

# Foresters off-shore

This issue of New Zealand Forestry which, in large part, focuses on forestry activity off-shore owes a debt of thanks to those who have volunteered or who have been coerced to write articles. This material demonstrates the diversity of activity and depth of experience which New Zealand foresters bring to the international scene.

We can boast a good number of colleagues now practising at large throughout the world. Although much of this effort is directed at the Pacific rim, there are those who range further afield. John Purey-Cust, for example, reports in from Mexico but writes about his recent endeavours in Sri Lanka. He actually travelled to Belize (remember British Honduras?) to post his offering, complete with pics carefully wrapped in open-textured, pink, central American toilet tissue. One of his shots appears on the cover. Maurice Williamson writes from northern Vietnam where he is putting his Northland site preparation and establishment skills to work as an adviser for a major Swedish forestry aid programme. Editor Don Mead, currently enjoying that perk of academia – sabbatical leave – reports on forestry activity in Malaysia.

You will enjoy reading Dennis Richardson's account of forests and forestry activity in Outer Mongolia and Tibet – written for the journal during his recent short spell at home. Dennis is arguably our most eminent international

forester and we look forward to the forthcoming release of his revised book on forestry in China.

From those more or less resident in New Zealand contributions include articles from John Groome and Ben Everts. For a considerable period John has been an acknowledged leading authority on international forestry affairs, and his company has been centrally involved in New Zealand's bilateral forestry assistance programme. Ben Everts writes about recent changes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now the Ministry of External Relations and Trade, and the place forestry might have in the revamped official development assistance programme. In his new position as forestry adviser to the Ministry's Development Assistance Division he will be looking at forestry as a development assistance vehicle. He would welcome your input – refer to his letter to the Editor.

Thanks to all contributors. This issue should stand for some time as a useful reference to our involvement in international forestry affairs.

## TAXATION CHANGES NEEDED

On the domestic front, the Minister of Forestry, Peter Tapsell, recently addressed the Rotorua local section of the Institute. A slightly abridged version of that address appears herein. The

Minister is enthusiastic about the country's future forestry potential. "There is no doubt that the forestry sector has the potential to be a major contributor to the future growth of the New Zealand economy," he said. You may recall that in the last issue Roger Douglas made similar encouraging comments – and look what happened to him!

## The Realities

Unfortunately the rhetoric of Ministers does not square too well with the realities of the moment. The New Zealand Forest Owners Association has, for instance, reported that new planting declined to 22,800 hectares in 1987 – compared with 42,800 hectares planted in 1984. Forest Owners are predicting a further reduction in the planting rate to 5600 hectares in 1990. Forestry companies are just as pessimistic, predicting an 85 per cent decline in new planting over the next five years.

## The Consequences

To a significant extent this decline in planting levels can be attributed to the 1986 tax changes which removed tax deductibility for costs directly associated with plantation forest management. The consequences for investment and employment in the forestry sector, if changes to the taxation regime are not forthcoming, will without question be substantial. Simple Government action removing tax disadvantages to arrest the decline in both investment and employment opportunities is needed now.

Peter Tapsell has indicated that he will be taking the issue up with the Minister of Finance. We hope for the sake of the forestry sector, for provision of employment and in an effort to revive the economy, that he is able to persuade his colleagues to support tax changes that do not discriminate against forestry investment, and will help restore New Zealand's competitive position relative to others in the forest product market places of the world.

**John Halkett,  
Acting Editor**

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### Edition 5

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