

1887, when his people gifted the sacred volcanic mountains in the centre of the North Island – the nucleus of today's Tongariro National Park.

The National Parks Act says of these and subsequent dedications: "to set aside lands in perpetuity as national parks, for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand that contain scenery of such distinctive quality, ecological systems, or natural features so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their preservation is in the national interest".

Members of the National Parks Centennial Commission have been reminded of the relevance of the indige-

nous Maori culture in shaping our vision for the future in a spirit of genuine partnership as envisaged by the Treaty of Waitangi nearly 150 years ago.

New Zealand, the unique remnant of the ancient continent Gondwanaland, was particularly susceptible to the invasive exotic animals, plants and fire. We are fortunate to have today such a relatively large unmodified natural resource of protected natural areas. Unquestionably the presence of the beautiful and intensely interesting National Parks has been a major factor in the rapid increase in tourists – especially those coming from the faraway lands of Europe, North America and Japan.

Latest research indicates that 70 per

cent of all overseas visitors coming to the South Island include a National Park experience. A survey conducted for the Centennial Commission indicated that in the past two years only one-third of New Zealand residents reported a visit to one or more of our National Parks. It is hoped the Centennial Programme of events will widen interest materially in our unique heritage and encourage more to make a contribution to this ongoing act of stewardship for the benefit of all in the world-wide community.

These matters are of special interest to professional foresters and horticulturists, many of whom have been leaders in the 'conservation ethic' for generations.

Jolyon Manning

RECENT EVENTS

Forestry Corporation reports

The New Zealand Forestry Corporation has published an account of its operations since being born out of Government's restructuring of the public sector on April 1 last year. The report dwells heavily on the transformation of the exotic plantation and sawmilling activities of the former Forest Service into the new slimline Corporation – now acknowledged as being in the vanguard of Government's new SOE brigade.

Although the report has been heralded by Roger Douglas and others with an eye to the political main chance as vindication of Government's corporatization initiatives, it does not provide conventional financial accounting information. The reason for this, as the report indicates, is that the Forestry Corporation and the other SOEs are presently operating in a sort of suspended animation pending the valuation and purchase of publicly-owned assets. These tasks have proved somewhat thornier than initially envisaged – with the Maori Council winning an historic court battle to prevent asset transfer until Maori land grievances were on the table, with disputes between Government agencies on appropriate allocation of land to corporations, and with negotiations on the value of the assets to be transferred taking much longer than expected.

It would appear therefore that the Minister of Finance will really have to bide his time before the Forestry Corporation will be in a position to measure its performance and efficiency in acceptable orthodox terms. At that stage it will be easier to gauge the effectiveness of

Government's reforms – and a more appropriate time for Ministers to trumpet the success of their strategies; or to find someone to blame because the experiment went wrong!

In his prefacing remarks, Chairman Alan Gibbs reports that prior to the existence of the Forestry Corporation the Forest Service commercial activities were receiving a cash injection from Government of about \$35 million for a six-month period. In the six months since its formation the Corporation has shown a \$24 million surplus of funds from operations. Alan Gibbs states that this performance represents a \$59 million turnaround, with the same level of

wood production, and similar programmes of new planting and silviculture.

The secret of this change in cash flow lies at least in part in the drastically trimmed employment levels. The Corporation has a salaried staff of 660 compared with about 2000 employed in the commercial arm of the Forest Service. This saving in salaries alone is equivalent to \$44 million, or 20% of the revenue of the Corporation. The total number of staff and workers, including contractors, has been reduced from about 7000 to 2700. Alan Gibbs claims that this has been achieved without reducing logging activity and maintaining new investment



Timber stocks at Forestry Corporation's Prolog sawmill at Waipa.

in plantation establishment and silviculture at levels comparable with Forest Service's 1986 programmes.

The Forestry Corporation is now almost up and running, and the transfer of assets scheduled to occur by the end of March is seen as the next significant milestone. "We are looking forward to taking the Corporation to a publicly listed company next year in line with Government policies. This will provide a further stimulus to our efficiency by exposing us to external financial monitoring, and ensure we make the most of this major New Zealand resource," concludes Alan Gibbs.

J.C.H.

Family forest company sold

Carter Holt Harvey Limited have agreed to purchase, for an undisclosed cash amount, a 50 per cent interest in Baigent Forest Industries Limited.

Although current conditions for the forest-based manufacturing and exporting industries are depressed, Baigent Forest Industries Limited, with its major manufacturing unit in Nelson, is seen as being in a strategically strong position for any upturn in either the domestic or export marketplaces in the future.

Carter Holt Harvey's 50 per cent involvement in Baigent Forest Industries will form a joint venture relationship with Shell Forestry New Zealand Limited (40 per cent) and Todd Forestry Limited (10 per cent).

Baigent Forest Industries, with its head office in Nelson, currently owns and manages approximately 20,000 hectares of exotic forest resource which is used to service the new sawmill at Eves Valley which was commissioned in 1985. The Eves Valley industrial complex also includes a number of important remanufacturing activities. The products of the Eves Valley site service the New Zealand domestic market and exports to Australia.

A number of retailing outlets are operated by Baigent Forest Industries in the Nelson district at Stoke, Nelson City, Takaka, Motueka and Wakefield; in Wellington there is a majority owned Northern Timber and Hardware Ltd at Johnsonville and Ngaio, and in Christchurch there is a 100 per cent owned outlet called Baigent Timber Canterbury. In addition, in Australia there is the wholly owned Trans Tasman Timber Pty Limited situated at Home Bush Bay, Sydney, and the 50 per cent owned Kembla Timber and Industrial Services Pty Limited at Wollongong in New South Wales. Baigent Forest Industries also has a 50 per cent holding in Southpine (Nelson) Limited.

H. Levack

CAPTION COMPETITION

Thanks to those of you who submitted suggestions to the Caption Competition contained in our last issue. The candid pic snapped at last year's conference features Andy Kirkland and Guy Salmon during the panel discussion on multiple-use forestry.

Priestley Thomson judged entries and favoured short pithy offerings – a few were rather long. The winning entry was:

"Your Move Andy"

The prize, a copy of Lindsay Poole's new book 'Southern Beeches', goes to Malcolm Conway.

We hasten to point out that we are not running a cosy ex-Director-Generals' club!

Other meritorious entries were:

"It's all a great big yarn" – Eric Purnell

"Andy doesn't think my idea of underplanting Kaingaroa with rimu is true multiple-use forestry" – Phil Shattock

"I hope he thinks I've got toothache" – Jack Barber.



YOUR MOVE ANDY
(Malcolm Conway)

NATIVE FORESTS ON PRIVATE LAND

A recent decision by the Planning Tribunal concerning the Waimea County Scheme has raised some interesting issues over placing controls on native forests on private land.

In an interim decision the Tribunal upheld the NFAC amendment to the scheme which made the logging or clearing of any areas of native forest a conditional use. (A conditional use is a use or development which is generally appropriate but special conditions may apply; hence approval must be sought). Nelson Pine Forests Ltd sought to have the original predominant use ordinances reinstated and has lodged an appeal with the High Court in an attempt to overturn the Tribunal decision.

The controversy surrounds whether conditional use procedures are an appropriate method for controlling logging or clearance of native forest. Previously

the Tribunal has disallowed conditional use procedures being used for the objective of conservation or preservation (Clutha county vs Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society). However, in this case the objective is not conservation, but rather controlling development with a slight bias towards resource management. In particular, this allows controls to encourage sustained yield management. While the objective is laudable, the method is open to criticism.

The case is not yet finalized and will be tested in other district schemes (e.g. the Opotiki Scheme). Whatever the outcome, it appears that owners of native forests on private land will increasingly be subject to pressure to ensure wise land management.

Sarah Wilson