

Privatisation of State Forests

Sir,

I am grateful to Andrew McEwen (49/2) for his explanation of the privatisation sales process and for pointing out my errors of understanding of that process. I can explain (but surely not excuse) that ignorance by my fortunate absence from New Zealand over the period when the process was taking place – my judgement is also perhaps over-influenced by the ultimate shambles which has resulted in the Central North Island.

I am no defender of the pre-Rogernomics public service, sclerotic, inflexible and rule bounden, expanding uncontrollably and totally unsuited to selling things. Change had to come and, as we all know, it did and I don't judge the process. Since such things are best done quickly it was inevitable that a few babies went out with the bathwater. Of course with forestry the problem was compounded by a total ingrained misunderstanding of the difference between mining an asset and farming it sustainably. The short term thinking of a government strapped for cash probably didn't help there either.

As to separation of Church and State I have only to point to the Southland example where the large North American company which ultimately bought the bulk of the forests has not invested at

all in processing (apart from an MDF plant dependent on residues). That of course is itself a heresy in some eyes, but the company in question evades that judgement by its system of standing timber sales which, by giving some surety of supply, has convinced local mills that they should invest in their plants and sales structures rather than in the forest.

In varying degree that is now the standard approach in Otago/Southland, resulting in a situation where the bulk of the cut is processed locally. Log export, so beloved of market analysts, has shrunk to insignificance.

I suspect that as the timber business matures similar structures will appear in other parts of the country, if they have not done so already. The CNI model which causes me so much angst is, as I quoted (48/4), apparently rare in complex economies, which ours increasingly becomes, so perhaps nature will take care of it and recycle it into something better – and not dairy farms. Despite its errors it deserves better than that.

John Purey-Cust
Campion Road, 4RD Gore, 9700
Ph/fax 03 208 5200
Email - cust@esi.co.nz

new information

Remsoft Training Workshops and User Group gathering in Melbourne, Australia

Remsoft Inc., developers of the Remsoft Spatial Planning System – software for integrated forest management – will be hosting two Open Training Sessions and a User Group in Melbourne the week of February 7th, 2005.

A three-day *Forest Modelling with Woodstock* training course will be followed by a two-day *Spatial Planning Workshop*.

These courses are open to licensed users of the

software from any organization in the region.

A one-day User Group session will follow immediately after the training courses.

The exact dates, location and time of these sessions will be made available soon.

Please contact Doug Jones, doug@remsoft.com, if you have any questions, or visit the Remsoft web site at www.remsoft.com for additional information.

FSC Plantation Review

There is a Plantation Review process happening within FSC. Three New Zealand delegates attended a meeting in Bonn recently.

The FSC Plantations Review website <http://www.fsc.org/plantations/index.htm> contains the presentations presented at the meeting on September 9th, the Perspectives on Plantations paper, a summary of the participants' evaluation of the meeting, and a list of people who registered

to attend, have been posted on the "Resources" page of this site.

A summary report, including the outputs of the discussion groups will also be added to the site soon.

The discussion is wide-ranging and very interesting.

Roger May