

Key components of the Accord established in 1986 are outlined below:

- An agreed transition to allow for the timber industry to move from traditional reliance on indigenous forests to a future of exotic resources.
- Approximately 166,000 hectares of indigenous forests immediately gazetted into conservation estate, including the creation of Paparoa National Park. Remaining indigenous production forests comprised only 5% of the total West Coast land area.
- South Westland rimu forests, Okarito and Saltwater, gazetted previously for sustainable management production, were reaffirmed for such use.
- Provision made for the sustainable management of a beech resource allocated expressly for that purpose.
- Unsustainable harvesting agreed to cease in Westland in December 1994, but continue at a low level in Buller until 2006.
- An earlier Government decision to compensate the South Westland people for production forest already placed into National Park status by establishing up to 10,000 hectares of "Special Purpose Species", was reaffirmed.

Having set the scene for dramatic change, the leading role in implementing these concepts into reality was assigned initially to the Forestry Corporation. This responsibility has now been passed on to Timberlands West Coast Limited, the State Owned Enterprise created in 1990 to manage the Crown's remaining indigenous production forests, under the intentions of the Accord. The company has a total resource base of 171,000 hectares, of which 24,000 hectares are stocked exotic plantations.

Probably the greatest challenge the organisation has faced is to try to remain neutral and attempt to stand off from the

arguments, instead concentrating on its efforts to help transform a traditional industry to one capable of facing the future.

Now, in 1994, what were only words and agreed ideas in 1986 have borne results and become reality. The final chapter of extensive indigenous production is closing while the new sustainable management regime opens the door to the future.

Today rimu is becoming appreciated for the precious timber it really is, and is consequently receiving higher returns. Prices are set to continue to increase over the coming years as the availability declines through drastically reduced production.

Currently Timberlands is harvesting approximately 130,000 cubic metres per annum. After December 1994 this will drop to approximately 8-10,000 cubic metres of sustainably managed rimu from South Westland and up to a further 17,000 cubic metres of overcut in Buller.

Improved returns, in conjunction with both the need for low-impact harvesting methods for the sustainable management operations, and the terrain which the remaining production rimu resource exists on, allowed Timberlands the opportunity of reviewing its harvesting methods.

The choice of harvesting by helicopter provided Timberlands with an operation which has proved to be efficient, economic and environmentally beneficial.

The helicopter's daily path across the West Coast skies symbolises the tides of change and transition in the region's timber industry. Utilising the latest technology and sophistication on a traditional resource represents the progression West Coast forestry is achieving, not only on a regional basis, but also on a national scale by being prepared to attempt practices new to the New Zealand industry as a whole. The high volumes of rimu pro-

duction are in their final stages, with the first two sustainably managed forests, in South Westland, having already been brought into production.

South Westland is also well advanced in the implementation of the Special Purpose Species programme, with a total of 1719 hectares already planted in *Acacia melanoxylon* and various cypresses.

The picture of West Coast forestry is colourful, one of general optimism and enthusiasm as both Timberlands and the sawmills position themselves to make the final major changes to a new future of diversity and opportunity, instigated by the feelings and beliefs of a range of people under the auspices of the West Coast Forests Accord.

There are, and will always continue to be, deeply held views at both ends of the scale who are vocal and determined to achieve their desires, but the deep commitment by the majority to move in a positive direction together should ensure positive and rational results will secure the future of West Coast forestry. Its reputation should change from being the black sheep of the industry, but its individuality will remain.

Liz Solari

Local Heritage in the Changing Tropics

The student chapter of the International Society of Tropical Foresters (ISTF) at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies is organising a conference entitled Local Heritage in the Changing Tropics. The focus of the conference is on innovative ways in which customary claims and knowledge are being used by groups of 'local peoples' to manage and establish control of their natural resources. The conference is to be held on February 10-12, 1995 in New Haven. The proceedings will be published as part of the Yale School of Forestry Bulletin series.

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