LETTERS

Privatization of Forestcorp?

Sir,

There are signs that the Government may be considering the early privatization of Forestcorp, possibly in toto, quite possibly overseas and in either case without public consultation.

Should this happen it would be a matter of great concern to members of this Institute, no matter what his or her views on privatization may be. I understand the Council is seeking the views of a wide spectrum of opinion within the Institute and is preparing a submission to put to the Government at an appropriate time. Meanwhile I suggest that any member holding strong views, one way or the other, should make them known to his local MP either orally or in writing and should also write expressing the same views to the Ministers of Forests and State Owned Enterprises.

A. P. Thomson
Wellington

Role of State Forestry

Sir,

Reading somewhat belatedly at this distance the November 1987 issue of 'New Zealand Forestry' it is depressing to note, as a result of the pervasive narrow philosophy of Rogernomics and the dismemberment of the Forest Service, that both the education and training of the forestry profession and the practice of State forestry seem likely to be restricted to what is necessary for single-purpose timber production in competition with the private sector.

Yet, surely, the roles of the public and service sectors in forestry are not the same. If they were there would be little justification for maintaining State forestry at all. Many of New Zealand's State forests were established for social and environmental reasons. Are such public objectives not valid, when certainly private organizations dependent solely on profits from timber sales could not entertain them?

It is interesting that, in Britain, Thatcherite thoughts of privatizing the forestry enterprise role of the Forestry Commission are opposed by statutory bodies such as the Nature Conservancy Council and the two Countryside Commissions, by many local authorities and by all the independent conservation organizations. Although criticism of Forestry Commission activities is certainly vigorous at times, the Commission, in carrying out its principal objective of coniferous (exotic) wood production, is also required to have regard for employment generation in rural areas, for the protection and enhancement of the environment (its forests contain 344 Sites of Special Scientific Interest designated by the Nature Conservancy Council, covering some 70,000ha), and for the provision of public access and recreational facilities. Private forestry companies, of course, are not bound by such mandatory obligations.

Whilst it would no doubt have made little difference to the outcome, it is disappointing that organizations in New Zealand, both public and private, which might have been expected to act otherwise in view of their functions or beliefs, chose to fall in behind the Treasury with its single-purpose attitude towards land management.

The conservation of nature should be an integral part of State forestry, if not of all forestry, and the education and training of the profession should fit it for this task as well as for growing trees and managing forests for a variety of objectives.

Eric Bennett,
Rothesay,
Isle of Bute,
Scotland.

Proposed name change

Sir,

The general public have very little understanding of the concept of a "forester". While the contributions of some professions, e.g. dentists and architects, are well understood, that of the forester is not. Some members of the public even think of us being Lodge members.

Even within the profession there is confusion. In the UK, for example, foresters are equated with the New Zealand rangers. In the old New Zealand Forest Service, a very clear distinction was made between the professional forester and the sub-professional ranger. Yet in recent times our Institute regarded both groups as foresters.

It was because of this general lack of understanding and concerns about the word 'forester' that in 1978 Jim Kennedy and I in our questionnaire survey of NZIF members asked the question:

> "Given that many members of the NZ Institute of Foresters are *not foresters,* its name should be changed to the Institute of Forestry".

We obtained the following responses:

Strongly agree	17%
Agree	34%
Neutral	19%
Disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	5%
No opinion	5%

The result was a clear 2:1 majority in favour of the change.

A constitutional amendment for a name change was proposed to the 1979 AGM but it just failed to win the required two-thirds majority.

Nine years on, I believe we should again test members' views. Hence the current amendment proposal.

I supported the 1979 name change and do so again. My main reason, however, is not because of a concern about the public lack of understanding on the word forester. Rather it is because the Institute is now much more concerned about forestry issues than it is about the professional forester. A New Zealand Institute of Forestry should be much more clearly identifiable as concerning itself with forestry issues than would a New Zealand Institute of Foresters.

Such a name change is consistent with members' views on the Institute's role. Responses in that same 1978 questionnaire on the role of the Institute clearly showed that the vast majority of members saw the Institute primarily as an advocate for forestry. That advocacy role was mentioned five times more often than the advocacy of the forestry profession (which includes professionalism).

The proposed name change is still consistent with the general objectives of the Institute.

Foresters around the world seem divided about whether their Institute should be named "Forester" or "Forestry" (or its equivalent in a foreign language).

An analysis of the names of member organizations of the International Union of Society of Foresters gives the following breakdown of member countries by whether their organization title includes the word "Forester" or "Forestry":

Foresters	**Forestry**
Australia	Cameroons
Belgium	Canada*
Colombia	France
Finland	Kenya
India	Korea
Indonesia	Nepal