

THE N.Z. INSTITUTE OF FORESTERS' POSITION ON THE N.Z. FOREST SERVICE BEECH UTILIZATION PROPOSALS

The N.Z. Institute of Foresters accepted the invitation of the Director-General of Forests to examine the N.Z. Forest Service proposals for beech utilization and Council forwarded its report accordingly. This was subsequently printed in the *Journal*, Vol. 17(1), pp. 112-26.

During the Annual General Meeting of the Institute, held in Hokitika from 1 to 4 May 1972, some aspects of the recommendations in that report were queried by members of the Nelson and Westland sections. A meeting was accordingly held to bring together these members, those of the two N.Z.I.F. subcommittees who were present, and Council, to iron out any misinterpretations. Most of these queries concerned minor points of interpretation or the use of particular words. None affected the conclusions of the report although it was considered that the reservations with regard to the Westland scheme could have been better expressed.

Following these discussions the modifications that need to be made to the report are:

1. There is an error on page 11 (p. 118, *N.Z. Jl For.*, Vol. 17(1)) with regard to the amount of exotic forest in the Nelson project. In the report it is given as 64,000 acres with a current planting rate of 5,500 acres. These figures apply only to the State Forest element. The total exotic forest area for the Nelson region is some 100,000 acres, with a current planting rate of 8,500 acres. Similarly, the references to exotic forest areas in Westland and Southland refer only to the State element.

2. On page 12 of the report (p. 119, *N.Z. Jl For.*, Vol. 17(1)) the Institute queried the management proposals for beech in Nelson. The Conservator of Forests, P. W. Maplesden, clarified this point as follows in a letter to the President dated 16 June 1972: "I consider all merchantable forest in Big Bush and Howard State Forests suitable for exotic conversion. However, for ecological and aesthetic reasons it was considered desirable to plan beech management areas in both forests and in particular in Howard Forest because of its proximity to the Nelson Lakes National Park."

3. On page 19 (pp. 125-6, *N.Z. Jl For.*, Vol. 17(1)) the wording of the conclusion with regard to the West Coast indicated that the main drawbacks were the sheer size and logistics of the enterprise. The subcommittee emphasized that the major drawbacks were "the many unknowns of forest management" and that, owing to the sheer size and logistics of an enterprise based on a 500-ton-a-day pulp mill, they considered that a less ambitious proposal would be desirable in the first instance. The recommendation in regard to the West Coast could be better expressed to read:

"The West Coast project as envisaged is a desirable concept from the viewpoint of rejuvenating a region that currently has a depressed economy and in developing a large under-utilized resource. However, the many unknowns of forest management are the major drawback in view of the sheer size and logistics of the enterprise envisaged. A less ambitious proposal that would use lesser quantities initially would be more realistic as it would allow the requisite resources, skills and techniques required to establish a large industrial enterprise later to be acquired. If the processing of the wood resource is at present not economically viable in its own right, the Institute of Foresters recommends the project should be held over. The resource will accrue in value as the predicted world shortage of forest products increases."