

background and proposals.

In 1928 Ellis suddenly left the New Zealand position and took up another in Australia. There has been a great deal of conjecture as to why Ellis abandoned New Zealand forestry but there can be little doubt that he was unable to make headway with a system of short-term changing politics in developing reasonable and necessary forestry measures.

The unexpected gap was immediately filled by E. Phillips-Turner who had been a senior officer of Lands and Survey, and as well as being a surveyor was widely experienced in the native forest cover. He was a great friend of Cockayne who was now, by invitation, the Honorary Botanist of the Forest Service.

Cockayne lived not far from Orari. As he grew older he became partially blind. Nevertheless, he worked

almost to the day he died, 8 July 1934, coming down to the Forest Service office in Featherston Street, and dictating his last papers to Mary Sutherland, a Welsh-trained forester who had migrated to New Zealand to work in the newly established Forest Service.

I happened to have been posted to Wellington that year and was allocated a spare desk in Mary Sutherland's room. I used to listen to Cockayne's dictation and then I had the task of taking him to catch the train home.

One day he stopped suddenly, turned to me and said "I'm as good as you fellows!" I suddenly remembered he had just been given an Honorary Forestry B(For)Sc by a long-time ecological friend in Europe who had just been made Head of State! It was the only time I ever heard Cockayne being modest. It certainly raised my ego!

Services to members

I have recently been coopted on to the Council of the New Zealand Institute of Forestry with a brief that includes looking at the services that the Institute provides to members. This has come about partly as a result of a review I made of the new Southern North Island section to see what sort of activities the new section could arrange for its members.

The new section covers a large geographical area, but with over 50% of members concentrated in or around Wellington. Apart from a dozen members at each of two provincial centres, all the other members are scattered in ones and twos all over the region. As I focused on what the Institute / local section could provide for such members, I also realised that provision of better services goes hand in hand with increased membership – but if we want to increase membership, we need to consider what we can offer to potential new members that they cannot get elsewhere.

The services that might interest one group of members might be of less interest to another group. For example, members working for larger companies or government departments benefit from the size of their employer in terms of in-house libraries, ability to subscribe to journals, news services, statistical reports and so-on. While the internet has improved access to some information, cost can still be a limiting factor for a self-employed member or those in small organisations.

As part of my involvement with the Southern North Island section, I have been running an email distribution service for members. Through it I have passed on messages about meetings and events in the region that might be of interest to forestry people, copies of speeches and media releases from organisations such as the Forest Industries Council or the Forest Owners Association, news about forestry people, advice of new material on web sites and so on. While a few members feel that there are too many messages, there has generally been a positive reaction. I find Institute members turning up at meetings of other societies, I get feed-back asking for more

information and I get people sending me material to distribute in this way. Positive reactions come from a range of members including those in smaller centres, consultants, retired members and those in government departments. There is also interest from members in other local sections. This suggests that a service such as this is appreciated by members, is worth providing and that we should consider making it available to all NZIF members.

I have also contacted a couple of suppliers of information about the possibility of them providing their material at a group price, as long as we could get sufficient interest from members (in the same way that NZIF members can now purchase the South African Forestry Journal at a reduced price). There are some problems with this sort of service as the publishers are concerned about cannibalisation of their material and a reduction in profits. The trick is to find a way for purchases by Institute members to lead to an overall increase in demand, rather than simply a switch from individual to group purchases.

To assist me in the task assigned by Council, I invite members to contact me with suggestions for services that they would like to see the Institute trying to provide. I would be particularly interested in knowing what sort of member you are (consultant, full member, retired member, self employed, corporate employee, large city, rural town, overseas, etc.) and your views on how new services could be funded. Responses can be emailed to am.mcewen@xtra.co.nz, faxed to (04) 476 6264 or posted to 12 Tisdall Street, Karori, Wellington.

I look forward to receiving your ideas.

Andrew McEwen

