



## Sustainability of exotic forest yield management practice in New Zealand

Sir,

The account of committee work and reports put together by Graeme Whyte and published in the May 1993 issue of NZ Forestry spells out the potential for breathing new life into New Zealand professional forestry after being battered for several years by conservationists, politicians, and the public at large. The final paragraph, "Conclusions", contains an excellent formula on which to base revitalisation.

*"This working Group supports the recommendations made in the Grayburn Report on making pronouncements on possible overcutting and supports the view that the Institute Council continue to play a supportive role in critically reviewing statistical information about the plantation forest resource, its rate of harvest, the pattern of utilising its produce in the market place, and the analytical methodologies that are employed to derive relevant statistics. The Working Group further urges the Council to disseminate this information for the good of the country, while at the same time raising its own professional profile as an informed and independent body within the community."*

In this conclusion, it is encouraging to read the words plantation forest resource, its rate of harvest, the pattern of utilising its produce in the market place – matters that seem to have been avoided by some foresters until comparatively recently. But their importance has been emphasised by the Rt Hon Sir Wallace Rowling in the same issue. We can no longer ignore the revolution that is going on under our noses.

World demand for wood, reflected in unexpectedly high prices, and the manner in which the cutting rights in State Forests were sold, have led this country into an ever-increasing log-export trade. From the growers' points of view, this trade is simplicity itself. They, understandably, show no desire to change.

The boom in log prices is encouraging a boom in new planting.

We have passed through the period of planting on pumice lands, then through the period of planting marginal farmland, and now we are entering the period of

planting better developed to good farmland.

But this brings us to a minefield in land use, and also to a period of still greater log trade. Land-use issues involving long-life plantations, and a huge log trade are national issues which politicians and many others are unlikely to keep their hands off.

In his review of "Tomorrow's Trees" by John Johns and myself, also in the same issue of NZ Forestry, John Purey-Cust detects a 'pessimistic note' with reference to the future. The pessimism was intended to convey the danger of minefields. But the great potential for planting and trade are still there, and the book analyses this position. Hopefully the Institute will now keep it analysed.

I have also been accused of being anti-Government in the same book.

Which Government?

In the 1950s and 60s, when the development of marginal farmland forests was being planned and planted, we had a succession of seven Ministers of Forests from both Labour and National Governments. Most of them were farmers.

All Governments, and the Ministers, strongly supported the planting for regional development purposes including employment, and for sustainable supplies of wood to New Zealand industries of the future. If there had been the slightest suggestion that it was being done for a log-export trade, no support or money would have been forthcoming. So, which Government?

As it was, planning was not easy. Cases had to be made to the Department of Lands and Survey for the purchase of land. That Department negotiated all land acquisitions once Ministerial approval had been obtained, and when the land had been acquired, it sometimes carved off the best of it to be retained for farming. Politicians, too, had the engaging habit of pointing out that "had they been Ministers of Forests, the Forest Service would not have got that piece of land for planting!" Neighbouring, irate farmers could also turn stock onto newly planted country!

When I saw a proudly displayed photograph of Port Chalmers depicting recently reclaimed land covered with logs and chips awaiting export, and recall the instruction (somehow forgotten!) from the Minister of Forests at the time (about 1960) to stop planting around Dunedin because of the opposition there, I regret the time and effort expended in trudging over the gorse-infested hills around Dunedin evaluating planting land. And this applies to some other ports as well.

Everybody should be told what the country is losing by exporting logs versus local industry and employment. We are

not throwing money away by the bucketful, we are throwing it away by the shipload.

The current rate of log exports (4.5 million m<sup>3</sup>) is the equivalent of seven times the quantity of the sale that started up Tasman Pulp and Paper barely 40 years ago! In ten years it will be double that again.

A.L. Poole

## Croatian forestry engineers

NZ Forestry recently received a letter from two Croatian forest professionals who are in the process of applying for New Zealand residence.

Milan Ivkov and Jasenka Hatlak-Ivkov are a couple and are looking for employment in the forestry or forestry research industry. A short CV is available from the editor, or they can be contacted direct at: Ljudevita Gaja 8, 41211 Zap-resic (Zagreb), Croatia.

## Cutting strategy concern

Sir,

The AGM of the Institute of Forestry held at Napier on May 12, 1993 was the scene of vocal debate regarding the issue of the cutting age of plantation forests in New Zealand. I was encouraged to see the consensus as a group on the need for improved and more timely information regarding the state of the nation's estate. Analysis of this information provides the basis for debate and discussion as to the direction that the industry and its components are at, and where it is heading. This internal and external debate can only improve the quality of the decisions being made for the operational and strategic management of the industry.

However, I was concerned by the content of Priestley Thomson's motion that was passed at the AGM, concerning the request to the Minister for an investigation into the cutting strategy of the Crown's forest asset of the Forestry Corporation of New Zealand.

The basis for my opposition is that there is in my opinion a fine line between the public's perception of a forest in State ownership as a public good and those forests in private ownership as a public good. I am more than ready to acknowledge that there are outputs of any forest