

MULTIPLE-USE FORESTRY

*Opening Address by the Hon. D. MacIntyre, Minister of Forests,
at the Annual General Meeting, Gisborne, 1970*

Over the past couple of years, we who are associated with forestry as a business, a vocation, or merely as an interest have had put before us a host of facts and figures that should ensure that forestry will follow orderly lines of development for at least the next ten years. But there is another side to this issue, and I am pleased to see the Executive of your Institute realized this when they sought a theme for this conference. They chose, most aptly, "the evaluation of multiple-use forestry", and I am sure later speakers will give it the scrutiny it deserves. Before the experts are turned loose, however, I want to make a few comments on this topic. It is one in which I am particularly interested.

In recent months there has been a growing awareness among New Zealanders of the importance of conservation — an awareness highlighted by the Manapouri controversy. We seem to be developing a national conscience on conservation issues, and this may be a sign of maturity. But this conscience does not relate only to issues like Manapouri; it includes others at the very heart of the practice and business of forestry. So I want to refer to the forestry image, and to develop the thesis that multiple-use is one part of it that has come to stay. The advantages it brings amply justify the change from single-purpose management and will ensure New Zealand will be able to offer a better environment for the future.

First, however, I should like to comment on our appearance to others — the image is a trifle blurred and should be re-focused. While there is great satisfaction at the growth of exports during recent years, some disquiet has been expressed as to the manner in which we will continue to maintain this. Dr C. A. Fleming, in a much discussed essay on "Mammon in the Mamakus", expressed, a widely-held view that indigenous forests, whatever their condition, are "good", and exotic forests are rather less than good because they are foreign and established on the mortal remains of indigenous forests. The forestry image is undoubtedly coloured by the historical fact that in earlier days, in spite of our good intentions of winning timber for houses and clearing land for farms, we became branded as destroyers of forests primeval and wreckers of wildlife habitats. The changes in the natural scene were to fire the imagination of a thinking, influential section of the public who gave birth to the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand. There was little to suggest our practices had any background of conservation, or that there was concerned thought for the future.

With the birth of the Forest Service, a new era dawned, but it was too late — the die was already cast and the image

well developed. One has only to think back two years to the furore in this very area, and remember what some people thought of the forester because of the Taylor Report* and its warning blue line, to get a vivid picture of the forester, unloved and alone. With much of our future planting dependent on the conversion of cutover, and the opportunities offered by the use of beech, an important public relations job must be done. It is up to you professionals to explain fully why some cutover should be converted and why some beech resources can be used, and the public will probably accept it. I know the Director-General of Forests shares my concern, and I invite the Institute and the industry to help sell the story. Have a look, for instance, at Southland, where forest development seems to have been adequately explained to the public and where there seems to be rather more acceptance locally than is usual elsewhere. And do not overlook the sense of annoyance and frustration that may be felt by some people now the forest industry is beginning to compete significantly with traditional primary exports; to compete also for land and labour; with a seller's market without quotas or significant tariffs.

Don't forget tourists, sportsmen and naturalists who see opportunities to pursue their interests in managed exotic forests as well as in the more extensive indigenous areas. Sensible, discerning management should be able to cater for them as well as the production of timber. The Wairakei tourist park may foreshadow similar developments elsewhere. Full-scale forestry development linked with tourism and sports might help to develop a breadth of forestry activity akin to that in Europe, where productive forests are tourist attractions in their own right.

During the past year we scrutinized forestry policies thoroughly. The Multiple-use Working Party recommended that all forests be managed according to multiple-use principles; that is, including wood production, soil and water conservation, recreation, scenery preservation and, where appropriate, mining. A further recommendation was that "in all areas where the need makes it applicable, soil and water conservation shall be the first priority of land use" and this has been referred to the Land Use Advisory Commission. I mention this, because Cabinet has reviewed Government policies in respect to land use committees, which must now examine all areas of Crown-owned land of more than 200 acres where the status of prime use of the land is to be changed. There seems to be no serious impediment to optimum land use for all Crown-owned land.

I should like you to know that I regard multiple-use as being an important method of educating the public to know and understand much more of forestry objectives. The recent acceleration in the establishment of State Forest Parks offers opportunities for public use of large areas of indigenous

*Report of the Technical Committee of Enquiry into Problems of the Poverty Bay-East Coast District, 1967.

forest. I should like to see something similar, on a smaller scale and carefully sited, in exotic forests. During the past few years six State Forest Parks have been, or are being gazetted. They are: Coromandel State Forest Park, of 158,000 acres; Kaimanawa of 187,000 acres; Tararua of 235,000 acres; North-west Nelson, 919,000 acres; Lake Sumner, 185,000 acres; and Craigieburn, of 12,300 acres. In addition, a part of Great Barrier Island, Pirongia Forest, and the Kaweka and Ruahine Ranges have been approved in principle and should be gazetted in the next two or three years. This gives a total of about 2.2 million acres. And I understand consideration is being given to the Raukumara Range State Forests as a possible State Forest Park for declaration within the next five years, along with the Kaimai Range and a large area centred on Lake Moeraki in South Westland. The Forest Service is being given the opportunity to manage these areas — with the help of advisory committees — along multiple-use principles. I should like to see more examples where there is extraction of forest produce and recreational use without detriment to the primary object of management — soil and water conservation. The developments at Hanmer, Whakarewarewa and Waitangi, where public use of recreation areas in forests is well established, shows that public entry need not be detrimental — in fact, I believe it is desirable and necessary.

The Multiple-use Working Party commented on the need to rank management objectives in order of priority, and the need to ensure that priorities meet the needs of the land itself. This is being done; all working plans that have come to me for approval have spelled objectives out in clear terms and in sensible practical priorities. The Physical Environment Conference to be held on May 21-23, 1970, will almost certainly examine our policies and objectives. I am sure multiple-use forest management will be mentioned favourably and will qualify as an important feature of the kind of environment the community might aspire to — an environment:

- in which participation in the finer side of life is open to all, irrespective of income, occupation or location; where ugliness is no longer accepted as an inevitable by-product of economic progress;
- in which we avoid the problems affecting western industrial nations — urban and rural slums, pollution of air and water, degradation of land;
- in which planning is accepted as something that helps us renew the beauty of our landscape while serving our economic needs;
- which is better for our having lived in it, because we have conserved the best of its natural features, including its many examples of unique plants and animals, as well as the heritage of Maori and European endeavours in places and buildings that are reminders of our history;
- and in which the development of our country's productive capacity will not mean we have sacrificed the opportunity for future generations to enjoy the good things of life available to us.

To achieve these worthy aims, we foresters must continually look at ourselves and our work with a coldly objective gaze. We have not only to do these things, but to believe in them. It will be pointless to put up notices saying "This is your forest — welcome — enjoy it and care for it" if what we really think is a resentful "keep out — you're only a nuisance here". We have to believe in what we are doing to make it a success; we must keep before us the wider, long-term view as well as the narrower, specialized task; and we must remember that the more we make the people of New Zealand a part of our work, the more help we shall get from them.