

## EDITORIAL NOTES

### *The Forestry Development Council*

Last September the Minister of Forests announced the membership and the terms of reference of the Forestry Development Council. It will be recalled that the Council was constituted by the National Development Conference in May 1969 pursuant to a recommendation by the earlier Forestry Development Conference. The terms of reference are:

- (1) To keep under review (a) the targets and objectives set for the forestry sector as a result of the National Development Conference; (b) the measures and resources necessary for their attainment.
- (2) To advise the Minister of Forests and the National Development Council on (a) changes which may be required from time to time to the targets and objectives, and to the measures and resources required for their attainment; (b) any matters concerning the productivity and efficiency and future development of production forestry and forest products industries (including the multiple use of forest lands) which the Council deems relevant to the continued attainment of the targets and objectives; (c) any other matters which may be referred to it from time to time.
- (3) To co-operate with the National Development Council and its secretariat as necessary to ensure consistency between national and sectoral targets and objectives.

The eleven members of the Council, four of whom are also members of this Institute, constitute an imposing array of political, industrial and administrative strength, and their appointment breaks new ground with a vengeance. Not that the principle is new; the Forests Act of 1921 provided for a Forest Advisory Board, that Board's membership to be the Minister (*ex officio*), the Director and Secretary of Forestry (two persons), and seven or eight others to represent the sawmilling industry, the timber merchants, the Counties Association, those interested in promoting forestry (presumably farm and private forestry), and, optionally, a Professor of Forestry if such existed in the University of New Zealand. The functions of the Board were "to give advice and assistance with respect to all matters submitted to the Board by the Minister or the Chairman, and generally with respect to matters arising in relation to the administration of this Act."

The strange thing is that a Forest Advisory Board, as "hereby established" in the 1921 Forests Act was never appointed, and the provision was not repeated when the Act was con-

solidated in 1949. At this distance in time we can only surmise that the then Director of Forestry (L. MacIntosh Ellis, 1920-1928) found the proposition unacceptable and was politically astute enough to avoid implementing it. A formidable character Ellis, like Drake, "nor devil nor Spaniard feared"; he was reputed to have had a large hand in formulating the 1921 Forests Act, and he certainly left his own indelible mark on New Zealand forestry.

Returning to the Forestry Development Council of our own day, the profession will probably view its formation with mixed feelings. There may well be some cynicism at the readiness with which *ad hoc* bodies proliferate at the behest of Government; on the other hand, planning both long and short term is such an integral part of all forest operations that the idea of setting out targets and objectives on a national scale will be regarded by many as a logical extension and summation of individual forest working plans. Thus the Council as an informed body equipped with all relevant data is well placed to assist towards attainment of the ultimate objectives, namely, the creation of adequate forest resources, these resources so managed as to make the maximum possible contribution to the common weal.

We can be certain there will be no dearth of tasks to which the new Council can address itself. One point likely to become critical in the near future is the question of meeting the rapidly expanding demand for more workers at every level of forestry. This field is expanding at a rate above average for all industry, and if the targets being aimed at are to be hit, forestry must get a larger share of our human resources than heretofore. Despite the effort expended in technician and similar training over the past twenty-five years, and the demonstrably good results therefrom, the call for more and better trained people in forestry is likely to be loud, long and insistent. No organization could be better placed than the Council to ensure this call is heard and answered; if it does this and this only, the Council may well claim to have justified its existence.

The course taken by the Council will undoubtedly be followed with keen interest, and, may we hope, constructive criticism. Its members are men of talent, prestige and influence, and the Institute wishes them well in their task with the dictum: from those who have much, much shall be expected.

### *Production Forestry in the 1970s*

Although there is controversy amongst purists and press correspondents as to whether the current decade began last New Year's Day or does not begin until 1 January 1971, there can be no room for doubting that in the forestry sense the seventies are away to an auspicious beginning. Practically all sectors of the forest industries are booming, and export earnings from forest products are running at volume and value levels undreamt of a few years ago. But, perhaps most significantly, wood and New Zealand's capacity to grow it

quickly and cheaply have captured the public imagination as the likeliest substantial prop to bolster our position in the face of increasing economic uncertainty regarding the export of farm products.

There are some "soft spots" in this bright picture. The indigenous timber industry shows little sign of emerging from the recession it suffered two to three years ago. This is a sorry plight for an enterprise which as recently as 1959 produced the bulk of our sawn timber, its product acknowledged as being in world class for quality and utility.

It is significant that, in the short time during which indigenous timber has been reduced to a Cinderella role, it was given little in the way of research, promotion and marketing effort. Conversely, massive programmes on these lines were directed towards the exotic timber field during the same period. But so long as New Zealand continues to import considerable volumes of special-purpose and decorative woods, there is surely room to capitalize locally on the qualities inherent in the timbers available from our still-substantial indigenous forest resources.

In exotic production forestry we find ourselves being increasingly committed to a one- or at most two-species economy. Many species, esteemed for their timber qualities in their home-lands, and established here in considerable area, appear now to be virtually "proscribed" from future planting programmes. This is usually justified on grounds of slow growth-rates, susceptibility to pathogens, intractability of timber and the like, the sum total of objection often adding up to the query: what will species *x* give that we cannot get more quickly and cheaply from radiata pine? A good question surely; but it is difficult to dismiss the solemn, often portentous warnings uttered by many eminent foresters of the past about "vast monocultures" and their susceptibility to disaster. Admittedly, technology and the logistics of protection have come a long way; but *Dothistroma* in several pine species still appears an unanswered question, while recent eruptions of wood-destroying insects in North Island timber depots give no room for complacency.

It is a fair assumption that visitations from unwelcome pathogens will increase rather than diminish. And even if they all prove eradicable, or at least controllable, their minimum effect must inevitably be to reduce the profitability of production forestry.

These few clouds on an otherwise clear horizon could well gather bulk and momentum within the current decade. Fortunately, the profession was never better geared to deal with exigencies than at present, and given prudent handling of the three basics of forestry, management, protection, utilization, a happy continuation of the swinging start which has ushered in the 1970s may well be expected.

*The Renewed School of Forestry, University of Canterbury*

It might be said that, with the opening of the new School of Forestry in Christchurch, the profession of forestry in New

Zealand has come of age, at a time when the products of the earlier schools at Auckland and Christchurch have reached, or are reaching the age of retirement. What that earlier school at Christchurch lacked in facilities it made up in enthusiasm, and the names of C. E. Foweraker and F. E. Hutchinson will long live in the annals of New Zealand forestry. The issues of the predecessor to this journal (*Te Kura Ngahere*) emanated from that school. There was some editorial comment: in Vol. II, No. 3 (1928), it is stated that "It must be gratifying to the staff to note the rapid increase in size of the school this year". The next year there is: "The most important event of the year . . . is the announcement by the Minister of Education . . . that the Dominion School of Forestry is to be located at Canterbury College". Then the axe fell. In 1934 the Editorial states: "the School of Forestry at Canterbury College is to close its doors temporarily, due to financial stringency . . ." Thirty-six years is a long temporary closure, but it is interesting to observe that the *N.Z. Journal of Forestry* had little to say about professional forestry education until the furore of 1965 and 1966.

From 1920 onwards, forestry had become largely the mechanical business of getting a very great quantity of trees planted, as a means of employing the large numbers of men adrift in the depression; and of selling blocks of native forest. The few professionals had a thin time. Indeed, even as late as the 1950s, professionals were still regarded by forest managers largely as "advisers" whose advice could be taken or left. In some corners of the Forest Service this attitude still lingers on, despite the fact that increasing numbers of vigorous young foresters have proved their ability in all phases of forest management, and that a happy symbiosis between forester and ranger produces, on the whole, a degree of efficient management unknown twenty years ago. It is much to the credit of the late A. R. Entrican (and perhaps his major claim to the plaudits of the present generation of forest managers) that he was the instigator of a vigorous policy of forestry training — first, the Ranger Trainee scheme, then the Woodsman Training scheme, and thirdly the recruitment and training of professional foresters. Towards the end of the last war several foresters, now prominent, were recruited overseas, while at the same time a regular flow of B.Sc. graduates were sent to Britain, Australia, and sometimes other countries, to obtain forestry degrees. The advantages of this scheme have possibly been more valuable than is currently appreciated. J. C. Westoby, in the public address printed in this issue of the *Journal*, had this to say: "it can truly be said that the education of a forester is incomplete without some international experience. . . . And the real gain from service overseas and from multiplying international contacts lies . . . in the intellectual cross-fertilization which enables the forester to think about his own problems in new and different ways. . . ." Thus, though we may have gained from the re-establishment of the School of Forestry, we may also lose something unless these contacts are maintained. It is therefore heartening to know that proposals have been put

forward to exchange Australian and New Zealand students, even at the undergraduate level.

It was with some misgivings that the *Journal* (Vol. 10, No. 1, 1965) commented upon the proposal to re-establish the school. "There is considerable uneasiness within this Institute" it reported; "This disquiet issues from doubts about whether the decision was premature, whether it was taken for the right reasons, and above all for the stealthy manner in which it was made". However, it was also conceded that "there are several very real benefits to be anticipated from the proposed location" in Christchurch. It was symptomatic of the then public image of this Institute that it was not consulted in the early stages of the move towards higher forestry education in this country. Happily, the pendulum appears to be swinging slowly in the other direction today.

The Institute then set up a subcommittee, ably headed by A. W. Grayburn, to report to Council; and it was also decided to devote the 1966 Annual General Meeting to the subject. A further Editorial appeared in Vol. 10, No. 2 (1965), pointing out the deficiencies of courses provided in overseas schools of forestry, and advocating a "School of Forestry and Conservation" with a "strong and versatile faculty". This Editorial is well worth a second glance in the light of what has transpired since.

The Annual General Meeting of 1966 was wholly concerned with professional forestry education, and invited Dr L. L. Pownall, then Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the University of Canterbury, to attend. The debate was not without acrimony, but it appeared that the fears of the Institute, though not entirely groundless, were perhaps to be overcome by events. Dr Pownall stated, *inter alia*, that "the initial concept that is held by the University Council [is that] Forestry Studies [will be] part of a whole complex of inter-related disciplines comprising engineering, architecture, fine arts, science and forestry".

In the event the Professor of Forestry (P. J. McKelvey) was given generous time and facilities to prepare his brief, and it is now clear that both he and the University authorities have done a most commendable job. Nor could the Institute have foreseen, even as late as 1966, the rapid progress of forestry in both sales and new establishment that has taken place since, and the concomitant demand for more professional staff, both in the Forest Service and private industry. While the school does not break with the traditional biological basis of forestry practice, students will live with computers from their earliest studies, and will be given a strong grounding in economics and business practice. This perhaps foreshadows the shape of things to come in forest management. But let us not forget that forestry practice is becoming wider in its scope, with recreation, tourism, landscape architecture, wildlife management, and other aspects of land use, becoming the normal stock-in-trade of the forest manager; nor that many of the best foresters of the past had sympathies more liberal than scientific.

We wish the school a long and distinguished life.

## *International Union of Societies of Foresters*

The Organizing Congress of the International Union of Societies of Foresters (IUSF) took place in Washington U.S.A. in August 1969. Out of an estimated 35 eligible national societies, 11 are Union members, one has applied for membership, and two are proposing Union participation to their members. Under Article II, "The purpose of the Union shall be to promote international co-operation for the advancement of the practice and profession of forestry and of professional foresters throughout the world." Then follows a list of ten activities in which the Union should have especial interest.

It may be remembered that the IUSF approached the N.Z.I.F. in 1968, with the proposal that we should join the Union. In spite of further pressure from Rome and from the Philippines, this proposal met with considerable buyer resistance, on the grounds that our members could see very little advantage to the N.Z.I.F. should we become a member, and also that membership appeared to be rather costly. It was felt that better value could be gained from closer contacts with neighbouring kindred societies. To this end, two of our members attended the triennial meeting of the Australian Institute of Foresters in Perth in October 1968, and a member of the A.I.F. attended our annual general meeting in 1969.

Nevertheless, it must be observed that several scientific disciplines have their own international organizations which attract a good deal of attention, and we should at least keep touch with the further development of IUSF.

## *Implications of the Manapouri Controversy*

Scientists from a number of disciplines have for many years been voicing their disquiet about man's onslaught on his environment, but one wonders why it has taken so long for the dangers to capture the public imagination. Is it because it is so difficult to envisage the implications, on the basis of the meagre information generally available to the man in the street?

In this country we have come to recognize that early widespread burning-off, followed by over-grazing, has led in time to the vital need to rehabilitate eroding steep-lands. We are battling now with the effects of land development on the nutrient status of lakes such as Rotorua and Taupo; in the case of Lake Taupo, the decision to use a large part of the surrounding country for production forestry is in recognition of this. It is some years since public indignation resulted in roading and hydro-electric engineers tidying-up and planting the much smaller devastation occasioned by their activities. But we have not really tackled the massive onslaughts on our environment. We have been warned, for example, that explosion of nuclear devices, and the current gigantic consumption of fossil fuels could well affect the upper atmosphere, leading to increasing air temperatures, possibly

followed by melting of the major ice reservoirs, a rise in sea levels, and drowning the bulk of the world's major cities and no small portion of the best farming land. We now know that DDT has spread from pole to pole. Scientists in Sweden have found mercuric contamination of fish so far advanced that in some instances they have become unfit for human consumption. The question of disposal of wastes from human activities is becoming more acute as the years go by — what can one do with the surplus radioactive material and waste pesticides, insecticides and substances developed for chemical and bacteriological warfare? City wastes, including discarded vehicles, if one believes the press, are already a municipal nightmare in many of the larger conurbations in the U.S.A.

The way the public has latched on to the proposal to raise Lake Manapouri, and has been prepared to swallow even extravagant claims as to the effect of this, is perhaps merely a symptom of a wider unease; first about pollution and the despoliation of the environment, and secondly about the "unholy alliance" between Governments and Big Industry. But foresters would do well to heed the public mood. Although we acknowledge conservation as one of our functions (and even call our senior officers Conservators), we have not been particularly assiduous in living up to our fundamental beliefs, as witness the very large areas of abandoned cutover bush in this country. We have perhaps not even given a clear lead to the public as to what our beliefs are. Nor are we ourselves always aware of the possible ecological results of our actions in the long term.

The public is becoming aware, be it never so nebulously, of the mighty ecological effects man is now capable of inducing. Some of these are spectacular, but many are much more insidious, because they start in the guise of a human good. It is easy to condemn nuclear fission or fusion for the purposes of destruction; it is more difficult to judge the morality of using insecticides, herbicides and fungicides which increase food production in a hungry world. The disastrous effects of Thalidomide on human wellbeing, after tests that were presumed to be adequate, is a cogent warning. Moreover, damage to humanity from chemicals now applied to the earth in tremendous and increasing quantities can occur at third or fourth hand through ecological links of which the public is not generally cognisant. Beside these possibilities, the raising of Lake Manapouri may seem of very small consequence. Viewed from the narrow field of vision of man as taxpayer, it can be considered, moreover, a public good. For man as sentient being, it is a disquieting symbol.

But the implications of the controversy are clear. Whenever there are major proposals for tampering with the environment, there is need for very stringent public examination of these proposals and their probable consequences, before any irreversible action is taken.