

Sir — I am delighted that Piers Maclaren feels strongly enough about forest education to write such a serious and delightful letter to the editor. For those who earn a living practising forestry, issues like training, continuing education and manpower must be somewhat remote and of little relevance to their day-to-day tasks. In the long run, however, we need people as much as markets and a forest resource to care for.

Specifically, I am glad that Maclaren believes that the Forestry School's "army boots" do at least come in pairs. It would be idle to pretend that any educational programme completely fulfils the aspirations of its students so it is inevitable that some find their boots uncomfortable. What is salutary is that "those last few men to choose their boots [who] complain" turn out to be admirable foresters (to my surprise, but my wife says I am a miserable judge of ability and character). Although playing only a small part, I am immensely proud of our former students who, thank God, are generally not inclined towards a research career and are happily getting on with the job of managing the forests. I doubt that more than 10% seek postgraduate qualifications or become research workers. Indeed, a distinctive feature of the Canterbury programme has been its emphasis on practical forest management.

The limitation of entry, which Maclaren queries, was imposed essentially because of limits of accommodation. It has been applied only once in twelve years and was lifted altogether in 1983. Even so, any increase in student numbers above foreseen demand could create difficulties: when students face unemployment there is a temptation to diversify the teaching to broaden the job market (*e.g.*, forestry courses overseas can offer courses in landscape architecture, recreational management or national parks administration, wild life and range science, etc.). This process risks diluting the emphasis on professional forestry, which is the *raison d'être* of the School.

More staff will be essential if the School is to cater for the increased demand foreseen by Baumgart and there will be a gradual broadening emphasis on harvesting, utilisation and marketing. Current proposals before the University Grants Committee are for teaching staff to increase from 8 to 14 in order to teach effectively this enlarged curriculum and an increasing student roll, as requested by the 1981 Forestry Conference. This is still very small beer compared with the agricultural sector with some 250 academics specifically involved in teaching agriculture at Lincoln and Massey, or indeed to some 150 scientists at FRI. As it is, our faculty is smaller than Aberdeen, Bangor, Canberra. . . , not to mention Oregon State University with whom we are sometimes compared and which has some 8 times as many staff. Getting the financial resources to support even this modest expansion will not be easy.

Maclaren suggests that in some cases — *e.g.*, marketing our future timber mountains — "a different type of mind is required — the sort of mind that one would expect to find in an Arts faculty". This is too sweeping a statement, although it may be partly true. A liberal education does not necessarily result in great entrepreneurs, marketeers or soldiers: Greek and Latin did not achieve much for the U.K. In my ten years in New Zealand the most frequent lamentation has been our inability to market successfully overseas — be it lamb carcasses or huhu grubs.

It is surely appropriate for the new forestry degree scheme to offer courses such as *markets and international trade in forest products* and *transportation systems in forests*. However, we are not seeking a monopoly on jobs and other professions are — and should be encouraged to be — employed by forestry trading enterprises.

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