

colour. New Zealand MDF by comparison is much lighter and better quality.

Alternatively, if it is difficult for processed New Zealand products to penetrate the Chinese market, it should be possible to invest in China itself, and share in some of the impressive growth. A New Zealand contribution via a joint venture could predominantly consist of supplying technology and expertise in processing and marketing. It seems to be a widely held view that China will be a lucrative investment destination; foreign companies invested \$US3 billion in China during the first three months of 1993. This was a 167 per cent increase over the same period in 1992. A further \$US25 billion was committed by foreign firms for 17,500 separate projects during the first quarter of this year.

The risk of investment in China may seem high. Deng Xiaoping is old and frail and is the key to current political stability. Political moods in China are notoriously volatile. However, most China experts agree that economic reforms have reached a stage that it would be difficult to go back, particularly in the south of China where the economy is becoming increasingly interlinked with those of both Taiwan and Hong Kong.

It could be said that although the risks and effort required in China are significant, the potential rewards are immense.

**André Neumann**

*André Neumann works for International Policy, Ministry of Forestry, and recently returned from China.*



New Zealand radiata pine logs at Zhenching Port.



## RECENT EVENTS



### New Commerce Degree in Forestry at Lincoln University

From next year Lincoln University will offer a three-year B.Comm (For) degree. This degree will be one of a suit of specialised commerce degrees offered at Lincoln – others are already offered in the areas of agriculture, horticulture, tourism and transport. In most commerce degrees students take about 25 to 30% of their subjects outside the commerce area. To

obtain this new degree they will take these papers in the area of forestry.

#### Complementary

This course will complement the forestry degrees currently offered in New Zealand in that it will not produce foresters but business graduates with a good understanding of forestry. It is anticipated that there will be a good demand for such people in the rapidly expanding industry and with groups servicing the sector.

Professor Tony Zwart noted that “these are primarily commerce or business graduates, who may or may not end up directly using their forestry background once they enter the workforce”. As an example he noted that the new head of Treasury has a B.Comm (Ag) degree.

To get this degree students will take an introductory forestry subject in their first year, three forestry subjects in their second year and at least two more in their third year. Some of these papers are already being taught; others will be new offerings. At Lincoln students take eight subjects each year.

Lincoln University is currently looking for a new staff member to assist in teach-

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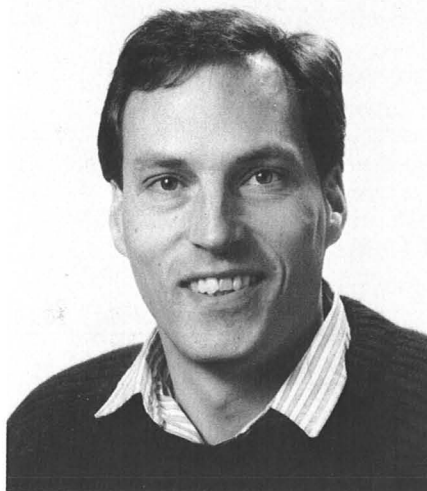
Comments, letters, news items, and Institute news need to be with the Editor at the beginning of the month prior to publication.

ing some forestry aspects of this degree. Furthermore, they have recently appointed Dr Hugh Bigsby to the Commerce and Marketing Department (see below).

#### **Dr Hugh Bigsby**

Dr Hugh Bigsby has recently been appointed as a Lecturer in the Economics and Marketing Department of Lincoln University. He will play a major role in developing the new B.Comm (For) degree.

Before moving to Lincoln University, Hugh Bigsby was Senior Economist for Alberta Energy Company Ltd in Calgary, Alberta. There he was involved with corporate planning for oil and gas, forest products and fertilisers. Prior to that he spent six years with the Forestry Section of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Melbourne. There he taught, researched and consulted in forest economics, forestry policy and forest management. He has also spent time working as an economist for the Alberta Forest Service and the Forestry Branch of



**Dr Hugh Bigsby**

the Saskatchewan Government. Dr Bigsby has a Doctorate from the University of Melbourne, his thesis being on the trade of forest products in Oceania.

Dr Bigsby is married and has two children.

**Don Mead**

## **POSSUM CONTROL PROGRAMME – DOC**

The Minister of Conservation, Denis Marshall, recently announced that additional financial resources have been made available for increasing the effort on possum control. The additional funding of \$3 million increases by 100% the resources that the Department of Conservation will now have for controlling possums. To ensure that the increased funding is spent for the greatest result, the department will be operating under a new draft national possum control plan that has ranked possum control priorities on a national basis.

#### **Possum damage**

The Australian brushtail possum has now colonised 92% of New Zealand's land area. The animals are especially numerous in native bush and shrubland communities. Possums eat out and collapse the canopy of native forests and have changed the appearance of whole mountain ranges and forest landscapes. Their selective attacks on canopy and subcanopy plants, creepers, epiphytes, native shrub and ground-dwelling plants, continue to degrade the botanical integrity of many native plant communities. Possums have eaten a native mistletoe to extinction and threaten the well-being and survival of many other plant and animal species. New information indicates that possums may also play a significant role in preying on some native animals and birds and they are known to rob other species of their food and nest sites. An unfortunate down side to efforts in controlling possums through the use of traps and poisons has been that native and introduced bird species have been inadvertently killed and maimed.

Possums cost the New Zealand taxpayer, ratepayers, farmers, foresters and other landholders dearly. Quantifiable costs in managing possums and their associated damage exceed \$40 million. While it is impossible to set a monetary value on possum damage to the conservation resource it is estimated that if the bovine

Tb problem is not controlled then New Zealand's \$5 billion annual trade in dairy and beef products will be at risk.

#### **Control measures and responsibilities**

Since 1990 the Department of Conservation has been spending \$3.1 million annually on controlling possums. This has permitted control operations to take place annually over 90,000 hectares or 2% of the 4.6 million hectares managed by the Department. The Animal Health Board has in addition been spending Government funding of \$1.3 million controlling tubercular possums on conservation lands, focusing on the pasture-bush margin. Government has announced that this will be increased to \$6.1 m per annum.

The responsibility for management of the possum-disease complex can be confusing. The initial responsibility for management of any pest lies with the owner of the interest affected. In relation to bovine Tb, the policy responsibility is held by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Because bovine Tb is a disease of national significance, provisions have been made for the mandatory control of the disease and therefore of the vector, possums. The agency in whom this responsibility is vested is the Animal Health Board, which uses Regional Councils as service delivery agents. The funding used by Animal Health Board for operational control of possums on private land is derived largely from levies paid by farmers on all cattle killed. Government funds the AHB, through MAF, for control of possums on lands of the Crown, including Conservation land, where such control is for bovine Tb reasons. It is important to realise that Regional Councils have no statutorily-based requirement to control either bovine Tb, or possums, although some do contribute ratepayers' funds to increase the effectiveness of funds available from the AHB. Expenditure on possum control as a means of Tb bacillus control obviously has spin-off benefits for conservation.

The Department of Conservation has national policy responsibility for the protection of flora and fauna on all land, and responsibility as a land owner for pest control on the Conservation Estate (c.30% of New Zealand's land surface).

The Ministry, and the Department, liaise to ensure that the programmes of possum control designed by each agency are fully coordinated to achieve the optimal outcome.

The prime objective of the draft national control plan is to conserve native

## **Marubeni and rain forest project**

Much criticism has been levelled at the Japanese trading companies for their involvement in rain-forest felling in South East Asia, with Mitsubishi Corporation a particular target. The companies are sensitive to the criticism and are taking steps to improve their environmental reputations. Marubeni's environmental division is now running a research project related

to rain-forest regeneration in Sarawak, with the involvement of Japanese and American researchers as well as the Sarawak Forestry Bureau. The project is focusing on animal and plant ecology related to the forest crown as well as the linkages between biological and climatic factors. – **Reprinted from Japanlink, Ministry of Forestry, Rotorua.**