

Forest Industries Training and Education Council

Mike Blakeney

One of the forestry sector's most important resources is its people. However, it cannot afford to be complacent about the level of education and skills in its current workforce and the type of people being attracted into the industry. Changes that have taken place in both the forestry industry and in New Zealand's education system mean that it is no longer practical to expect training and education to continue along the old lines. Recent reforms in post-compulsory education are designed to remove unnecessary barriers to learning, to improve responsiveness of education and to increase the transfer and portability of skills. The forestry industry needs to take advantage of this and also become more clearly part of mainstream trends in education. It requires a co-ordinated, cost-efficient system of education and training that is well tailored to its changing needs.

While the work of organisations such as the Logging and Forestry Industry Training Board (LFITB) has been widely respected in the industry, there has been little recognition outside the industry for the skills and qualifications they have imparted. Workers holding industry qualifications have gained no benefit from them when seeking jobs outside the forestry sector.

Because education and training has not been co-ordinated, it has been difficult for workers to see how they can progress through the sector. There is therefore a need to encourage greater flexibility of qualifications and "staircasing" – the term used to describe a system where qualifications obtained earlier on in an individual's career will receive appropriate recognition and credit towards higher-level qualifications.

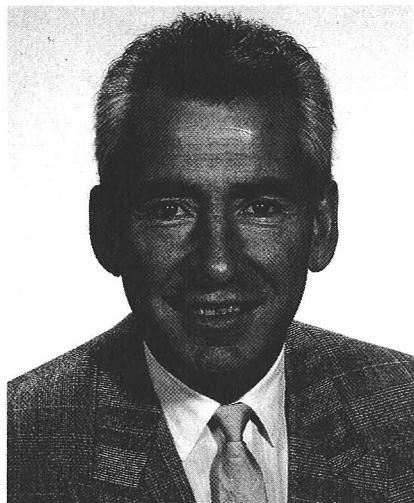
In response to these factors, last year the New Zealand Forest Owners' Association (NZFOA) initiated a review of forestry education and training. This, coupled with similar concerns on the part of the Timber Industry Federation, led to the establishment of the Forest Industries Training and Education Council (FITEC).

FITEC is concerned with policy, funding and ensuring consistency between the various programmes in forestry and solid wood processing. It will not replace existing bodies such as the LFITB, the Timber Industry Training Centre and the Forestry Training Centre. The LFITB will function semi-independently of FITEC but under its umbrella.

As well as having responsibility for pre-entry and trade training for forestry and timber workers, FITEC will be concerned with forestry education in schools, polytechnics and universities.

Its key functions are to:

- maintain a strategic plan to meet sector training and education needs by consulting with employers, education and training providers and funding bodies;
- co-ordinate a framework for forestry sector education and training, providing links between the school, pre-entry, trade, technical and university levels;



Rod McGowan

- develop and maintain a regional structure of forest industry training and education;
- facilitate the orderly development of high-quality resource materials for schools;
- provide recognised qualifications for skill level training;
- seek Government funding for forestry industry trade training programmes.

Mr C. McKenzie (NZFOA) is Chairman of the new organisation. Other Council members are: P. Bacon, (Waiariki Advisory Committee); M. Blakeney, (Ministry of Forestry); T. Brighthouse, (Logging and Forest Industry Training Board); J. Butterworth, (Timber Industry Federation); R. Fargher, (Education and Training Support Agency); R. Hall, (Timber Industry Federation); M. Hetherington, (NZFOA); C. Wall, (NZ Timber Industry Employees' Union and NZ Workers' Union); and W. Cote, (Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand).

In May FITEC announced the appointment of Rod McGowan as its Chief Executive. Mr McGowan brings a strong background in industrial training and sociology to the newly-established position. He was previously training adviser to the New Zealand Dairy Industry Training Council, with special areas of responsibility for development of product skills courses, graduate recruitment and management seminars. He also has extensive experience in the meat industry and was the recipient of a Lincoln Foundation grant to study the impact of new technology in the meat industry.

A network of six regional boards, centred on Whangarei, Tokoroa, Rotorua, Napier, Nelson and Dunedin, is being established to implement FITEC programmes. They will provide a regionally based focus for pre-entry and trade training programmes, and be responsible for the ongoing review and maintenance of a pool of suitably skilled providers to undertake on-the-job training. Membership of the regional boards will be made up of industry, employer, employee and educational representatives.

FITEC, in partnership with the Ministry of Forestry, has embarked on a major project to introduce forestry related materials into schools. This project comprises the design, development and implementation of forestry education packages for schools. Resource materials will be produced under annual themes:

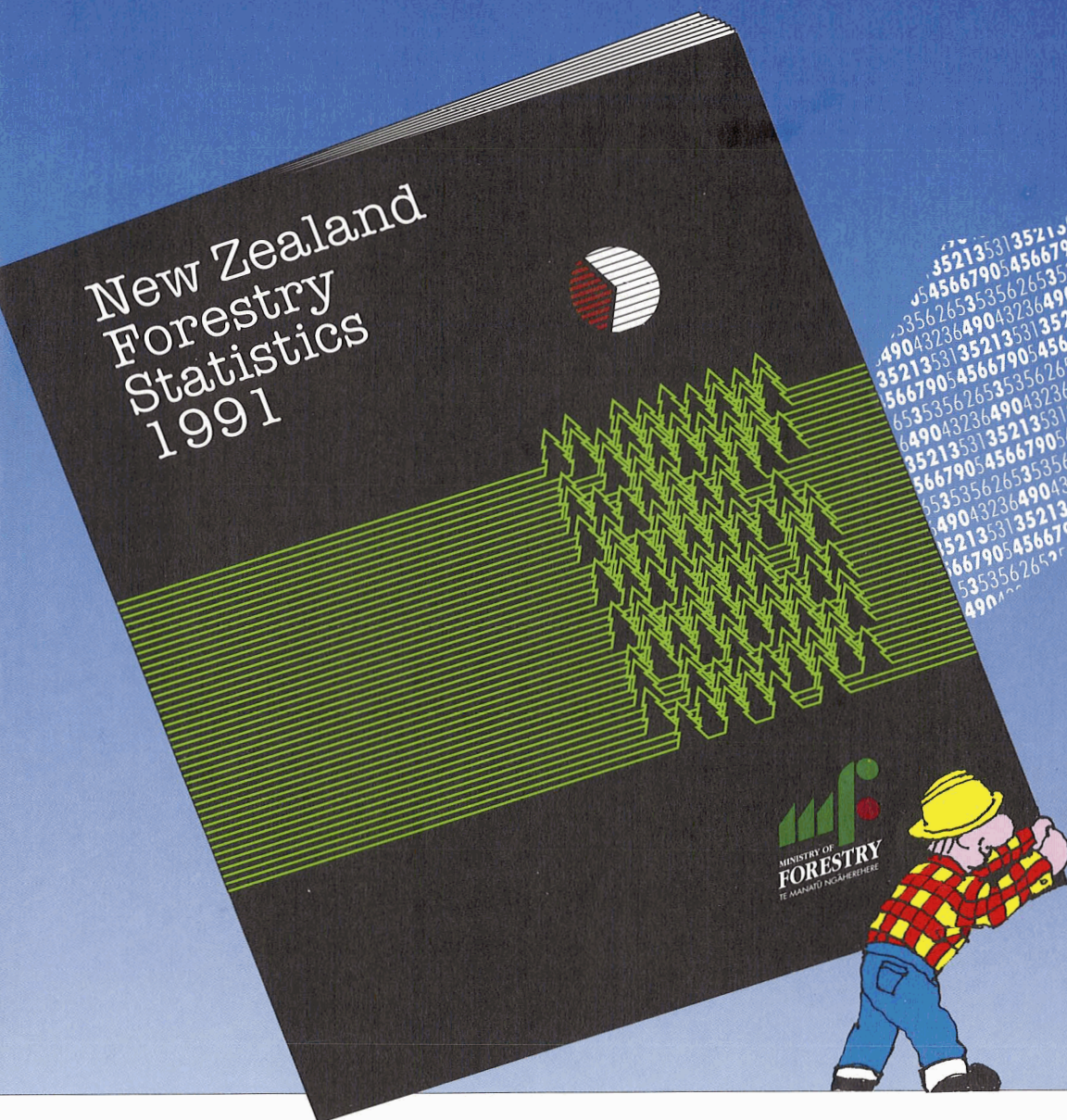
- 1992 The Forest
- 1993 Conservation and the Environment
- 1994 Human Dimension
- 1995 Processes
- 1996 Science, Technology and Machinery.

The various modules produced under each theme will target school students in five groupings:

- New Entrants to Junior 2,
- Standard 1 to Standard 4,
- Form 1 and Form 2,
- Form 3 to Form 5, and
- Form 6 and Form 7.

All materials will be written by teachers and education professionals. The parameters of the project will be established by an Advisory Board of educationists and forestry experts to ensure they are of the highest possible standard and appropriate to classroom teaching and curricula specifications.

Forestry statistics released!



The Ministry of Forestry is pleased to announce the release of a new statistical publication:

New Zealand Forestry Statistics 1991

This convenient publication brings together in one place many of the long-term statistical series on New Zealand forestry. Series on the growth of the resource, sawmilling, pulp and paper production, panel products, trade in forestry products, employment, and many more may all be found within it.

A statistical must for anyone interested

in tracing through figures on how New Zealand forestry got to its present state!

Copies (\$30.00, including GST and postage) may be ordered on the form enclosed with this issue or directly from:

The Forestry Statistics Section

Ministry of Forestry
PO Box 1610
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Telephone: (04) 721-569
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