

# Government submission

**Curt Gleason, President of the NZIF, wrote to Hon. K. Wetere, Minister of Forests, on May 30, 1986:**

**Tena koe Honourable Minister  
MINISTRY OF FORESTRY —  
NEW ZEALAND FORESTRY  
COUNCIL**

Thank you for the earlier opportunity to discuss forestry sector servicing with your Departmental head and his staff — this Institute appreciates the significance of administrative reorganisation now in train. In our view structural changes must be introduced carefully because many parts of the forestry sector are still indefinite.

## **MISSION AND FUNCTIONS**

Present statements on the Ministry of Forestry mission are cleanly drafted and the Institute endorses them. Obviously the detail of functions performed must interact with the contributions made by any allied sectoral groups, specifically the Forestry Council. This is addressed separately.

## **Forest Research Institute**

We feel strongly that the previous record of solid applied research from FRI will be eroded unless FRI is linked closely to forest lands. The formal delineation of research blocks and/or small research forests distinct from Forestry Corporation land should be given close investigation at this point. Management responsibilities could be met via assistance from regional offices and/or joint venture arrangements with outsiders.

Research forests should be widely distributed; they offer obvious benefits to whatever style of extension services evolves in the Ministry.

Precise details on research staff deployment will presumably come to the surface as the appointed Secretary of Forestry begins to structure the new agency. However, the Institute wishes to highlight now the importance of flexibility in any structuring over the next year. The intent of Government policy re cost recovery is clear enough but the implications for research administration have yet to be truly experienced.

Strengthening of regional research capability may be in order to secure client satisfaction as opposed to centralisation.

The Institute expects to see the

development of some research capability within the Department of Conservation. Agencies such as Wildlife Service and Lands and Survey already contain small research elements. It would seem that the best course of action for facilitating a strong and positive research programme over those lands embracing considerable natural values is to coalesce researchers into a DOC divisional unit funded from within. Alternative options for contracted research services will be difficult enough to implement for production-related studies let alone conservation-orientated projects.

## **Policy**

The functions of this division embrace a range in depth from relatively routine statistical processing to serious advice to Government on major utilization developments, and forestry trade. At senior levels it is essential that high calibre staff are recruited with wide experience in forestry.

## **Extension Services**

The Institute has consistently supported practical encouragement and advisory services within the forestry sector as implemented by Forest Service. We anticipate a major reassessment of service assuming the user-pays/cost-recovery principle is applied intensely. As for FRI, we would suggest that current extension services people and systems are not well tuned to real commercial practice and consequently careful decision making is appropriate. We do not believe a few regional centres for the Ministry including extension services marries all that well with the needs and preferences of more widely dispersed clients. It is the clientele that will eventually determine the structure of extension services if the user really does pay.

The design of the Ministry must solidify to some extent fairly soon for the sake of those people involved from Forest Service. The Institute wishes to see prompt completion of departmental restructuring but not at the expense of good forestry and the longer-term national interest.

(a) The Ministry could and should be used in the interim administration of forest lands where forestry activities are currently intensive and resolution of conflict between development and preservation is awkward and/or impractical during the short term; for example:

- East Coast — Poverty Bay protection/production forests
  - West Coast indigenous production forests and associated plantations, minor reserves, etc.
  - State Forest Parks encompassing considerable recreation/aesthetic values overlapping commercial plantations, as in Hanmer State Forest Park, Whaka State Forest Park, etc.
- (b) The Ministry could quickly lose initial vigour and initiative if it is deprived of "hands-on" management experience and problem-solving in the practice of forestry. It is not necessary to own and manage extensive forest lands to retain this beneficial element and obviously imaginative staffing arrangements (particularly outside secondment, contracts for personnel) could be applied too. However, amongst departments the latter approach is rarely harnessed. The Institute is concerned that the practical background of existing Forest Service management staff not be denied the future Ministry.
- (c) The mission and functions of the Ministry will call for a wide range of skills and knowledge, but the overall purpose of the agency requires integration and synthesis and multi-disciplinary thinking. We suggest attention be given to frequent exchange amongst divisions and minimal barriers through few occupational classes. Closer ties between research and extension services should be investigated along the lines that research provides the prescription for management, extension services passes it on and reports back on success — there is no better way to maintain realism in research whilst also allowing optimum access to the best technical knowledge.

## **NEW ZEALAND FORESTRY COUNCIL**

Though this is not openly stated, the Institute detects a certain impatience in government circles with quangos *per se* regardless of their role and purpose, let alone the background to their existence. Thus the New Zealand Forestry Council appears to be seen rather simply: past effectiveness by the Council was limited by private companies' distrust of Forest Service's own commercial activities; therefore now that Forest Service com-

mercial operations have been excised the new stand-alone agency should be able to do all necessary sectoral planning and servicing.

The Institute of Foresters does not believe the functions of the Forestry Council are necessarily appropriate now, given the reorganisation of the sector and it is certainly timely to review both the objectives and status of the Council. The Institute's view of Council places great emphasis upon its role in development of a longer-term utilization and marketing strategy for our wood resource. Although this goal has been accepted in principle by virtually all the sector there have been difficulties in achieving the degree of industry confidence and commitment necessary to realise real progress. We feel much of this observable sluggish participation reflects present short-term constraints in wood supply, the atmosphere of change to established order introduced by Government early in its term, the still predominant place of domestic sales relative to total wood processed and the pronounced move by Forest Service to secure greatly increased revenues from wood sales wherever possible. None of these factors looms so significant in the longer term when wood availability expands suddenly and greatly — even in the short term the free-up of trade restraints in wood products (for example papers and paper board) may be expected to highlight the need for improved industry cooperation.

Institute opinion has confidence that Ministry of Forestry staff could expertly collect data on forestry and monitor the vigour and contribution of forestry to the nation but this does not constitute sector planning. We feel the national interest is best served by positively encouraging and aiding genuine inter-industry consultation and planning — this implied a degree of separation from the Forestry agency. The Institute suggests an allied or alternative participatory role by the Council overseeing Ministry activities may be worthy of consideration. Regardless of the immediate future of the Council as presently established it seems inevitable that industry will eventually generate some sort of producer board, lobby group or whatever. However the need in forestry is for planning in advance and discipline in moving towards perceived goals. Forest management generally and silvicultural practices specifically determine cost and quality characteristics in the wood resource. Wood and the wood industry can respond to markets and marketing only if timely decisions are made well in advance of harvesting. The long term is a very real dimension in forestry; short-term market forces are not reliable

## Main points from Council meetings (May-June 1986)

1. The Institute is to convene an in house seminar on the topic of Forest Valuation. FRI would run the seminar and provide the Chairman. Council does not wish to indicate support for any one valuation method over another, but wishes to ensure that all methods included in an approved "basket" do in fact meet certain criteria. Council can then be satisfied that only members of the profession are qualified to value trees and will proceed to advise Inland Revenue, the Courts and the Institute of Valuers accordingly.
2. Standing committees set up were  
**Membership** — J. Holloway (convenor), P. Berg, plus one other member to give an 'outside' view.  
**Education/Training** — H. Bunn (convenor), G. Cameron and L. Vaughan.  
**Reorganisation** — Thode, plus others as necessary.
3. Council is concerned that the Institute's forest policy is not widely understood, indeed whether the term "forestry" is properly understood. There has been a lot of discussion on matters of definition, policy and whether the name of the Institute and its journal really reflects the nature of what the Institute should be over the next decade. Council wishes to encourage debate on these questions and members are encouraged to do so via their local sections or their nearest Councillor.
4. Council decided to print 3000 copies of the new Handbook. These will be out in August. There will be enough to service the likely needs of training institutions for the next few years. Council agreed that the production of another handbook should be looked at in five years' time.
5. Council is remaining in touch with environmental Ministers and the Permanent Heads of the new departments to ensure that the Institute's

guides to building a secure and competitive forestry sector around the forests already planted.

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**N.Z. Institute of Foresters**

philosophy is properly understood, and that foresters are not disadvantaged in the subsequent staffing reshuffle. For this reason, Council has to be very clear in its perception of forestry, and be sure that foresters are being educated and trained appropriately to meet the various demands over the next decade.

The Council has a challenging yet exciting period ahead.

## Annual General Meeting 1986

"The Business of Forestry" was the theme of this year's Annual General Meeting held in Wellington last May. There were 120 delegates with a total of 165 people involved when family members were included. The organisation of the meeting was excellent and the Michael Fowler Centre proved to be an exciting venue.

The organisers had lined up an impressive list of speakers. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Forests.

Only selected papers presented by the speakers are to be published in future issues of New Zealand Forestry. These are likely to be:

Bassett, C. The role of the Forest Service in the conservation of indigenous forests.

Cooper, A.N. and Ashley-Jones, C. The economics of fire prevention in exotic forests.

Easton, B. Forestry as a growth sector.  
Girling-Butcher, W. Forestry Insurance.  
Gleason, C. The structure of forestry — when will it be big enough to think small?

Piddington, K. Balancing conservation values and the needs of society — the tasks of the new institutions.

Proctor, R. A rationale for current government policy towards forestry.

However, copies of the following papers which are not to be published are available at \$3 each (including postage) to members by writing to the Institute's Secretariat:

Hunt, M. Investor confidence in forestry.  
Keating, J. E. International competitiveness and trade patterns in the Pacific basin 1985-2000.

Maughan, C. W. The domestic demand