labour Government.

The Evening Standard, in a five-column banner headline, said: "Australia watches as the Tories sweep to victory after 14 years."

"New Zealand leads the way, throw the Socialists out."

BRITAIN TOMORROW.

The Evening Standard, in a leading article, said: "The result of this election delineates the shape of things to come."

TIME FOR A CHANGE, NATIONAL

P9-17 : 1949 Election results

PALMERSTON NORTH.			
Polling-places.	Candidates.		Total.
	Tennent.	Wilson.	
Broadway Avenue	297	152	449
Church Street East	1,287	984	2,271
Church Street West	255	401	656
College Street East	529	239	818
College Street West	443	504	947
Cuba Street, Methodist Church Hall	157	197	354
Cuba Street, Oddfellows' Hall ..	587	895	1,482
Ferguson Street	294	342	636
Fitzherbert Avenue	301	163	464
Grey Street, Marist Brothers' High School	322	159	481
Grey Street, Y.M.C.A. Building	367	211	578
Hokowhitu, Albert Street	417	262	679
Hokowhitu, Ihaka Street	157	77	234
Roslyn	64	201	265
Takaro	236	276	512
Terrace End, Main Street	518	668	1,186
Terrace End, Phillip Street	133	173	306
Terrace End, Ruahine Street	368	386	754
Absent, declaration, and postal votes	636	510	1,146
Totals	7,368	6,850	14,218
Informal votes .. ..	..	93	
Number on roll .. ..	..	15,260	

Fruitful Years 1950-1982

Return to Mt Lees - Farmer again

From 1951 Wilson was back at Mt Lees working the land and attending to family needs.

But this time there was a new urgency, an ecological experiment. With his long standing interest in land development he decided to undertake a new project. He fenced off a bush gully from stock; cleared undergrowth to uncover tall trunks of totara, kahikatea, titoki and pukatea and introduced trees both mature and exotic and a ground cover of tall yellow watercress and other plants. He created a walkway through the bush.

The continuity between Ormond Wilson's interest in trees and that of his grandfather is striking.

In 1972 when Ormond and Rosamond decided to move to Wellington to live they gave their homestead and 30 acres of bush garden to the Crown. It is now administered by the Manawatu District Council and is a lovely place to visit.

Visitors to Mt Lees

Ormond Wilson maintained a life-long habit of inviting friends to visit Mt Lees and stay with Rosamond and himself.

From overseas came Arnold Toynbee, Lili Kraus, the Menuhin sisters, Jim Callaghan and finally President Lyndon Johnson made a fleeting visit in 1966. Over these years “hardly a week passed without our spare room being in use at least for a night or two. The sprawling homestead could ... accommodate 3 or 4 guests” (*Outsider*, p.162).

Historic Places Trust

In 1958 Ormond Wilson was appointed Chairman of the Historic Places Trust. There had been suggestions that he might go to London as the High Commissioner but when this did not eventuate he took up his work with Historic Places Trust. Wilson states “There could hardly have been a more congenial and stimulating body to work with than those guiding the Historic Places Trust, nor a more promising field to be engaged in”. (*Outsider*, p.175).

Wilson was Chairman for twelve years 1958 to 1970 and in his time the Trust’s main role was the preservation of selected historic places and buildings – two of the most famous Old St Paul’s in Wellington and the Waimate Misson House in Northland.

Discovering China

Ormond Wilson’s interest in international affairs helped him recognise that “During the fifties I used to say the American predominance in the world – that ‘American century’ would last but a few decades and that we could then turn for guidance and example to the oldest and most populous nation on earth. Its civilisation predated that of Athens and Rome ...” (*Outsider*, p.155).

In 1956 he seized the chance to travel with a “group of New Zealand academics, scientists, artists and a couple of farmers” to spend a month in China.

Thus Wilson completed his journeys beyond the English speaking world – Germany in the 1920’s; the Soviet Union in the 1930s and China in the 1950s.

Author 1950-88

Ormond Wilson continued his writing and as he says himself “my preoccupation then is evident in the dozens of articles I wrote for several

journals and in various pamphlets” (*Outsider*, p.155). It continued to be international affairs. “Once we had blindly followed Britain, right or wrong. After the war it seemed to me, we were blindly following the United States and thus became enmeshed in the hysteria of American anti-Communism, which infected its foreign as well as its domestic policy. I was convinced that communism was no more monolithic than capitalism or Christianity”.

However his writing later took a different turn when historical interests drew him to write two slender volumes on Maori-Pakeha relationships and war.

In 1961 his long term interest in the Tongariro National Park caused him to write *War in the Tussock* about Te Kooti and the colonial forces, and in 1985 *Hongi Hika and Hone Heke* appeared.

His most mature writing is revealed in his substantial volume *An Outsider Looks Back – Reflection on Experience*.

Cultural Commitments

In addition to his commitment to the Historic Places Trust which as can be seen was substantial he became deeply involved in a number of related cultural organisations.

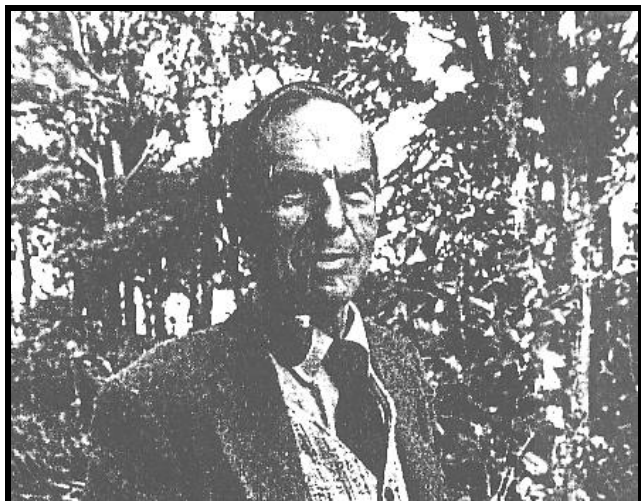
For four years from 1975 to 1979 he was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum and National War Memorial.

Also in those years he was appointed to the Environmental Committee of the National Development Council. Here his personal contribution to land development and restoration of forest land was of importance.

Consistent with his educational interests he was a member of the New Zealand Commission for UNESCO and an inaugural member of the New Zealand Literary Fund Advisory Committee.

Amid this he was an active member of the New Zealand Council of Civil Liberties, fulfilling long standing commitments to these issues.

It was not surprising that he was awarded a C.M.G. by the Governor General in 1979.



*P9-18 : Ormond Wilson,
Mt Lees in 1982.*

Summation: The Insider and The Outsider

This lecture concludes with a comparison between the life and work of James Glenny Wilson and his grandson, Ormond Wilson, from the perspective of the opening years of the 21st Century. Both were genial, friendly personalities. Both loved the land but from different perspectives. Both had distinctive political careers in national politics. Both made a substantial contribution to community life – in itself an unusual feature for politicians.

The Insider (JG)

Sir James Glenny Wilson was clearly an insider. He was able to purchase, with the support of his father and his wife a 6,000 acre sheep and cattle run which he made a success. It gave him entry into the squatter group or elite group in the New Zealand society of the 1870s. He quickly made it into national politics in 1881 and although he did not always enjoy political life it gave him entry to many avenues of influence and he became a New Zealand figure well known by the 1890s.

After his withdrawal from Parliament he quickly assumed leading roles in the Farmers Union and local body politics. For all of his years in the 20th century his voice on many issues was listened to with respect.

Ormond Wilson's own reflections contain this reference "We bore genes derived from them (Wilson's and Ormond's) unbeknown to us, their genes, transmitting disposition and family likeness, would influence our future lives. Both grandparents ... took up land in early days, both played prominent roles in public life. ... My own recollection of JG is of him sitting at the desk in his study, endlessly writing letters and articles on farming topics." (*Outsider*, p.3).

The Outsider (OW)

Whilst Ormond Wilson was very well aware of his middle class gentry inheritance and his profoundly English education at Christ's College and Oxford University and all the insider advantages that such a background disposed, he was profoundly aware of his individual difference.

It is therefore no surprise to find that when choosing a title for his autobiographical account that he selected the title *An Outsider Looks Back – Reflections on Experience*.

At Lincoln College Oxford he was the New Zealander from the colonies.

In Germany in the twenties he noted “but dress, speech and style marked me as an alien belonging to a different class to be treated with circumspection” (*Outsider*, p.25).

When he returned to New Zealand, Ormond Wilson was drawn to the land, but soon found that his development of socialist ideas, albeit derived from Kant not Marx, drew him to politics and away from his own people.

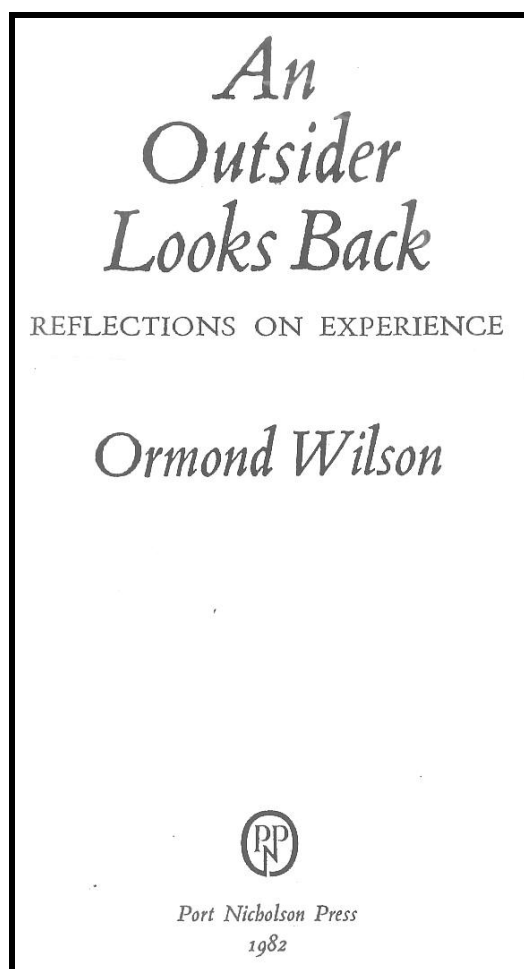
He joined the Labour Party and offered himself as a candidate to the Party. As Ormond Wilson writes “Though in England plenty of well-to-do socialists were active in politics, would one be acceptable to the Labour Party here?” (*Outsider*, p.43).

Upon election in 1935 Wilson found himself in the Labour caucus. He was different. In caucus he found that “caucus was in fact, a diverse group with conflicting goals”.

Whilst he functioned well in the 1935-38 and 1946-49 caucuses his views were often divergent from the dominant groups.

In his ending reflection Wilson states “of all intellectual positions, the sensible, and moderate approach, the search for the happy mean, the liberal outlook is the least newsworthy and offers least scope for dramatic presentation ...” (*Outsider*, p.204).

P9-19 : Wilson's Autobiography



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