

Once again the history of our organization is worth looking at.

1. In the 1948 AGM notes, as reported in Vol. 5/5 of the Journal, it was the opinion of the meeting that the time was opportune to proceed toward obtaining legislation granting a Charter to the NZIF and a motion instructing the Council to move accordingly was passed. I wonder what happened to it?
2. Tony Grayburn in his 1967 Presidential Address commented: "...it can be said that the Institute's main aim is the protection and development of the "professionalism" of forestry in New Zealand. If the Institute is to advance its professional status, such a move is ultimately inevitable (the obtaining of a Charter).
3. Bob Jackson, when Editor of the Journal in 1968 (Vol. 13/2), said "...in becoming a Chartered Society — as we must aim to do, if the Institute is to speak with full legal authority on matters concerning our profession ...That need may be closer than we realize".

We have international role models to follow, in British Columbia, California and Great Britain where foresters either have a Charter or a Registration procedure. Within New Zealand there are other professions that we can look to for advice and assistance.

I suggest to you that the time is now ripe to pursue a Charter and we must grasp the opportunity before it gets away.

There will need to be grandfathering provisions. An Editor of the Journal once wrote: "...The strength of a professional Institute does not (wholly) rest upon the academic qualifications of its members, but upon their proven calibre, and the vigour and wisdom with which they pursue common professional aims." I agree wholeheartedly with this.

There will need to be a setting of educational standards and experience for future registration of professional foresters as well as a whole host of other matters which will need to be addressed as we move in this direction. This should not dismay members; many other orga-

nizations have headed down this path.

Perhaps there will need to be a change of name but if, as I believe, foresters are people involved in the management of forested lands of all types and in many different organizations under different names, this will be unnecessary. There may well need to be a change to the Object of the Institute to focus on those matters of real concern rather than to take a holistic approach that ends up being fuzzy around the edges.

In conclusion, I believe that there needs to be an organization setting "across the board" professional standards. It has been commented in a number of places before that "the interests of its members is the rightful concern of any professional society but what distinguishes a professional from other occupational groups is its primary concern with providing the public with the highest standards of service". The Institute is uniquely placed for such tasks.

**P.J. Thode,
President**

Lessons of history — unheeded?

Obliteration of the New Zealand Forest Service is producing a spate of *instant* historians. The last number (May 1987) of New Zealand Forestry is evidence of this, and other articles are appearing in various journals and newspapers.

We are so close to the scene that most of these scribblings lack objectivity; some are deliberately subjective, thus carrying on the slanted campaigns conducted prior to the 1984 elections; or they are political statements justifying the obliteration engineered by the Labour Government. Moreover, the process hasn't stopped. The School of Forestry in particular, the Ministry itself and the Forest Research Institute are all in the line of fire.

All I have read usually omit the most important parts of any historical account of a Government Department — the guiding influences, checks and balances provided by Parliament, its Members and Ministers, and the reports of its chief advisers, Treasury. No historical account could pretend to be complete, or even begin, without reference to these. It is galling to read "The Forest Service did this." "The Forest Service did that...therefore it went wrong."

It is true that the Service was founded by a Director of unusual vision who had the vigour to develop that vision. But he operated under an Act, and his performance was closely watched by Members of Parliament all over the country. Throughout its 68 years the Ser-

vice has been noteworthy for employing many exceptionally able officers, from the highest to the lowest ranks, but in their work they could not depart far from the ground rules set down by their masters.

If anyone doubts the effect of politics and politicians then just remember that they introduced the Forest Service in 1919 with a fanfare of trumpets and ended it in 1987 with a devious exercise.

I would dearly love to join the ranks of the *instant* historians and take up the theme of "what went wrong". But I will resist that and instead keep to the theme emphasized above: the circumscription imposed by politicians and politics.

We could take the list of Forest Service achievements so poignantly set out in Alan Familton's "...last official communication that will ever be written by a Director-General of the New Zealand Forest Service".

"We have created a first-class resource of commercial plantations..."

World War II put an end finally to the first 'planting boom'. By the time some large exotic-log-based mills had been built and the sale to Tasman finalized on the yields created by that planting, it was clear that the potential for plantation forestry was considerable. So the second 'planting boom' got under way. In the beginning much more encouragement came from politicians than came from the Service itself. Backing

also soon became based on regional aspirations. At estimates time in the House, the first thing MPs looked at in the annual report were the tables of planting. Then questions directed to the Minister of Forests had the flavour: "I note that only ? acres were planted in ? during the past year — a poor effort."

For a number of years, on top of this push, came urgent demands to take on men, usually a large number, for winter employment. This direction became so insistent that it was safe to budget for a small planting programme, knowing full well that it would be augmented later by special winter programmes.

Politicians sometimes took matters into their own hands. An example of this was Aupouri in North Auckland. By the late 1950s all the older exotic forests in the Auckland Conservancy were being expanded or improved and new ones started up. The great stretch of sand at Aupouri always looked tempting for afforestation and some sand stabilization had started years earlier. However, complete afforestation would be a big project, and Auckland's resources were fully extended. Discussions took place from time to time but then the Minister of Forests took a trip around the north and by the time he arrived back the commitment had been made to commence planting at Aupouri. No advice was sought from Head Office and no approval obtained from Parliament.

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