

Afforestation inevitably became involved with soil conservation and river control measures. The most spectacular scheme was planned for the East Coast because the situation there was: no trees, no soil, no anything, except erosion and silted rivers. Few schemes anywhere could have been investigated so thoroughly. Five Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, finally visited the area to adjudicate on the recommendations which received the blessing of the whole House. Once approved, the Minister of Forests could not get to the East Coast quickly enough to announce it.

It is a sad reflection of our system of government that we now have to listen to what are virtually the sneers of Messrs Palmer and Prebble, and the complaints of the Forestry Corporation, about planting out of place.

The greatest stimulus and support to the whole afforestation development came from the 1969 Forestry Development Conference. I had promoted this initially with the Minister of Forests as a 50-year celebration of the founding of the Forest Service. It was accepted with alacrity, but as a Sector of the National Development Conference. How completely the meeting was taken over by the politicians can be realized upon looking back over photographs of the event. Sitting at the meeting's head table were Sir Jack Marshall, Deputy P.M. (chairman), Sir Robert Muldoon (Minister of Finance), Brian Talboys (Minister of Agriculture), Professor Phillpot, E.R. Davis, Secretary of Treasury, and J.W. Rowe of the Employers Federation. The audience contained many other MPs, both Government and Opposition, and members of industry and trade unions. The Conference set a very sensible course that was adopted by Government. That was only 18 years ago; less than a rotation of radiata pine.

Afforestation did not consist of just scampering over 'marginal' country planting trees. We go back again to Alan FAMILTON's letter. "We have developed a magnificent Forest Research Institute which has received world renown in a remarkably short time."

Afforestation has had the benefit of the progressive and wide-ranging work well set out by W.R.J. Sutton in the May 1987 issue of *New Zealand Forestry*. All this work was backed and supported not only by sister organizations, DSIR and MAF, but by politicians.

This support, for research as a whole, was evidenced most strongly at the time wild animal control passed from Internal Affairs to the Forest Service in 1956. The Minister of Forests, Sir Eruera Tirikatene, took a lead in the change. He called an inaugural meeting which was held in Parliament buildings. As is the habit of Parliament, he commenced pro-

ceedings with a prayer, I am sure much to the surprise of deerstalkers. However, it did not stop the meeting from soon getting down to altercation.

Sir Eruera gave particular support to the investigations commenced by the Service in an effort to understand the problems better. He even flew in a monoplane deep into the valleys of the West Coast to see for himself the defoliation of rata and kamahi caused by possums.

The linchpin of the attack on the Service leading to its obliteration was the campaign of accusations aimed at undermining the stewardship of State Forests. Yet, as Alan FAMILTON says: "We have established a system of State Forest Parks for recreation, conservation and multiple-use management of natural forest."

What one would like to have seen added to that was something that nobody has yet given the Service sufficient credit for — the fire control that has operated for 50 years or more around the edges of protection native forests. These forests have constituted 80 per cent or more of native State Forests. Fire control has saved at least half of them — possibly a great deal more if one is to believe the present assumptions about the effects of past Polynesian wild fires.

This aspect of stewardship is conveniently forgotten by those who want to forget.

The timber-yielding State Forests were earmarked for logging by politicians well before the Forest Service got

underway. Few politicians have ever swerved from that path. They have clung to it very much longer than they need have by tenaciously retaining price control of sawn native timber, thereby giving it an artificially low price and hindering the substitution of exotic timbers.

And so the catalogue could go on at length.

Everybody will wish the Department of Conservation all success in its administration of native forests. They are a vital element of our land. The greatest danger to them now lies in possible ravages from fire. The highly efficient rural fire-fighting organization developed by the Forest Service has been decimated. New Zealand may have to re-learn its fire control lessons through serious fire losses.

The Forestry Corporation is operating on the cream of world plantation forests. But the potential of forestry lies away beyond that and can only be developed by long-laid plans of planting supported by investigations. Only the State can nurture such long-term potential.

The Institute of Foresters alone can rekindle the spark that will lead again to properly integrated forest management. The people who have to be convinced are the politicians.

In addition, the chequered history of forestry in this country clearly shows that some long-term checks to control the acrobatics of three-year-term Governments is essential. Trees grow by rotations not by three-year terms.

A.L. POOLE

Some thoughts from the Diaspora

The changes that have overwhelmed forestry, traumatic though they may have been for individuals, have been changes only of structure and not of design or purpose. They have been imposed — and opposed by the profession — largely for the same reasons, as a fight for territory and for the simplicities of administration.

Since it is as true of human organizations as it is of any other life form that the simple evolves towards the complex, it is fair to see the restructuring changes more in the light of the conservative reactions against change itself; and also against complexity and the threat to control that that implies. At least the evidence so far points that way.

The old case for the professional arrogance that Ken Piddington in his paper so rightly complains of, was in fact rather different for foresters compared with, for instance, engineers or doctors. Both

of the latter were to a degree putting a price on the exclusiveness of their knowledge. Foresters on the other hand found themselves, in developing societies such as New Zealand, Australia and North America at least, to be a very small voice indeed in Government land administrations that saw their mission simply as to survey, allocate and settle. Forests and timber had no part in that world and it was a necessity of the time that foresters be arrogant in order to be heard at all. While the arrogance may have lingered too long, it was in its time successful.

Forests and trees are an awkward resource simply because they live too long. By doing so, they deny opportunity to others and they enrage economists because, by their presence, they contradict the declared truth that time is an enemy to be disposed of by compound interest. For these reasons alone, there

will always be arguments for the end of trees, though the arguments will often follow quite different lines of attack.

All foresters are familiar with the cry that something must be done, but — not this way and not with that tree, not with native trees — not with monocultures — not unless it meets preconceived levels of economic return and so on. The arguments produce a comfortable aura of concern, while ensuring that in practice nothing is done.

The role of foresters in the future therefore is not to stand up and confront the forces of arboreal apartheid and genocide, but to get in amongst them, and by seeming to be a part of them, to bend them in positive directions.

Clearly this cannot be done by separate organizations — that era has just ended — and it is time for the Institute to take a long hard look at the new Ministry of Forests and at forestry training. Of course the cry goes up that we have just done that, and was not the creation of a separate Ministry based on the need to salvage something from the wreckage?

But have we? The Institute's review of the need for foresters measured the need in terms of technical pressure, and it found that the public and private sector views of that, as expressed by whom they employed, differed. The private sector far prefers professional training for its managers, more foresters and fewer rangers.

Position on this argument will largely depend on individual circumstance, but we may assume that the preference for graduates is tied to a need for a greater diversity of knowledge and maybe experience. Transfer that attitude outside our profession, to a world looking in on forestry, and we can see a need for forestry itself to be a part of a much wider land management training.

Quite apart from lacking the economies of scale mentioned by Geoff Sweet,

are we not risking economies of quality and stimulus also? If the profession is too small to provide the full depth of training needed from within its own ranks — and it will be too small for many years to come — should it not actively look for a wider bed?

The same of course applies also to the Ministry of Forests, some of whose employees seem already to wonder what it is that they are supposed to do.

Subversion from within will not come easily to a profession that has traditionally seen itself as pretty short back and sides. But if foresters do not adopt the role of yeast in the pudding, they risk getting left behind alongside the forces that they see as having defeated them.

These should not include either the Government or the Treasury, since these were neutral forces unconcerned with forestry as such. What they did to foresters and forestry was a part of a wider scheme of things, and generally accepted. We may feel the Treasury part to have been negative and based more on the need to simplify so as to control and on a wariness of success seen only as a measure of tax evasion, but there is at least a simple logic to the thing. If there is a failure, it lies in a preference for bending to preconceived rules and a reluctance to understand, or, as put elsewhere, the inability to translate understanding into effective action.

If that was all there was to it, why do foresters seem to have been so much more affected by the changes than for instance, railway engineers and Post Office people who are undergoing the same restructuring? What made foresters more vulnerable?

The missing element, of course, was the religious element in preservation, with its missionary urge to convert and to change, and its sense of a revealed message and absolute rightness. It was this onslaught of righteousness that left

so many foresters (and to a lesser degree agriculturists and Parks people) shell-shocked.

Perhaps we should not have been. Such cultural onslaughts have long been a tradition of our approach to life, and they have been common enough in the past and still continue worldwide in the traditional religious sense. If we found ourselves pursued by missionaries determined to clothe our nakedness, we should have remembered that, like others before us, we can always take them off again in the appropriate place. It is they whose belief makes them intransigent, and who therefore in the end must themselves break or change.

So where do foresters go now? Ken Piddington suggests an ethos of "stewardship", but we have been there before and it is all things to all men. Stewardship of what for whom?

The concept becomes more remote if it is pursued as he suggests, into the Middle Ages. A phoney mediaevalism has historically been the path down which the cultured have fled when confronted with the vulgarity of money, but the reality is a harsher one than King Arthur and his knights. Should we seek to imitate the oppressive agents of an alien aristocracy, whose mission, however cloaked in fine language, was to assert their masters' interest over that of the conquered indigenous people?

That in itself becomes an odd concept to copy in a New Zealand that is trying to evolve a multi-cultural approach. We can do a bit better than the Norman conquest, though possibly some may find the oppressiveness of its forest law attractive.

Quite simply, foresters now have to find a way to move out into a wider world with room to roam around. Our institutions and effects must become a part of a wider whole, and not just castles to be defended in isolation. Ironically enough, that is where the preservationist lobby now seems to be, fighting off the devils of its own soul and prey to a mean-minded Treasury, and it is where the Department of Conservation could end up if it isn't careful.

Philosophy aside, it means that the Institute must surely do all in its power to add another F to MAF (or even an F on the end of DOC) and to get all forestry training in a wider pond. Then and only then will forestry as a profession begin to be able to properly influence landuse practice.

The changes so far have only been changes of power base. The real changes have yet to be made and we can still play a large part in them so long as we abandon ground already lost. The Institute is the only body that can make that happen.

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**THEME: 'IMPROVED UTILIZATION FOR
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