

Bridge-builder to the province retires

Jack Julian (64) won't be building bridges any more — for anyone. After 28 yrs he has decided to close his firm of McMillan and Julian Ltd, Bridge Contractors, and retire.

There were several reasons for Jack's decision. He says he's getting on in years but it's mainly because the young men he's employed in recent times just weren't prepared to work.

"Lately I've found a new man would only last on the job for about two weeks and then he'd be off. The money lost training someone else just got too much," Mr Julian said.

In the early days (he actually began buiding bridges 47 years ago) if the men were on a project in the country they used to sleep in a bach on the job.

"Young men won't do that today. They have to come home each night to a hot meal and television."

HARSH

Mr Julian has worked on many jobs in back country areas and says working conditions were a lot harsher when he first began work.

In 1948 he began his own firm with the late Mr Ivan McMillan and since then the company has built 160 bridges throughout Taranaki and parts of the King Country.

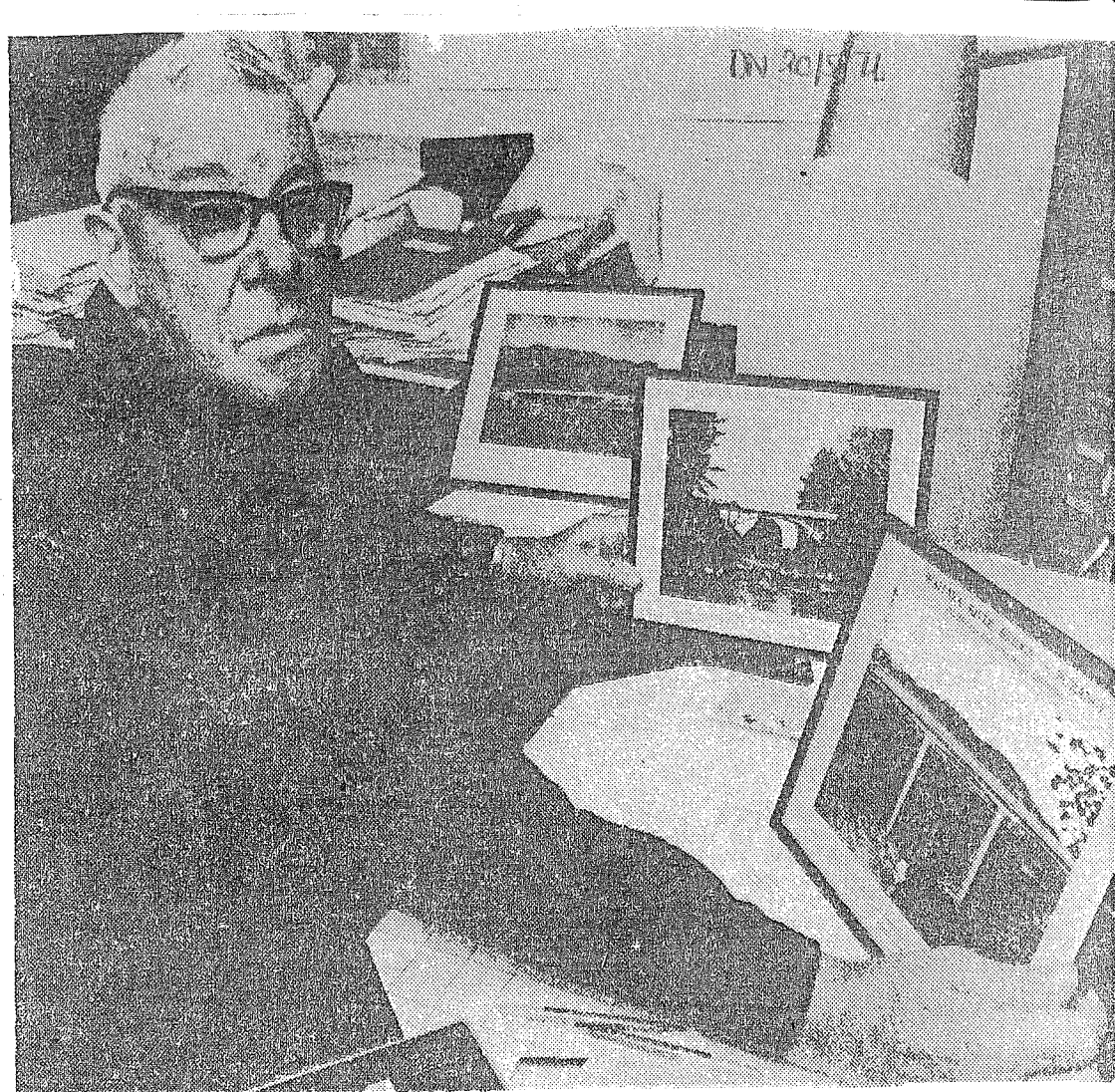
Their first job was the Mohakatino bridge on the main highway, the biggest was the Waingongoro crossing and the last was the \$99,000 contract to lay the foundations for the Vivian St viaduct in New Plymouth.

Only one job remains for him — selling all his equipment.

"There are thousands of dollars' worth to be sold and this will all come under the auctioneer's hammer. I expect it will take two days to get rid of it all," he said.

Almost all the equipment used for bridge building would be up for sale, including some items manufactured for special jobs.

Mr Julian's firm officially closes on May 31 and after that he's looking forward to spending some time in his garden.



Jack Julian, bridgebuilder to the province for the past 47 years, pauses to look over examples of his handiwork at home in New Plymouth last night. After almost half a century in the business, Jack's firm will close up at the end of the month.