

## RECENT EVENTS

# Forest industries initiatives

Paul Quinn\*

In December 1990 the New Zealand Forest Industries Council, as a first step in accepting the challenge of developing a strategic plan for the New Zealand forest industry, convened a day-long conference with the theme "Industry Initiatives for the Future". The main objectives of the conference were:

- to identify and action several immediate working party initiatives which focus on improving the competitive advantage of the forest industry;
- to progress the development of a long-term vision and strategic direction for the industry.

The conference was stimulated by the urgency which both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Forestry placed on developing such a plan of action following the Leaders Summit convened by the Prime Minister earlier in December.

A wide cross-section of industry personnel were invited, not on the basis of representing a particular sectional interest but as individuals who could provide an independent view. In all 26 people attended.

By the end of the day's discussions five

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### Tough treatment

(continued)

with other alkyd molecules. This causes large, tough polymers to grow within the wood. When the alkyd is applied to dry wood with its knots removed and its holes and cracks filled, the wood becomes as durable as tropical hardwood. The problem with alkyds is that they can take a whole day to dry.

DSM combined the alkyds with acrylic polymer, the material used to make standard water-based paints. The acrylic does not form chemical bonds during drying, so it is not as strong as the alkyd but it does dry quickly. A mixture of the two chemicals dries fast enough at the surface to allow the wood to be handled within an hour of treatment, while the alkyd goes on drying within the wood.

DSM chemists are now trying to add reactive sites to acrylic polymers that will allow them to cross-link with the alkyd, creating a tough complex of the two within the wood.

Debora MacKenzie writing in the New Scientist

principle initiatives emerged as projects Council could immediately pursue. These were:

- FRI - Centre of Excellence
- Industry Co-operation - A Shared Vision
- Education and Training
- Funding
- Radiata Pine Promotion.

Working groups have been established to pursue each of these initiatives

### Labour spokesperson on Forestry

The Labour Party spokesperson on Forestry, Paul Swain, MP, has announced that he is going to embark on the preparation of a plan which will develop a forestry strategy that will take New Zealand into the 21st Century.



Paul Swain

In late April 1990 he began work on his plan, which may take two years to complete, by consulting a range of people with forestry interests in the Rotorua area. Over the next few months he intends to talk to key people in the sector at Gisborne, Nelson and in Southland. He says you can phone him at Parliament (04) 719379, or home (04) 676842 and he would welcome any ideas you might have.

See if you can sway Swain!

H. Levack

and already positive feedback has resulted. Within the FRI - Centre of Excellence initiative a number of smaller sub-groups have been formed to develop specific ideas, including the promotion of forestry tourism activities around Rotorua, developing closer linkages between FRI, educationalists and corporates, and of course the overall objective of FRI as the world centre of excellence for radiata pine research.

Council has already accepted the recommendation of the Shared Vision working group to commission an appropriate group to undertake the co-ordination of an industry strategic plan.

Progress is continuing on the other initiatives, two of which are in conjunction with other work being undertaken by sector association.

In supporting these working group initiatives, Council does not of itself necessarily seek their management control. Rather it has encouraged a whole process of networking so that as many industry people as possible can contribute. This is an exciting project and one the Council believes must be given the highest priority. The Minister of Forestry, Hon. J. Falloon, is strongly supportive of the project, as is the NZ Trade Development Board.

### Robin Cutler to split British Forestry Commission powers

Don Mead

The Forestry Commission, Britain's largest land-owner, is to be drastically reformed by the Government. The Commission was bitterly criticised by a House of Commons select committee last year for "conflict of interest" between its twin roles as regulatory body and nationalised industry for forestry.

Since its foundation in 1919, the Commission has been responsible for the planting of millions of acres of alien conifer trees on the most ecologically sensitive parts of Britain and, latterly, for promoting and funding planting by the private sector.