

Family business top priority for busy executive

"Once diesel gets into your blood — it's there for life," says Bill Hargreaves, managing director of the Hargreaves group of companies in the Wairarapa.

His bright cheery office sits almost on the edge of the State Highway south of Masterton. From his window he can see the comings and goings of the company's trucks and trailers of all sorts, shapes and sizes.

Mr Hargreaves, a descendant from pioneer families from Norway and England, was educated in Dannevirke, where he was born.

Although he'd had a steering wheel in his hand almost from birth, Mr Hargreaves wanted to be a teacher and spent four years in Christchurch studying for a BA at Canterbury College. In his last two years there he worked for the licensing section of the Transport Department, while studying part-time.

In 1951 he returned to Dannevirke to work for his father, the proprietor of a 4-truck carrying business and a service station. While doing a wide variety of driving jobs, Mr Hargreaves purchased his own truck and with one driver started his own lime-spreading business.

Later that year he took over the family business and during the next few years gradually built up its vehicle fleet. In 1961 Hargreaves Transport purchased the local business of Lindsay Drummond — a single truck operator.

At the same time another four carriers in the district formed Dannevirke Transport, which was offered and sold to Hargreaves two years later.

In 1965, Hargreaves Transport purchased a 100 percent shareholding in Transport Wairarapa and in 1972 bought Keith Shackleton's business in Mauriceville, followed by Harry Robinson's at Pirinoa two years later and the Eketahuna Carrying Company in 1977.

In 1981, the company

moved into the Manawatu by purchasing the assets of Manawatu Transport and, earlier this year, greater diversification was afforded the company by the purchase of P and O Roadways in Petone.

To-day, Hargreaves Transport remains a family company. Mr Hargreave's wife, Bernice, is a director; while his only son — the eldest of four children —

there has been an increase in MoT enforcement.

"We're constantly being checked and weighed," he says.

Mr Hargreaves is a member of the executive of the No. 10 district council of the National Roads Board, a Wairarapa RTA executive member and a member of the Wairarapa Regional Development Council.

responsibilities at both local and national level Mr Hargreaves' over-riding concern is Hargreaves Transport — the people the company employs and the service it gives to its thousands of clients, large and small.

Mr Hargreaves believes it is harder for truck operators to survive.

"With RUCs, permit fees, fuel, cost of equipment,



does a mail run for the company.

Owning more than three hundred road vehicles (including trailers) the salaries and wages of the 150 staff exceeds \$2 million a year, most of it going to the men behind the steering wheels.

Last year over \$500,000 was paid in road user charges, and the fuel bill easily topped the million-dollar mark.

The company's latest move is a daily service between Wellington and Napier which began last November when the 150km limit was lifted.

Mr Hargreaves says the Wairarapa has not seen any major changes in the local transport scene since the new transport regulations were enforced, although

He represents the NZRTA on the National Advisory Committee on Meat Hygiene and is the chairman of the RTA's industrial committee.

Despite his heavy

and debtors' ledgers, you need an astronomical amount of money to keep a unit on the road."

"You can't go into the business without a large amount of capital," he says.

