

which is only marginally uneconomic could be supported by Central Government.

If a locally based agency were to put in a price for the work that compared favourably with Forestry Corporation costs, this could be of greater advantage to the region.

Are current technique and regimes the only ones that will meet our objectives?

Indirect costs include the costs of administering benefits, lost taxation, perhaps increases in social problems.

It is also desirable that relocation and retraining of workers not be bunched up.

Regional Self Help

Like the rest of New Zealand the East Cape region needs to adjust its long-term structures to match supply to changing patterns of world demand.

There are welcome signs in the Town and Country Planning arena that these adjustments are being facilitated.

For example, Waiapu County is liberalizing its district scheme with respect to forestry. Forestry will become a predominant use on most rural land.



Decision making

Sir,

I was pleased to read your editorial comment in Vol. 31 (2) on 'Discontinuing Discounting' and John Groome's article on the 'Future of Forestry.' Most important however was the publication of Jeanette Fitzsimon's paper from the 1982 economics seminar. This should have been published long ago — it was about the only paper presented there which made any sense.

For some reason the myth that we can make all our forestry decisions by the application of economic formulae has been with us for quite a long time and is now being used by Government to justify the implementation of their new forest policy, including punitive tax regimes. It is high time these myths were confounded. Unfortunately as a simple forester I don't have the answer — all I know is that economists don't have it either.

A classic example of the futility of these systems is demonstrated in a

paper published recently in the Journal of Forestry Science in which the pretax rates of return were compared for a number of plantation species. The result gave the impression that radiata, followed closely by blackwood, was probably the best investment.

On face value it was a well-written, logically argued paper, which does credit to the authors, but the large number of assumptions made (32 were counted) make it quite worthless as a decision-making tool. Very few human activities can be based solely on economic analysis and, as the authors point out, aesthetic values, soil and water protection, shelter will also be important.

There are very few decisions which can be based solely on economic criteria — we have to make value judgments all the time throughout our lives and many have to be made in forestry. Not least of these is what qualities and types of timber will be required 50 years hence. If this decision is left solely to economic calculation we will have, God forbid, nothing but radiata pine.

I would like to suggest that the Institute should take an urgent lead in

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solving this important problem. Perhaps what is needed is a seminar with a wide range of opinion present. The only criterion should be that the seminar seeks non economic, or economic solutions dictated by common sense, rather than doubtful formulae. It may be possible to hold this in conjunction with the next Institute AGM, but this will probably be too late. In my opinion a topic of such vital importance must be addressed and solved now.

Ian Barton

Forestry and Environmental Consultant

(Slightly abridged — Ed)

Paper by W.R.J. Sutton (31/2)

Sir,

Difficulties are raised if you allow further papers largely devoted to individuals. Their merits, as seen by the author, are given and possible mythology engendered; nothing else.

The number of people in local forestry is too small to allow this sort of article, as personalities inevitably intrude. Any discussion is likely to be unpleasant and, indeed, painful.

I record my emphatic disagreement with many of the views and certainly most of the recollections given by Dr Sutton. As it happens, I agree with others.

R. Fenton

Tokyo

Forest products to Japan

Sir,

In reply to C.A. Radomske's letter of August '86.

1. When the first radiata produce was exported anywhere, it was the start of "head-on competition from existing traders (of) softwoods". This is a fundamental point — all the softwood New Zealand exports, in whatever form, incurs this head-on competition. Whether it is newsprint, sulphate pulp, or sawn timber, the competition is out there (and now coming here) — from Scandinavia, N. America, the USSR or from local supplies in the importing countries. As 60-80% of the resource is bound for export, it is surprising to have to stress this.

2. Concerning the specific point of sawnwood for Japan, and the packaging (in the widest sense) market there:

2.1 The packaging market is itself intensely competitive. Some high-quality timbers are used, but generally much fall-down quality timber from other imported and local species is available. The following figures show the size, proportion and share of this market in the last five years.

Imports from New Zealand

	Total 000 m ³	Packaging 000 m ³	%
1980	970	696	72
81	806	604	75
82	645	506	78
83	624	500	80
84	604	492	81

Source Mokuwai Tookei Yooran 1982-86.

2.2 The packaging market is not expanding in total. If New Zealand just sticks to this outlet it won't help sell the x million m² (x depends on growth forecast/planners' figures) New Zealand will have available to sell overseas from 1990. It can't possibly sustain the "export future". Our share is wilting.

2.3 In Japan this will probably be reinforced by events in 1986, as the yen reaches a more realistic exchange rate. While competition from domestic wood is reduced, (a secondary benefit) the exchange adjustments are considered likely to again fundamentally change the Japanese economy (as the 1973 oil shock did). Japanese manufacturers for export are considering relocating in the newly industrializing countries. The packaging market would follow such a trend, and would be the timber market section most affected by the change.

3. Re Clearwood.

I have no published copy of my paper here. The typed copy I have here mentions clear wood in one sentence (in a paragraph discussing the effects of the end of lauan supplies). "The large range of timber sizes of lauan used internally in Japanese conventional houses need enumeration to see what volumes of graded (probably clear) and seasoned radiata pine could be substituted." (Part of my present job.) By a process obscure to me, this presumably leads C.A. Radomske to his sarcastic remarks about clear wood production. It is necessary to try to quantify the role of clear wood in plantation strategy, but this suggestion isn't made by him.

The final paragraph presumably misunderstands the last sentence in

my summary, which was "much more specific information on plantation quality is required while marketing has to be fundamentally changed." It is hard to see why information on plantation quality is irrelevant to export sales. For example, my present employers require specific targets

	Japan Total	
Annual % of total packaging	Packaging as % of total sawn	Volume 000 m ³
22	9	3156
20	9	2959
18	9	2799
17	10	2868
16.5	10	2980

(product groups by time periods) — and there is a case for such an approach. More generally one obviously has to know what there is available to sell. It appears, and I may be wrong, that Silmod and its developments do not provide this information. When I did grade studies they used to provide answers to such questions. So if C.A. Radomske is right: a) his industry wants to stick to packaging (and I agree that we know we can produce this; b) we don't need to know much else about the resource. As a corollary, my own findings so far are that we don't, in fact, seem to be able to say what we can produce.

Marketing is not exclusively concerned with the market or with forests — which are versatile; it links the market and the supply potential. To ignore either is stupidity. We seem to have ignored both, which is almost unbelievable.

R. Fenton

Tokyo

New format

Sir,

Would you please forward me a replacement copy of 'Forestry', Vol. 31, No. 2 Aug, '86. The copy I have received has a number of pages missing, or duplicated.

I have really appreciated the new format, and find the magazine very readable. Articles to date have been interesting and well presented, and two or three of them have been directly applicable to work we have been involved in recently.

Paul Cox

Ashley Forest, Rangiora

We apologize for the wrong collation of some pages in a few dozen copies of our August issue. Readers who received one of these copies should let us know and we will forward a replacement —Ed.

1986 AGM Papers

Sir,

It is now several months since the AGM — time enough to reflect on it soberly.

Frankly, I'm still hopping made at the insult extended to a supposedly scientific body by the quality of some of the papers.

Don't get me wrong. Mr Piddington's paper, for example, was well thought out and worth listening to. But some of the others left me speechless with their bland, unscientific platitudes.

The classic comment — "High interest rates are not all bad, because the money comes from the kitchens and the sitting rooms. . ." of New

Zealand. Thousands of little printing presses, all forging dollar notes?

Bull. . . It is manufactured out of thin air by the trading banks, who charge us over and over again and force us further and further into debt to borrow our own money which they counterfeit (legally). Once we've earned some and saved a little, then we get cut in on the racket, but always less and at lower interest rates than we pay overall.

What's this got to do with the AGM?

I know I belong to the "lunatic fringe" of economics and politics. This means that (in company with a lot of others, including some prominent foresters) I have done what no orthodox economist has ever done and checked the respective theories against reality by Baconian-inductive scientific reasoning. Been prepared, as any scientist must be, to ditch or modify any assumption that doesn't stand up to test by prediction or experiment.

And I'm sick to death of forums from Rotaract conventions to our In-

stitute's meetings being used for misleading propaganda by those with a stake in the nastiest racket ever foisted on humanity.

May I suggest that a set of criteria be established for any non-scientific paper presented to the Institute in future — basically that it must follow scientific discipline by:

- 1 Outlining the theory on which any sweeping statements are based, and detailing the assumptions made.
- 2 Providing at least one reference to a statistical check made to test each, using proper scientific methods.
- 3 Detailing one prediction based on each theory that has actually worked out in practice.

Economists have meddled in our field to the extent that they now practically control it. Isn't it time we had a look at theirs, to see how good our new masters really are?

John G. Rawson

Consultant Forester, Whangarei

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