

are entitled to control the effects of land use. The last thing that these councils want is that each will demand a resource consent for the same aspect of a resource use activity. Opportunities exist to transfer or delegate responsibility between councils. These opportunities are being increasingly taken up.

In addition, councils are recognising the need for higher levels of cross regional and district standardisation in regard to RMA consultation, plan preparation and consent administration. I know it will be too late for some, but I can assure you that the second generation of plans will be very much more user-friendly than the first.

Additional issues

Three additional but less significant 'fore-sight' issues deserve passing comment. These are first, a concern about the effects of forestry on water yields, second a concern about employment opportunities and third, a concern about contaminated sites.

Research is now confirming that in

areas with a water deficit, forestry is a land use that needs to be carefully planned for. Market trade-offs are required to recognise that the planting of trees is, in effect, tantamount to the granting of a resource consent to extract water, with consequent effects on other water users.

The second issue concerns the optimising of employment opportunities. To small communities, the option of simply exporting logs without adding value seems a dreadful waste. These communities would welcome the industry taking up "techno opportunities" based upon the exercise of the "foresight about economic conditions" noted by Professor Cartwright.

The third issue concerns contaminated sites. The exercise of foresight will have the current problems avoided in the future. A recent discussion paper suggested that New Zealand has in excess of 8000 contaminated sites. About 5% of these are associated with the forestry industry. We should be planning now not only to clean

up the problems from the past but also to prevent these problems occurring in the future.

Conclusion

Global warming is an issue that we cannot put our heads in the sand about. There are additional broad picture foresight matters that may affect our natural environment. We cannot afford to deny the existence of those as well – particularly the opportunity to promote the value of forestry as a means of achieving sustainable land use. Nor should attention be diverted away from the task of establishing a value set that provides for the fair and equitable treatment of forestry within the planning instruments promulgated by local authorities.

From a 'planner's' perspective the forestry industry has much to contribute to our environment and our communities. The exercise of 'foresight' will ensure that opportunities are maximised and risks and threats are minimised.

INSTITUTE NEWS

President's comment

A sense of destiny

Attending the ANZIF Conference in Canberra in April left me with a huge sense of future destiny for both the NZIF and the IFA moving into the 21st century.

The current plantation forest area in New Zealand already occupies about 5% of the country's productive land area and its harvest will lift forest products into the number one export-earning slot. If current new land planting rates are sustained, plantations in the future could occupy up to one-quarter of the productive land by 2030 with all of the additional harvest adding to export earnings.

Australia is currently exploring the feasibility of expanding its plantation forest area from around one million ha of mainly softwoods, to around three million ha of both softwood and hardwood by 2020. That area of plantation would be capable of meeting a large part of the domestic wood demand and generating a substantial level of wood export. How much export will presumably depend on what happens to native forest harvesting in the meantime. Compared to the declining viability of pastoral farming and the withdrawal of a major area of land from productive use due to salination and other

effects, forestry across the Tasman is also likely to become an increasingly significant force in rural land use and in the economy in general.

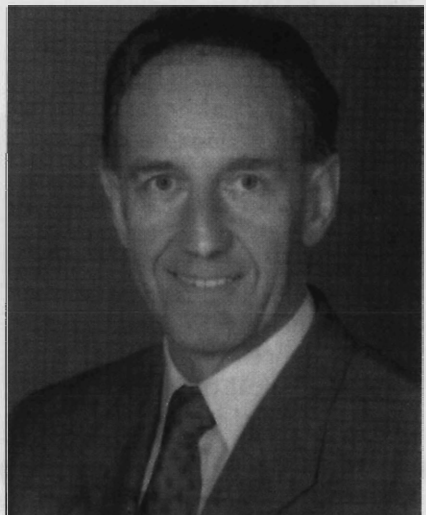
So our relatively small professional associations on each side of the Tasman (about 2000 members in total) are set to represent the basis to very significant parts of our economy and future growth. From this we need to form a mental vision of our future role and start acting and positioning ourselves to assume that leading role.

As one commentator at the conference noted: "We are what we think ourselves to be".

The NZIF has a strong and growing membership base and will exert an increasing influence in its sector and in the community through various initiatives, professional representations and local activities. Through 1997 the NZIF Council will put additional effort into promotion of its "products" (including the new registration scheme as exhorted by our Editor in the November journal).

Planning ahead

Most of the New Zealand delegates to the ANZIF Conference met briefly at the end



John Galbraith

of the conference and supported the propositions that:

- The next ANZIF Conference be held in Rotorua in 2001, and
- NZIF should explore opportunities for possible joint development of programmes and initiatives with IFA, including the work on standards for promotion of forestry investments, professional registration and encouragement of student interaction.

John Galbraith