

School of Forestry news

Following on from the Government report on forest training in September 1987 (see N.Z. Forestry, Nov. 1987) the Ministry of Forestry set up an implementation working party. This working party, convened by R. J. Smith, reported back last February.

Amongst its conclusions were that the School of Forestry should remain at the University of Canterbury and not be shifted to Waikato University or to Lincoln College. However it was keen to see some changes in the programme at Canterbury, including closer links with other disciplines.

Revising Curriculum

The School of Forestry is currently revising its curriculum and in doing so it has been involved in talks with other faculties at Canterbury and with Lincoln College. A School of Forestry Advisory Committee is currently being set up and is expected to begin work shortly. The committee will consist of a range of representatives from the forestry sector, including those involved in environmental, production, processing,

research and educational activities. It is expected to advise the University on both education and research at the School.

The Institute of Foresters is co-operating with the School of Forestry in producing a more structured work experience for students.

School of Forestry and Timber Processing

J. Bathgate

Following the recommendations of the Forestry Training Review Committee ("Probine Report"), Government has now transferred administration of the Forestry Training Centre and the Timber Industry Training Centre from Ministry of Forestry to the Department of Education.

Both centres continue to operate on their traditional sites, with all existing staff, and with similar identity and autonomy as before. For instance, forestry and timber processing companies can still deal directly with their own training centres over courses and other training programme matters.

The significant change is that administratively the two centres now comprise a new School of Forestry and Timber Processing of Waiariki Polytechnic. While the day-to-day function of the two

training centres has not altered, the collective School has a national role in being the forestry sector's main provider of technical-level and skills-based training.

The fundamental issues of access to training, control, quality and funding of training, and equality with other sectors when it comes to training resources, will all be addressed more effectively now at a school level.

Another significant change, which could have more immediate benefit, is that forestry has joined forces with the carpentry, diesel engineering and the metal and motor trade sections of Waiariki Polytechnic to form the Technical Studies Faculty. Some obvious applications, for example diesel engineering, pneumatics and hydraulics in logging, the metal trades to sawdoctoring or timber grading in carpentry, should have mutual benefits in the skills area.

Skills training has long been the thrust of T.I.T.C., and only recently complemented with management programmes – which may have been overdue judging by the positive response from industry. In contrast F.T.C.'s recent consolidation in operator-level training, through its practical logging facility, is proving to be a growth area that perhaps could give clearer separation in role from that of the School of Forestry at Canterbury.

Concern

Certainly the transfer to Waiariki will have a spin-off for skills-based training. A concern, however, is that the shift to an educational-based administration is for both training centres one step further away from the forest and timber industries. It will be increasingly important then for tutors to maintain good dialogue with their counterparts in industry, for example through the Institute of Foresters.

At a formal level, a number of mechanisms are being examined to enable the sector's representatives to have an input into the type of training programmes offered, and to provide feed back on the product delivered. An advisory committee to the school will soon be formed, and in addition it is hoped that the Waiariki Council will co-opt a forestry position to its membership.



Emphasis on skills training at the School of Forestry and Timber Processing.