

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, 1982*

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Last year the object of the Institute was changed. Where it had previously been "to further the development of forestry and the interests of the profession of forestry in New Zealand", the new object considerably widened the interests of the Institute:

"to promote the best use of New Zealand's resources,
to encourage the wise use of forests and forest land,
and to further the interests of the profession of
forestry".

The new object carries implications of considerable importance for the Institute in the future.

Since not all forms of forestry development are compatible with the best use of resources, it was not possible to keep the old object of furthering the development of forestry, and merely to add something to encourage the best use of resources. In my view, our new object clearly makes promotion of the best use of resources the dominant aim, the "encouragement of the wise use of forests and forest land" being a subordinate aim. (Although some might see the encouragement of wise use of forests as an equal aim, it is certainly not a superior aim.) The change here from the earlier directive "to further the development of forestry" to "to encourage the wise use of forests . . ." is worthy of note, since it prohibits us from arguing the case for encouraging forestry beyond the point where it will contribute to the best use of New Zealand's resources.

Last year I spoke of the antagonisms and conflicts between forestry and farming and between forestry and preservation. Although I believe the Institute has always spoken and acted responsibly in such arguments, there was nevertheless the possibility, under the old objective, that our arguments would favour forestry development and dismiss or give insufficient recognition to arguments favouring other uses. Some organisations favouring particular uses of New Zealand's resources act as

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extremely biased pressure groups, and it would have been easy and perhaps excusable if the Institute had acted in the same way. While some people will have perceived the Institute as unreasonably biased towards production of timber, such bias is contrary to our constitution. Indeed it requires us to look more broadly at the country's resources to ensure that our encouragement of forestry is in the context of their best use.

The aims of organisations promoting different uses of land must be understood and integrated before a proper balance of uses can be achieved. Such balancing exercises are needed to determine which areas should be developed for farming or for forestry, and which areas should be set aside for preservation or conservation. To facilitate this, the Institute must develop its relationships and communications with other organisations such as Federated Farmers, the Environmental Conservation Organisation, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, and others, since existing communication is inadequate. One reason for this inadequacy is that the Institute of Foresters is not seen to represent forestry interests generally. That this is true, is evidenced by the presence with us now of the N.Z. Loggers' Association and the Forest Industries Engineering Association. In some forums the Forest Owners' Association is seen to be representative of forestry interests, and the Farm Forestry Association is likely to play an increasingly important role in forestry development.

The Institute must develop its relationships with these forestry organisations, not with the idea of speaking for them, but to ensure that each can better understand its own and others' aims and can work to develop and promote the best use of New Zealand's resources. Each organisation working in isolation can see but one aspect of a whole raft of problems which prevents it from seeing how a series of these problems dealt with separately can place limitations on the best use of land. This joint meeting may enable some related groups of problems to be better understood and thus take us further toward the goal of wise land use.

There are other organisations with which the Institute must develop links. We have promoted joint seminars with the N.Z. Planning Institute and local sections have met with branches of the Institution of Engineers, but we have still to develop links with, for example, the Sawmillers' Federation, the Timber Merchants' Association, the Wood Preservers' Association, and the Association of Soil Conservators, to name but a few.

The Institute must develop links with agriculturalists, for an increasing proportion of the future forest estate will be on farms. There are several reasons for this; a fast diminishing resource of scrubland and idle land, increasing evidence of the sensitivity of forest profits to logging and transport costs, and the help which forestry can give in increasing productivity of farmland. Because, in the main, farms are individually owned, we must develop links with the organisations of farmers themselves — Federated Farmers of New Zealand, the Farm Forestry Association, and the Smallfarmers' Association. Looking more widely, we must develop links with the territorial authorities, which in rural areas are substantially composed of farmers.

The major needs to which the Institute should direct its attention in the next years are, first, the development of a fuller and more balanced understanding of the better development of New Zealand's resources and, secondly, the development of better relationships with farming interests. To take a proper part in these, the Institute will have to be prepared to give a great deal more time to developing and debating its policies, to providing a lead to other organisations and to acting on initiatives from other groups. The Institute's Council must provide the lead. It must be responsive both to its own membership and to initiatives from without. It must be innovative. It cannot afford to continue to operate as it has in the past; the pace of the world is growing too fast to allow that. With the present procedures and organisation, matters of concern to the Institute arise and require response too quickly for the membership generally to make a contribution. Often enough Council itself does not now have a proper opportunity to contribute to or debate a response prepared for it.

The Council's decision that it should use the services of a professional secretariat recognises the need to increase the Council's, and hence the Institute's, capacity for work and the rate at which it can work. The decision was not made lightly, or quickly. Indeed, for a number of years now successive presidents have argued the need for a full-time secretary, or a professional secretariat, or an executive director to free Council from necessary but routine work, enable it to devote more time to its professional interests, or to enable it to react speedily to public issues.

Until now each proposal for such a change has been rejected. The cost of servicing has featured large in the arguments and this has been related to the small membership base of the

Institute. The importance of the voluntary nature of work for the Institute and the willingness and desire of a few members to give freely of their time has been an argument against change. The reluctance to tie the Institute to someone active enough to lead it, but who might lead it in directions not to its liking, has also been a factor.

The decision now made by Council to use secretarial services from the Royal Society will resolve many of these problems. Additionally the Institute will benefit from the closer relationship which can be expected to develop with the Royal Society, a society which is held in high regard for its integrity and impartiality.

The employment of secretarial services to the Council is just a beginning to the process of re-organising the Institute and its activities. I have confidence that Institute members will be equal to the task before them in ensuring that the objective set in the constitution is amply met.