

sense that they both require low vegetation. Thus the two problems tend to increase in unison, though unfortunately removal of one is unlikely to result in a decrease of the other – at least in the short term. One only has to observe establishing plantations to see that early stages, before the tree canopy closes, can become prime *Hieracium* and rabbit environments.

## DISCUSSION

In discussing high-country options one should remember two quirks of human nature. One is that distant fields seem greener. The other is our tendency to overstate a case. War game theory says that if you know nothing about an option then you should play for minimum losses on your part, and it is only when you know everything about an option that you play for maximum gains. In practice, as the new boy on the block, forestry should perhaps be saying that it “is no worse than pastoralism”, rather than claiming the earth. In essence, an element of caution is needed in considering new options.

The long-term trends seem to indicate that natural clothing fibres are decreasing in value, and wood cellulose is increasing – though as yet these figures have not come from a suitably independent source to assume their impartiality. These changes have to be reflected in allowable use of land.

As outlined above, the advantage of pastoralism is that potentials and limitations are largely known, and that most of the infrastructure is in place. The economics of pastoralism will be largely determined by commodity prices (principally wool), as compared to environmental, labour and capital costs. However, pastoralism will have to change towards fertiliser use and the semi-intensive to make it sustainable in terms of nutrient use.

With the changing economics, and as indicated by support for the Mackenzie District Council scheme change, forestry should now be on an equal footing with pastoralism as an allowable land-use option, and let preference and economics determine which is the best mix. As indicated above, the preferable option is likely to be woodlots of varying sizes as part of pastoral farming.

However, probably the main requirement for the high country is the increased consideration of non-primary production uses, e.g. tourism, recreational, or lifestyle blocks. All the options will require some freeing up of land laws to allow subdivision for particular uses, or as a way of trading into the various options.

# Report on Forestry Corporation of New Zealand

A.P. Thomson

Peter Olsen's account of the Council's discussions with the forestry Corporation is full of interest. It portrays the Corporation as a responsible organisation with a firm commitment to what (in its view at least) is the long-term interests of New Zealand. This we knew already; it has been evident in various articles and statements made by the Chief Executive in recent years. But it was reassuring to have confirmation.

The article, however, did not deal adequately with the matters raised in the motion passed (by 26 votes to 21) at the last Annual General Meeting. True there was for the first time a statement on Douglas fir age classes and there were somewhat generalised statements on rotation lengths, the emphasis on radiata clearwood, a reduction in the Douglas fir cut, the restocking of Douglas fir and the varying levels of the radiata annual yield. What we were not told were the actual past and present and the projected future levels of the radiata cut, and likewise of the cuts of Douglas fir and other species. One cannot see that this is commercially sensitive information. It was stated that there was no evidence of any alarming trend that would jeopardise sustainability of the forest resource **quality**. What does this mean? And what are the trends, alarming or otherwise? And are there any other trends which would jeopardise the sustainability of the forest quality? We were not told. Finally we were given no answers at all to the main question raised which was how the Corporation's harvesting and marketing policies affect future yields.

The report concludes with the statement that “it is the Council's view that no further investigation is merited, particularly in the light of recent statements on FCNZ's future”. As Institute members we elected a Council and one must accept their considered view. For this reason I do not wish to press the matter in greater detail; Institute members may read the comments and make their own interpretation as to whether the Council has acted fully and fairly on the AGM motion.

The different matter which I will raise is how the Institute has handled this very important question. There have been what appear to be unnecessary delays. I am informed that the Minutes of the AGM were distributed to local sections within one month. This was useless as some local sections did not pass the information on to

members. The August issue of NZ Forestry did not deal with the motion at all except for a reference in one letter to the Editor. The last issue of the journal does not quote the wording of the motion passed. It was thought that the Institute would appoint a small select sub-committee to talk to the Corporation but three months passed and the matter was then handled by a full Council meeting with Corporation staff. The President and the Council apparently failed to recognise the urgency of this matter.

Before proposing the AGM motion I had had a letter from the Hon Wyatt Creech, Minister of State Owned Enterprises, a copy of which had been sent to the President. The letter said *inter alia*: “You ask if it is possible for members of the public to have easy access to details of FCNZ's forest policy, given that FCNZ is a publicly owned company. As a state-owned enterprise, FCNZ is required to observe the accountability requirements of the State Owned Enterprises Act 1986. It is also subject to the Official Information Act 1982. These statutory provisions oblige FCNZ to make more information publicly available than its commercial competitors. In general FCNZ is willing to make available information which is not commercially sensitive. If you have any questions concerning FCNZ's forest policy, you should write directly to the company.”

More recently in a post-election statement quoted in The Evening Post Wyatt Creech said: “The Government is not considering, nor has it ever considered, selling the Forestry Corporation or its biggest forest at Kaingaroa.”

The good tenor of the earlier letter gave me the impetus to propose the AGM motion; the letter seems to have been ignored by both the Institute and Mr Cullinane. One may ask why? One must further ask why the Corporation was not prepared to submit to the process of analysing how its harvesting and marketing policies affect the future supply of wood. If the Corporation's view is, as it appears, in contradiction with the Ministerial statement, why did the Institute not take this up?

The most disturbing statement in Peter Olsen's report reads as follows: “Comments from members and correspondence in the August 1993 journal indicate a degree of discomfort in the Institute being

involved in any examination of a forest company's activities *whatever the ownership*". (My italics)

The Corporation's forest policy should be subject to some form of government oversight and one would expect the Ministry of Forestry to have the power and the will to do this. They appear to have neither. The Institute thus has an important role to play.

The position appears to be fairly simple.

- a) The Corporation forests are still owned by the State.
- b) The Government does not intend to sell them at present.
- c) The public thus has a right to know what is the Corporation short-, medium- and long-term cutting policy and if need be to comment on it.
- d) As the country's best informed and concerned organisation, the Institute should take a lead.

To say that the Institute should not be involved with the long-term policies of State owned forests is in effect to deny a major reason for the Institute's existence. This I most emphatically deplore. And if the Institute likes to consult its most senior members I believe it would get almost universal confirmation of this view.

## The President replies

In response to Priestley's specific concerns:

1. There is little need in making a judgment on the condition of the forest, in respect of future capability to sustain a cut, to have data on the past levels of cut. Age class distribution of radiata pine and Douglas fir were given and present and projected levels were stated, albeit in general terms. These appeared to conform with the aim of maintaining rotations (for at least radiata pine) at a level not greatly different from like operations in the central North Island. That is, the trend appeared to be of a cut consistent with increment and the silvicultural aim of rotations of a length adequate for clearwood production. Therefore **quality** of the resource, based on this criterion, is not being jeopardised.
2. This has at its corollary the thought that **quantity** of cut is sustainable. It could not be a presumption of quality for clearwood being sustained if cutting exceeded increment. There is of course a more general debate on length of rotation affecting wood quality for framing timber, which is a New Zea-

land-wide concern not specific to FCNZ, and if age class distribution reflected an inability to keep rotation above a target set by density and fibre length.

3. I consider Council were given an answer on the Corporation's marketing policies, harvesting levels and the effect on future yields as commented above. We were not told the specific levels of cut planned for 1995. This is possibly commercially sensitive in the light of arbitration proceeding but it is also difficult to adhere to in practice as markets move up or down. I commented generally on the events leading to rapid reduction in production prior to November.
4. Delays. There was no desire to put the matter off and Council adopted the option of accepting an invitation to have FCNZ and Tim Cullinane meet

the full Council. Thus September was the first convenient moment to meet in Rotorua and there was no perception of the urgency requiring a prior meeting.

5. Communication. Council have adopted the policy of an information sheet after each meeting being sent to members. The most recent contains a note of the actions taken on this issue. As a reaction to Priestley Thomson's most recent comment, Council has reacted quickly on this complaint.
6. The propositions stemming from items (a)-(d) in Priestley's final paragraph are issues that we could take up after the arbitration is complete. Then Wyatt Creech's invitation could be a basis for reconsidering these issues.

P.F. Olsen  
President

## I have a dream. It's Jurassic Pine!

J.C.F. Walker\*

*"The late twentieth century has witnessed a scientific gold rush of astonishing proportions: the headlong and furious haste to commercialise genetic engineering. This enterprise has proceeded so rapidly – with so little outside commentary – that its dimensions and implications are hardly understood at all.*

*"Biotechnology promises the greatest revolution in human history. By the end of this decade, it will have outdistanced atomic power and computers in its effect on our everyday lives. In the words of one observer: 'Biotechnology is going to transform every aspect of human life: our medical care, our food, our health, our entertainment, our very bodies. Nothing will ever be the same again. It's literally going to change the face of the planet.'"* (Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton)

It is in this context that I see much of the argument about species diversity in plantation management as irrelevant, rather than as misguided or misinformed. Soon enough we will have the opportunity to select the varying and desirable attributes of a species with all the frivolity of browsing along the supermarket shelf. It is the inevitability of the situation rather than its desirability that should be recognised.

The quest for species diversity in plantation management is primarily a philosophical and economic Progress, and like any Progress it involves the future. The future doesn't exist, never did and because

of the considerable investment in knowledge, imagination and fortitude required in developing a working perception of the future most prefer to see it merely as a straight line extrapolation of the past. A more fruitful approach is to see the future as residing only in the mind's eye. The mind first creates our reality and then we see it. Since it is inside us, we can do something about it.

Change itself has changed. It has become so rapid, so complex, so turbulent and unpredictable that it can be described as "white water" change – no time for a cuppa, Mr Lange. In the past the usual basic strategy for playing change was to minimise it, but that could be the most risky strategy in the future. The essential skill for the future will be learning how to change one's mind: to shift one's point of view, to recognise that the future is uncertain and to be comfortable with the prospect. Believe those who are seeking the truth, doubt those who find it (for those who find it see no need for further change).

Technology defines all physical resources. Land was not a physical resource until people learnt how to use or cultivate it. Today the hard truth facing foresters is the fact that the majority of fortunes will no longer be made by commandeering natural resources. Rather it will be in the development of technologies and amusements that haven't even been dreamt of. Intellectual assets, not physical assets, are the resources of industries: after all, the raw material of a silicon chip is a handful of dust. Technology feeds back on

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