

after planting. Of how a deep humus soil has formed and how bracken will grow to 4.5 m tall where bracken could not survive before. Nor has he observed the populations of wetas, *Peripitus* and native robins to be found in these pine forests. These natives obviously do not understand that they are living in a 'biological desert'. Do we really want to "maintain and restore ecosystems" that existed before the pines were planted.

"Good biodiversity" appears to be assessed by the number of species that the observer **cares to record**. The inference seems to be that the greater the number of species recorded the better the factor called "biodiversity" and therefore Southland beech forests are less desirable than North Island podocarp/broadleaf forests.

The establishment of pine forests in these districts has provided better 'highways' for the movement of native flora and fauna than existed previously. That native species have travelled through the pine forests is a matter of observation that belies the propaganda put out by the green lobby.

We hear repeated calls for more planting of native trees for timber production. There are possibilities for Southland beech and for kauri, but when it comes to podocarps it is a lost cause. The only place where there is good podocarp regeneration on any scale is in the areas logged by the Port Craig Timber Co. early in the century. This area along the south coast of the South Island is subject to much cold wet weather and is covered with magnificent regeneration. Elsewhere in New Zealand the climate has changed sufficiently over the last few centuries to be unfavourable for this to happen.

What a misleading diagram the carbon life cycle one is (NZF, Feb 95 p 10). It shows mature pine forests as the dominant feature. *Pinus radiata* forest would have to be at least 70 years of age to reach this stage in New Zealand. These forests are harvested while still in the rapidly growing stage. This mature stage exists in most native forests but not in pine forests in New Zealand.

The pine forests of New Zealand contribute greatly to the comfort and well-being of all New Zealanders. Compare them with the cities with their smog and sewerage pollution. Rosoman asks how many Cyclone Bola force winds can our commercial forests stand. How many such winds could our cities and towns stand? How many hectares of good fertile soil have disappeared under asphalt and concrete? It is time to recognise that pine forests are ecologically one of the great assets that we have.

J.E. Henry

How public views plantation forestry

Sir,

I was perplexed to read, in the February 1995 issue of NZ Forestry, Gordon Hosking's accusation of arrogance supposedly displayed by three people who, between them, had been responsible throughout 20 years of weaving a course in their endeavours to establish long-term forestry in the face of a three-year cycle of opposing, confrontation politics, conducted in an increasingly brutalising (Jim Anderton's word) forum.

I was present at Potton's delivery ('A Public Perception of Plantation Forestry') at the 1994 AGM – the speech that Hosking was defending – and read it later when published in NZ Forestry. What a wonderful paper for dubious assumptions, admission of lies told to the public and statements such as: " ... *In the Accord, Tasman would stop clearfelling its native forest, ...* ". What wasn't said was that Tasman had secured some of the cheapest State Forest wood in the world for 75 years and could well afford to forego some native forest.

Where was the arrogance? In any event arrogance had little or nothing to do with the demise of the NZ Forest Service. It was rough and tumble, and at times corrupt, politics practised by both the politicians and the conservationists. It was the selling and buying of votes as recounted in the book 'Out of the Woods', for the writing of which the authors state they had access to, " ... *all relevant governmental, Treasury and Corporation documents and correspondence.* "

I became increasingly perplexed when I read further in Hosking's letter, " ... *but in the management of our indigenous forests it [the Service] was neither blameless nor, some would say, responsible.* " When formed in 1919 the Service set to work to investigate the remnants left from the slaughter of the wonderful kauri forests. Later it investigated, and worked out possible methods of management of West Coast and central North Island rimu forests. None of these things persisted through the changes of three-year-term Governments. I am sure that all forest officers were ashamed of the destruction of rimu forests and the creation of logs that went on along the West Coast. It was not their doing. Governments kept to Sir Francis Bell's (the first Commissioner of State Forests) instruction: "*Land which is suitable for settlement can never be held with trees upon it on any considerable area.* " 'Suitable', to most Governments, meant simply the removal of trees. What happened subsequently did not come into

their calculations. Any problems belonged to following Governments.

As for protection forest, which is by far the largest and most important area of native forest, the Service quickly developed rural fire fighting to prevent its continuing destruction. Later it made by far the most effective inroads into the destruction of wild animals eating their way through that 23 per cent of the total country in native forest. Now the possums are getting back in control in large parts and deer species are being moved about!

Much of the stigma that landed on the Forest Service was due to misconceptions deliberately concocted and spread by conservationists and the public they 'educated'. Guy Salmon, when he writes, "*the Forest Service did this*" and as an afterthought, adds in brackets "*(through the Minister)*", knows full well that it was the Minister through the Service.

Behind the Service was a Minister, a Cabinet and a Parliament. But they could all change every three years; with easy to perpetuate misconceptions in the turmoil! There were even many critics amongst the Forest Service's own staff when they were faced with countermanding orders coming 'through the Minister'.

Lindsay Poole
Ex Director-General,
NZ Forest Service

Clearing native forest for plantations

Sir,

The often-heard claim by the forestry industry is that plantations save native forests, through providing an alternative source of wood and only being planted on pasture or deforested lands. That the industry now did not clear native forest for planting was one of the main reactions from both industry and some conservation parties of the New Zealand Forest Accord when the Greenpeace report "The Plantation Effect" was released. It is accepted that the industry Accord parties have kept their commitment of agreeing to not clear indigenous forest (as defined under the Accord).

However, with much of the new plantings being carried out each year by players outside of the Forest Accord, the plantation industry as a whole is in danger of being discredited through the practices of irresponsible operators. There have been several recent incidences reported to Greenpeace where regenerating native forest (20-60-year-old) had been cleared for pines. Two examples are: approximately 200 hectares roller crushed by Far