

Leading Canterbury forestry figure retires

W.P. (Bill) Studholme

On the 13 November 2001 the New Zealand Forest Owners Association executive held a function in Wellington to honour Bill's retirement from the executive and to recognize his contribution to the Forestry Sector as a whole over 36 years. Tony Grayburn, a long standing associate of his, was asked to speak on the executive's behalf. The following is the contents of that speech.

Introduction

This is a good opportunity to review Bill's forestry career and acknowledge his considerable contribution to the New Zealand forestry sector from his base at Darfield, Canterbury. He was appointed to the Selwyn Plantation Board in 1965 after completing a science degree at the University of Canterbury. He was immediately awarded a Private Forestry Bursary and went to the School of Forestry, Edinburgh. This commenced his real interest in the profession of forestry which saw him later become the President of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry (1983-84) and more recently the Chairman of the School of Forestry Advisory Committee (University of Canterbury).

With Selwyn Plantation Board

This is a unique organisation that has only had three Chief Executives in 90 years. Each has been a real character and could well have used the German title *Forstmeister*. Bill became its C.E.O. not long after the devastating 1975 gales.

With the changes to Local Body legislation in 1989, he had to oversee its change from a local body board to a limited liability company in 1990. He continued as the chief executive officer until 2001.

Salvage of windblown timber after 1975 was a major exercise. Bill often reminds us that until quite recently, the Board harvested the largest proportion of its total log sales from the horizontal position. In re-establishing after the gales, he changed the silvicultural programmes and techniques to recognise the hazards of growing forests in Canterbury. He also recognised that future forest expansion by the Board should be back onto the hill country and that has been achieved.

To Canterbury Forestry

Bill has maintained a good relationship with the School of Forestry and with Lincoln University. He has encouraged field trips to the Board's forests, discussions and research plots there as well as providing students with vacation work. The Board's forests have provided shelter and wood supply to the farmers of the Canterbury plains, one of its major objectives. There has been considerable research into wind behaviour, shelter



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design and shelter benefits to farmers and their stock. Fire protection has always been a major concern. Bill has been very active in fire legislation, local organisation and fire fighting in rural areas.

He has been active in forest research co-operatives initiated by the Forest Research Institute, which were of special interest to forest owners in Canterbury and the South Island e.g. Tree Breeding, Douglas fir, Eucalypt species and Weed Control. Work on the latter has resulted in enormous improvements to establishment practices on difficult sites.

With all of this experience, Bill gave considerable help and encouragement to the local Farm Forestry Associations who learnt by example.

To the N.Z. Forest Owners Association

Bill was elected to the Executive in 1986 where he made a considerable contribution to their efforts. A vigorous debater and well known for his colourful turns of phrase, Bill became a very effective facilitator and committee member. He was part of the Local Body Forestry Group, which while independent of, worked closely with the Forest Owners Association. He represented the Association on the National Exotic Forest Description (N.E.F.D.) using his considerable experience in forest mensuration. This work is essential for national forest planning as it is used for long-term harvest predictions by regions. Bill chaired the Association's Forest Health Sub-committee that is advisory to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as to Government. This has been a very controversial area of late because of the difficulties of border control, surveillance, control programmes and forest health. They all contribute to potential dangers for both the exotic and indigenous forests. Bill did it well.

General

During his time in Darfield, Bill has contributed particularly to community life there including chairing the Darfield High School Board of Trustees, Church administration and National Party politics for the local electorate. He was closely associated with the elections of Hon. Ruth Richardson and Hon. Jenny Shipley (on the Selwyn Plantation Board for a term). All of these outside activities are further dedication to a life based upon an ethic of hard work. To Bill and Jan, we give you our sincere thanks for all you have given to the forestry sector and Canterbury in particular over 35 years. We wish you good health and happiness in your retirement at Charteris Bay.

Tony Grayburn