

TE KURA NGAHERE

THE NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF FORESTRY.

Vol. III.

1933

No. 3

EDITORIAL

A FOREST POLICY FOR THE FUTURE.

We have now seen our third year of depression close somewhat more favourably than the previous one, giving ground for the hope that a definite improvement has commenced. Comparatively speaking, forestry in New Zealand has, on the whole, weathered the crisis fairly successfully. In spite of drastic curtailment of activities, retrenchment, and reduction, our forestry organisations have managed to keep their operations intact, and to maintain some at least of the essential services. Nor will it be denied that the stimulus of adverse conditions has brought about increased efficiency in certain lines of organisation.

But with a new era opening before us, it is timely to ask what are our aims and objectives in forestry. Our forest policy in the past has never been fully developed nor clearly enunciated, but we have followed, rather gropingly, one or two lines which seemed safe, while we waited for the future to develop itself. But conditions have changed so greatly in the past few years that it seems essential that a re-orientation of our position should be made. There can be no return to the conditions as we knew them prior to 1930, so we can no longer accept unquestioningly any of our previous lines of thought or of action. The ensuing decade will no doubt be the most critical in all our forest history. It might well be asked, and fully considered, what is our line of development to be. We are faced with a number of extremely vital questions, some of them new, the result of the stress of the past three years, and some of them much older, which we have in the past refused to face, postponing them indefinitely in the hope that they might somehow answer themselves. But all must now be faced. We can no longer avoid the issue, the situation is

too critical. 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 a clearer visualisation of our objectives both in our own minds and in the general consciousness of the nation. The magnitude of the problem may be illustrated by citing some of the questions awaiting answer:

What are to be the relative parts played in our national development by the State, the local bodies and the private companies? Where ceases the responsibility of the State in ensuring adequate timber supplies, in view of the great development of private afforestation, all unforeseen ten years ago? What standard of care, attention and protection shall be applied to our new man-made forests, and having formed them and grown them, how now are we going to use them to best advantage? May it not yet be sound national economy to substitute sustained yield management for destructive exploitation of the native forests of the South Island? What is to be the ultimate destiny of the enormous area of Provisional State Forest and of the protection forest areas of New Zealand? What is to be the relation of forestry to river control, to game, and recreation? What of our attitude toward timber exports, to conservation for our own use, to importations? And finally, given a definite policy to pursue, can we not devise some adequate basis of organisation and finance for our national forestry service that it may work along planned lines free from political whims and changes, and from financial instability?

It is obvious that the elaboration of a definite forest policy for this country is a matter requiring very careful consideration from many points of view, so that it cannot be undertaken hastily, nor perfunctorily nor by any one interested party. There is provision in our Forests Act for an Advisory Board whose intended function is seemingly to assist in the drafting of a considered forest policy for the Dominion. The services of this Board have not yet been availed of. It is suggested, however, that the time has now come when action in this direction might well be made.

This editorial by F.E. Hutchison is from "Te Kura Ngahere", the forerunner to this journal. It was published just three years after another share market collapse in New Zealand.

OBE for Dr Colin Bassett

Recently Dr Colin Bassett retired after 41 years' involvement in the development of the country's forests, first with the New Zealand Forest Service and for the past two years with the Ministry of Forestry.

He served as a trainee at Balmoral, completed a Forestry degree at Canberra, worked as a forester on the West Coast, became a pathologist at Rotorua with a break to do a Ph.D. at North Carolina State University, and then in 1972 moved to Wellington as head of forest research. Here he was noted for his skill in administration and planning, his diplomacy and challenging demand for high standards from his team.

Back in the 1960s in the pathology section of the Forest Research Institute Colin worked with a multi-disciplinary team set up to fight the then major new threat to radiata pine, *Dothistroma*. Fortunately for the forestry sector they discovered that minimal-cost annual spraying of low-dosage copper chemical would restore infected slow-growth adolescent trees to normal growth rates.

His final years were perhaps the most demanding of his career. He was involved in planning the restructuring of



In this year's Queen's Birthday Honours list Colin Bassett, who is on the Editorial Board of NZ Forestry, was awarded the Order of the British Empire. Here he is with one of the past editors of the journal, Geoff Chavasse, who also received the same award a few years ago.

the Forest Service into the Ministry of Forestry, the Forestry Corporation and the Department of Conservation. Colin moved to the Ministry of Forestry with

FRI and the successful establishment of the Ministry is in no small part due to him.

H.H.L.