

NZIF Indigenous Forest Management Committee

Foresters face big public education push

Peter Allan

Prior to the Elections the Committee had posed to Labour Leader, Rt Hon Helen Clark, a number of propositions signalled by the Labour Party's stated intent to halt sustainable management of beech forest on West Coast lands of the Crown designated for that purpose. Pete Hodgson, Labour Party forestry spokesperson, responded on behalf of Ms Clark. His stated response was, "For the record none of your four assertions is true" (the 'assertion' is repeated in brackets).

- 1 (Intent to break the contract that compensates Waitutu Forest podocarp with sustainable management of Southland beech forest on lands of the Crown). "Longwoods is not crown managed - the trees are managed by the Waituku (sic.) Incorporation. Their rights are not infringed one iota by our policy."
- 2 (Intent to prevent sustainable management of privately owned indigenous forest for production of timber). "Simply untrue. Our policy applies to TWC forests that are of significant conservation value. It does not apply to privately owned or managed forests."
- 3 (Intent to breach Article II of Te Tiriti o Waitangi by not permitting Maori land owners manage indigenous forest according to their tikanga (customs). "Ditto."
- 4 (Intent to prevent Maori from sustainably managing their indigenous forests for the production of timber and other forest products). "Ditto."

On the afternoon of 13 December 1999 Timberlands West Coast Ltd, in response to instruction from

shareholding Ministers Cullen and Hodgson, withdrew their application for all resource consents associated with "the beech scheme" and Buller District Council cancelled the remainder of the hearing.

Consequently the Institute and the 53 others were not heard. Subsequently there has been a very heated reaction by both the forestry and scientific professions to firstly denial of a fair hearing under the RMA and secondly the apparent contradiction of Government support for sustainable management of natural resources for production.

Asking a number of city dwellers, individually and in groups, in the two months either side of the elections, what they understood happens to the beech forest once it is logged has resulted in a surprisingly unanimous response. "The forests are devastated for up to 1000 years."

"Clearfelling totally destroys the forest." "Turning the wood into chips and exporting them is terrible." "It might be alright if each logged tree is replaced by a planted seedling." A number then turned around and said, "do you know where I can obtain some silver beech to repair some furniture?" When shown a photograph of thicket red/hard/silver beech 3 - 5m tall eight years after chipwood logging they were incredulous. None seemed aware that the 1993 amendment of the Forests Act requires adequate regeneration after logging.

The present political situation with regard to indigenous forest management suggests that the forestry profession has a big job of basic public education ahead of it.

Applicants for Registration

The following people have applied to become a Registered Forestry Consultant:

Andrew McEwen	Wellington
Angus Malcolm	Gisborne
Colin Maunder	Rotorua

Under the NZIF constitution, any members of the Institute may send objections in writing within 20 days of *Journal* publication to:

The Registrar,
NZIF Registration Board,
PO Box 1340,
ROTORUA.

Some *Journal* readers may have been a little surprised to read in the November issue (page 16) that the Board member representing the Registered Forestry Consultants has a term of two years. Of course, that is incorrect. The Consultants' Representative serves the same length of term as the Members' Representative, which is four years. Our apologies.

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