

Record term as lawyer

A New Plymouth lawyer, Mr R. J. Brokenshire, who retires on July 31, is believed to have the longest career of any New Zealand lawyer.

He has been with the same New Plymouth firm, Standish, Anderson, Brokenshire and Howell, since 1911, when he was employed as an apprentice.

He was admitted as a solicitor by Judge Sir John Reid in 1921 and became a partner in the firm in 1924. He became a barrister two years later.

A spokesman for the Wellington-based New Zealand Law Society said Mr Brokenshire's 65 years' service "sounded like a record," but it could not be confirmed easily.

Mr Brokenshire was born in New Plymouth, attended the New Plymouth Boys' High School and studied law at Victoria University.

Increased major crime resulting from New Plymouth's growth had long since ended one Supreme Court tradition in the city, Mr Brokenshire said in an interview today.

It was once common for the judge to be handed a pair of white gloves, indicating the city had been free of major crimes since the last court session.

"I can't remember when this last happened," he said.

Mr Brokenshire said the answer to court congestion was more judges and magistrates, not the creation of different courts or night court sittings.

By the time judges and lawyers had been in court from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. they had had enough. Night court as well could cause fatigue, affecting court proceedings.

Mr Brokenshire supported repealing the Labour Party's legislation preventing publication of an accused person's name until he was found guilty or convicted.

"Not only does it prevent speculation, but it is also possible that further evidence will come to light when the person and charge is known."

Mr Brokenshire said his thorough and long grounding in all aspects of law by starting as an office boy was probably of more value to a legal career than the short terms spent at university today.

"I'm happy with the way the profession operates at present."

He planned to spend his retirement with his wife in New Plymouth, playing bowls, gardening and perhaps travelling.

Mr Brokenshire served as a private, later sergeant in the Taranaki Company of the Wellington Regiment during World War I and as a lieutenant in the Pacific in World War Two.

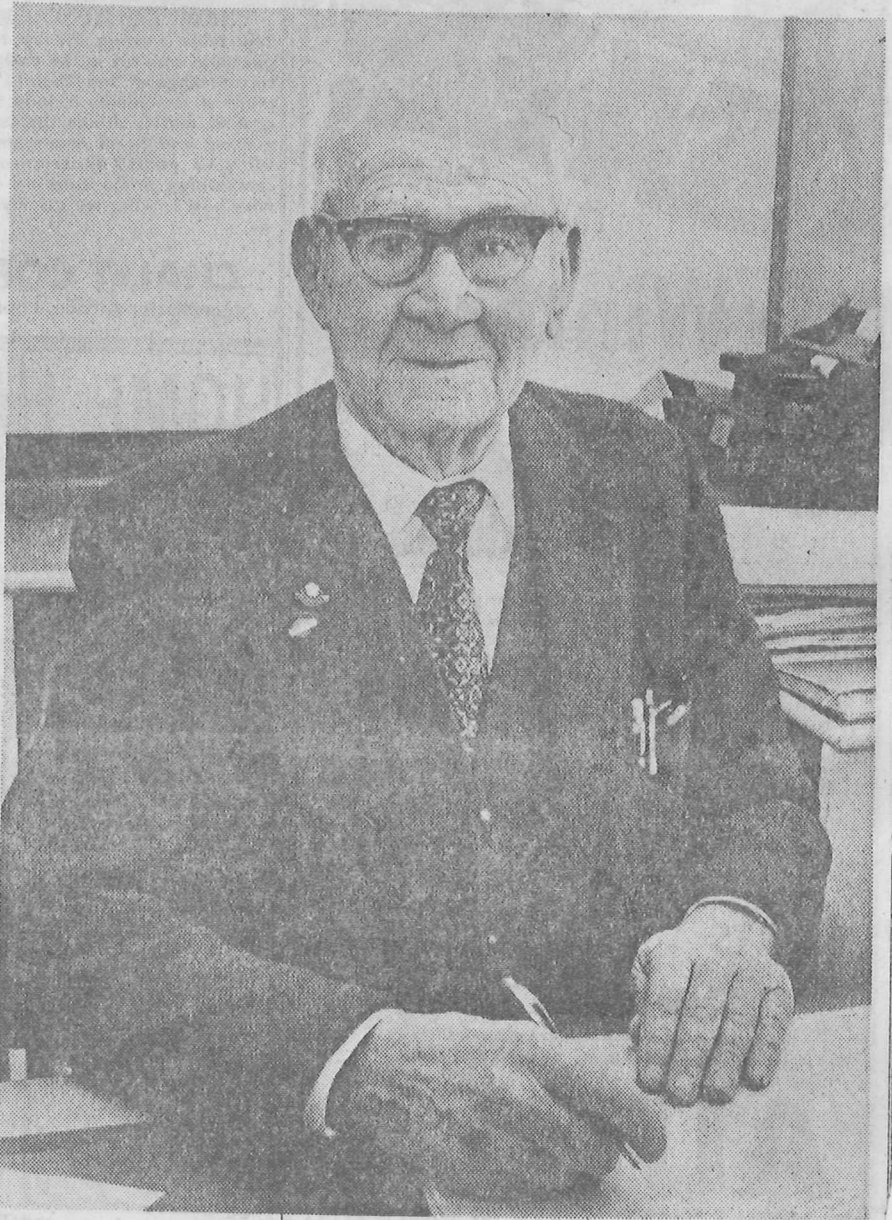
A former Oamaru solicitor, Mr R. T. Salisbury, is continuing Mr Brokenshire's practice. Mr Salisbury has worked in New Plymouth for three years with another firm.

Mr Brokenshire's firm has played a distinguished role in New Plymouth. It was founded in 1843 by Mr Thomas Standish, a prominent early citizen.

Mr Standish's son, Arthur, who was later first Mayor of New Plymouth, joined the firm with a Mr Kerr who later became a magistrate.

Mr Arthur Standish's grandson, Mr Arthur Russel Standish, was once Crown Prosecutor in New Plymouth.

Mr Brokenshire is the only surviving member of the 1924 partnership.



MR R. J. BROKENSHERE, New Plymouth, who will end a 65-year career in law when he retires this month.