



## Nelson and Marlborough sections' Molesworth field trip

The idea of holding a joint meeting of the Nelson/Marlborough and Canterbury sections proved to be a highly successful venture. It is many years since the sections held such an event, and with the waning interest in recent times it was felt this may be a "shot in the arm".

Molesworth station was chosen for a number of reasons for a field trip on the weekend of November 19/20. Not least was the fact that many of the senior members had been involved in the tree planting schemes, with the innovative and pioneering manager, Bill Chisholm. And geographically it was half way house. Finally the choice was clinched when it was learnt that Council were meeting at Hanmer on November 18.

A programme was devised around the past, present and future use of exotic trees in this harsh, wild and yet appealing environment.

The current management of Molesworth is shared by Land Corp. and the Department of Conservation, each with widely differing roles yet committed to the overall well-being of this huge tract (180,000 ha.) of high-country land.

A small 'army' of 4x4 vehicles took 52 members to the meeting point at Tarn-dale. Rain showers failed to deter the group from inspecting shelter belts and blocks of mainly *P. sylvestris* and *P. nigra*. The former was conejing profusely



Malcolm Conway, who chaired the debate on the future of plantation forest in the high country, and associate listen intently to the discussion at Molesworth. Malcolm is the one attached to the pipe.

and causing concern with its adventitious spread of seedlings. The pros and cons were discussed at length by the many specialists and lay members present.

One of the more significant findings was the policy of DOC to cut out from certain areas planted pines which it felt clashed with the tussock landscape and also threatened adjoining areas with wilding spread.

The journey from Tarn-dale down the Rainbow Valley was a first for many members who were impressed with the

contrasting views in vegetation types. Hells Gate and St Ronans Well were two of the more spectacular stops along the route.

The destination was Lake Rotoiti, where members stayed in a variety of accommodation, with most at the Red Deer Lodge, courtesy of Nelson Deerstalkers. This was the venue for an evening meeting, with a panel discussion after a series of speakers gave a short address on the topic "The Future of Plantation Forest Trees in the South Island High Country". The chairman for the evening was Malcolm Conway (a former Director General of the N.Z. Forest Service) and the panelists were Jack Hayward (DOC), Edwin Pitts (high country farmer), Nick Ledgard (F.R.C. Scientist) and Dianne Lucas (Maruia Society).

At the conclusion of the discussion Wink Sutton spoke to members about the role he saw the Institute taking, and urged a proactive group to set the pace.

On Sunday morning the meeting concluded with a visit to the nearby Tophouse forestry development planned by Ket Smith, who very kindly guided the party over the area and described the project in detail. Ket was kept busy fielding the many questions asked and at the same time had two young sons in tow who looked the very essence of future foresters.



Members of Nelson and Marlborough sections during the Molesworth field trip.