In attempting to identify and consequently elevate the few from the many, it is often more difficult to decide who to eliminate rather than to search for who to include. Criteria are necessary not only to finalize the choice but also to defend it against the inevitable criticism of other self-appointed judges. Consequently, in deciding to record permanently the names of certain individuals who could justifiably be called “forestry” people, a set of guiding principles was necessary. Whether these serve adequately to sort the elite from the normal is irrelevant as they are merely an aid to making a decision. However, those chosen must then “fit” the criteria: these are:

— An arbitrary total of five persons.
— A time period covering the last 45 years, which is approximately the life of this Institute.
— Those chosen must have had a visible or measurable effect on forestry, and not a secondary or potential effect.
— They must be personally known to the selector.

The need for the last rule, which will probably eliminate otherwise eligible candidates, is regretted, but the ability to defend one’s choice is made difficult if it depends on hearsay. The exclusion of the best qualified, the most elevated, or the most popular, was not considered to be of any importance if it resulted from following the guidelines set down. The names are presented in chronological order, depending on when the person concerned was considered to have had the greatest effect of his career.

RODERICK MacRAE

Creator of the bulk of Kaingaroa Forest in his position as Officer-in-charge from 1913 to 1932, MacRae’s effect on the New Zealand forestry and wood utilization scene is measurable in millions of cubic feet, dollars and newsprint rolls. Only the mass plantings successfully achieved during this period could have ensured the creation of a highly capitalized utilization plant, and New Zealand’s entry into the strongly competitive world newsprint market.

MacRae was a hardy Scot who drove a tourer-top runabout Ford with no other protection than a sock over the hand that grasped the steering wheel. In this position he would traverse.

Forestry Consultant, Taupo.
the whole length of the forest from the Kaiwhatiwhati to the Waitahuna Streams on each day that planting was in progress. Roads were treacherous, car heaters and radio-telephones unknown, and telephones unreliable, yet under this man's drive enormous planting feats were achieved; these reached a peak of 34,000 acres in one year. Such programmes are not achieved by one man acting on his own, and MacRae did have helpers; but they were surprisingly few. Stewart Hunter was responsible for all nursery operations during the rush years. Apart from supplying trees in tens of millions, he apparently had time to dabble in horticultural odds and ends, as a search of the Wairepukao area will prove. Charlie Kereopa assisted MacRae throughout the establishment period and was in charge of Maori planters, whom he ruled with a rod of iron. Bill Wright — still living in Wellington — looked after the Waiotapu Forest operations. Jack Barron was second-in-charge at Kaingaroa Forest Headquarters and there was one forest clerk who doubled as telephonist.

I hope that when experts in soils, ecology, the environment and economics criticize the single-species mass planting of the 1920s and 1930s they will remember that, if the politicians and investors of the day had not put up the money, and the MacRaes had not pushed on in the face of frosts, fungi and wild horses, there would be no Tasman or Kinleith today.

The Institute gave recognition to MacRae in 1932, electing him its third Honorary Member following Cockayne and Bell.

ALIX R. ENTRICAN

From 1939 to 1961, the Forest Service was controlled by this engineer, enthusiast, and educator, as its Director. His name is often first linked with the development of the pulp and paper industry and the “Murapara scheme” which has evolved into this country's greatest exporter of manufactured goods. But his contribution to this development was overshadowed by his performance in developing a minor department of state — a neglected child of the Lands Department and a handy employment medium for relief workers — into a much respected, vigorous organization. The staff who form the backbone of the Forest Service were deservingly praised by their Minister in his closing speech at the Forestry Development Conference when he stated that he would “put his men up against anything that industry could produce”. I venture to suggest, with due respect, that these same men owed their degrees and their dedication to A. R. Entrican. He achieved this by his drive for education and by the employment of those already trained.

His Trainee Scheme was slowed down by the war, but it eventually proved to be the catalyst for most of the qualifications held by Institute members today. Entrican made mistakes and enemies. His insistence on departmental control of training delayed the re-establishment of the School of Forestry in New Zealand for many years; but in lieu of a local school he sent numerous aspirants to various parts of the globe, to return and be part of a healthily mixed profession.
His much-criticized Woodsman's Training Scheme has withstood the test of time, and its products have formed the backbone of many forest work forces. How much better are trained woodsmen than the unwilling products of Hautu and Rangipo?

The remarkable advance of the Forest Service was too rapid to be one man's work, and Entrican was assisted, if sometimes unwillingly, by such stalwarts as Dolamore, Kinloch, McKinnon, Birch, Ward and Poole. He was made an Honorary Member in 1961 at the time of his retirement.

LOUIS H. BAIGENT

It is remarkable how few sawmillers have got round to re-establishing any forest in New Zealand. There are a few examples of an individual influencing a public company to plant, such as Tompkins of the Bartholomew Timber Co. in the 1920s and 1930s, but the only outstanding effort in this field is that of Louis H. Baigent of Nelson. Between the years 1945 and 1964, his private company achieved an average planting rate of over 1,000 acres per annum. Various departures from recognized establishment and thinning practices introduced by him incurred the scorn of orthodox practitioners in New Zealand, but strangely evoked praise from overseas observers. When every factor was regulated against private forestry, his company continued with their establishment policy. Taxation disincentives, shortage of labour, and stumpages set by Government at levels well below growing costs, did not deter the company from creating a valuable forest estate on the relatively useless Moutere gravel hills.

While Baigent did not receive any official Government help, he was advised and encouraged in his efforts by Hub Roche. The Institute of Foresters also failed to recognize his contributions to the profession.

ALLAN PRIESTLEY THOMSON

My fourth choice appeared from the depths of Africa and wartime England to make a mark on the New Zealand forestry scene about 1946, and his influence is still being felt 25 years later. The National Forest Survey was initiated by Thomson and Holloway, possibly because they had learnt how to conduct forest surveys on the grand scale, but more probably because, to carry out such a survey in New Zealand, a lot of mountaineering would need to be done! Completion of this task took ten years, and Masters and McKelvey finished off the job that Thomson started. By 1947 the Forest Experiment Station was in full swing, based on the stable in the Whaka Nursery — a position which it still occupies almost 25 years later — and Thomson was the first Officer-in-charge, encouraged by Entrican.

It was this institution which master-minded the "Heartwood Study" of Kaingaroa Forest. Thomson and Allsop pulled in every unattached forester and able-bodied trainee, gave them some cross-cut saws, maps, and a formula, and sent them
into the depths of Kaingaroa for the winter. The most important end results were a useful set of volume tables (still in use) and the confidence for Government to proceed with the Tasman Scheme.

When the strong threat arose of vast areas of forest land becoming wilderness areas controlled by itinerant lay boards, Thomson created a new concept which led to the Forest Park movement. With the creation of new legislation, mere State Forest land became Forest Park land, and the cries of the conservationists were stilled. More important, the land was still controlled by trained foresters.

Dedication to the profession has been Thomson's most outstanding contribution, and a remarkable unbroken period of 20 years' service to this Institute as Councillor, Secretary, Editor, Vice-President and President has yet to be bettered by anybody. His elevation to the highest forestry position in the country in 1971 is a just reward for an extremely productive career. The Institute also recognized his contribution to the profession by electing him an Honorary Member in the same year.

JACK HENRY

My last selection, whose influence is relatively recent, and still becoming fully effective, is Jack Henry of N.Z. Forest Products Ltd. Although trained and broken-in by the Forest Service at Te Whaiti and Te Wae Wae Bay, his name will always be linked with the emergence of company forestry from the shady notoriety of bond selling and disappointed speculators. The latent strength of what is now New Zealand's largest company was still not fully realized in the second half of the 1950s when Henry first became effective in diverting what appeared to be an exercise in forest liquidation into the dynamic renewable asset we see today. Revolutionary approaches to establishment, pruning and thinning of radiata pine, introduced by Henry under the impetus of an assured market, have lifted company forestry out of the depths of speculation into the "safest investment in New Zealand". The stock market and the Forest Service have been pleased to follow the lead.

As a former President of this Institute, Henry's single-minded drive resulted in the publication of two Journals a year. The manner in which the entrenched opposition to this move was overcome by him was an object lesson in how to advance new ideas in spite of the difficulties.

CONCLUSION

The variety of people who contribute to forestry is exemplified in examining the more important characteristics of these five people. MacRae was a dedicated public servant, unlettered and physically tough. Entrican was a visionary engineer, arrogant but effective. Baigent was an individualistic businessman, justifiably proud of his parochialism. Thomson, the only professional forester among this group, was included for his
drive and analytical brain. Finally, Henry's achievements have been soundly based on economics and end use. All five men, however, share the ability to create something important out of idle assets. We can still see the benefits accruing from MacRae's forest created on the barren waste that was Kaingaroa; Entrican's protégés, with their Government-sponsored degrees, are today's forest managers; Baigent's trees are thriving on their stony hills; the survey and research staff launched by Thomson have developed into essential adjuncts of successful forest management; and Henry's second crop, nurtured from neglect, is burgeoning into tomorrow's wealth. The fact that none of these men have been universally loved is perhaps a penalty of being effective and successful. But, although feared by some and envied by many, they have won universal respect.