



EDITORIAL

THANKS TO DON MEAD

Don Mead, your very capable editor since 1986, is standing down but we are fortunate that he has agreed to remain on the editorial board. I am sure you all join me in thanking Don for his great contribution to this journal which has included successful leadership during a period of major change in journal format and style.

CHANGE

Change can be exciting, but also upsetting. Professional foresters do not seem to have control over what has happened during the last few years in their sector. The only way to reverse this lack of influence is to put more energy into understanding issues properly and lobbying to steer relevant political and industrial decisions in the right direction. (See Don's last editorial.)

The NZ Institute of Forestry has not been a major initiator or advocate of the massive changes taking place in the sector today. (Indeed, your Council frequently has been in opposition to them.) But meantime many members of the Institute have converted into qualified supporters of much of the innovation. Whatever our positions on these issues are, change goes on and we are all obliged to continue grappling with it. Some of the changes that Institute members are having to come to terms with now are:

- * State forest sales (See Turland, p.22 for some new technical slants, and see First State Forest Sales, p. 8, and Comment by Bilek, p.3.)

- * Major new ownership patterns of existing private forest. (See Lee, p.11.)

- * Special legislation for long-term land-use controls for sustainable management of indigenous forests on private land. (See cover and Baddeley, p.9.)

- * New roles and relationships for the Ministry of Forestry with Government and the forestry sector, including a withdrawal from most commercial consultancy work and an increase in the production of information and advisory services. (See the Ministry of Forestry's 1990/91 corporate plan.)

- * A strengthening role for regional government in forestry.

- * A new bidding process for science outputs in government organisations including those produced by the Forest Research Institute. (See Walker, p. 18.)

- * Possibly a new approach to forestry taxation under a new Government. (See Bassett, p.7.)

I hope this journal will be able to continue providing you with information and comment on such issues as they develop, but remember the editorial board needs your input. Remember too that the Institute of Forestry is a fraternal and supportive organisation with an ongoing tradition. It may be able to help you manage your particular concerns. Collectively there are hundreds of years of practical experience and theoretical expertise among members of the Institute.

You might even get inspiration from members who have passed on.

About three years after another major share market collapse in New Zealand the late Frank Hutchinson (1933 Vol. III No. 3) wrote an editorial in our journal. (See p.6.) It is sobering because it mirrors many of our concerns 57 years later.

Current events and the contents of that editorial offer some interesting comparisons and contrasts. Here are three of them:

(a) Forestry and the current economic recession

In the depression of the 1930s forestry fared relatively well but measured by changes in new planting rates this has not been our experience during the last three years of our current economic recession. The "non-market-intervention policy" that Government has been following may need to be helped along with a little bit of judiciously placed catalyst money before it works. Signals are coming through that there are substantial inefficiencies in the use of capital as markets come to grips with the "level playing field".

There is an increasingly prevalent view among economists (e.g. Gareth Morgan of Infometrics and Kel Sanderson of BERL) and Government advisors that by itself the market is not allowing desirable change to proceed fast enough. (In particular, I refer to the afforestation of unstable pasture on the East Coast and Hawkes Bay.)

Impediments that need to be overcome include perceptions, access to information, social pressure, economic and financial constraints, infrastructure and institutional arrangements. There is a growing determination to overcome these impediments one way or the other, and before long it is likely that we will again see the planting of more trees by otherwise idle labour on unwisely used land, especially if the economic recession is prolonged.

(b) Biculturalism

Not only did our journal have a Maori name but it was given dominance in 1933. In view of the current revival of biculturalism, and in recognition of the fact that the majority of forest workers today are still Maori, would it not be a good idea to revive a name involving Naghere?

(c) Forest Policy

Frank Hutchinson commented in 1933: "If forestry in New Zealand is to go forward with any confidence or security as an essential component of our national life we must have clearer visualisation of our objectives both in our own minds and in the general consciousness of the nation."

This concept may at last be coming to fruition. (Refer to page 10 of the last issue of this journal.) The Queen announced in her speech at the opening of Parliament this year that Government would develop a National Forest Policy.

The Institute of Forestry cannot complain about being left out. Your President, Wink Sutton, your Secretary, John Novis, one of your Past Presidents, Colin McKenzie, two of your ex councillors, Dudley Franklin and John Valentine (also the co-ordinator), and one of your fellow members, Mike Cuddihy, are on the Ministry of Forestry convened 11-person committee which is putting together the draft policy.

They will have a difficult job getting a meaningful policy accepted by Government. If there is a change of Government, then getting an endorsement of the policy by the new administration may also be hard. In the past, various attempts have either not stuck or been fitters, (e.g. the indigenous forest policy, and the forest policy floated at the 1974 and 1981 forestry conferences). To be any use, the policy will have to be developed and supported publicly, and backed up by a code of practice, and an ongoing educational programme.

Get a copy of the draft policy when it becomes available, and make submissions if you feel moved to do so. The NZ Tree Manifesto (See p.13.), the "Policy Statement by the New Zealand Forest Owners Association" (See p.11.), the NZIF policy, and the Indigenous Forest Policy (See p.9.), and the political party references to forestry in various statements (See p.7.) will help you formulate your ideas. When the final version is approved, become familiar with the content and do your bit to help spread the word.

Hamish Levack