Of the several possible ways of judging merit, only two received an airing. One basis could be the "wisdom and mercy of Council" as noted by D. Kennedy. Trotman advanced other criteria — assessment based on academic qualifications, a project on one's daily work, experience and appearance before a registration panel. However it is to be judged, the Institute could be more active in insisting on re-training and refresher education. There would be substantial difficulties in setting up the Institute itself as an examining body, since it is not chartered, nor would it be easy to cover the wide range of specialization to be examined. Nevertheless, the Institute should actively seek and recognize pertinent courses which would benefit individuals in forestry, and perhaps even delegate authority to examine on its behalf.

Advance to member, therefore, should be judged on the worthiness of an individual, not only in terms of his performance at work, but of his participation in Institute activities also. If a majority of voting members disagree with the standards set, and interpretations made by Council, it is in their hands every two years to remedy the situation when electing a new Council.

On the other hand, it is important to beware of pressure groups or group representations on Council, and voters should therefore be encouraged to strive for a suitable blend of experience, background and initiative without voting necessarily for all the senior people in their particular organization who are offering themselves for election. Similarly, anyone elected should be prepared to be active without being hindered by divided loyalties.

There is apparently no need, however, to increase the size of Council. To cope with any extra work load, Council should continue to set up subcommittees which would include members from outside Council, and this practice should be extended as required.

There is a fair measure of agreement that, when recognizing the competence of consultants in particular fields, it is important to safeguard the interests of the public and the client, as well as of the consultant himself. Consultants, seemingly, would have to be full members, and machinery needs to be set up to police their activities.

In all other respects, the constitution of the Institute seems able to meet the needs of the 1980s.

A. G. D. Whyte

Colloquium 2: The Institute's policy for the 1980s

FRANKLIN: As far as the internal policy of the Institute is concerned, I think it is fair to say that this should revolve around the question of more involvement of members. If members feel that they can take an active part in the Institute they will contribute more. In part, this involves the question of membership which has already been dealt with by Graham Whyte. It also involves the role of local sections and standing committees with co-opted members, encouraging
participation from as many members as possible. This is essential if we are to attract and retain members.

There was some discussion on whether Council should be democratic or autocratic; it seems to me that Council could be more democratic in the initial stages but in the final analysis it has to be autocratic to be effective, recognizing that this will mean stepping on some people's toes. There was some feeling that local sections should be given authority to speak on behalf of the Institute on local issues, but I detected also a feeling that local sections would like more direction from Council, on certain matters anyway.

On the external side, John Purey-Cust outlined three possible stances that the Institute could take. The purely selfish stance of trying to protect our own interests; the stance of being a public relations front for forestry, perhaps just white-washing decisions made by other forestry organizations; or thirdly, being a collective conscience for the profession. There was some discussion on this question of conscience. Mr Thomson pointed out that there are limits as to how far organizations can allow employees to publicly disagree with their policies. Mr Gleason, on the other hand, said there has to be an opportunity for employees to let off steam, which I think is fair comment too. I think the Institute has a valuable function to serve here; if it considers that the views of a member are being wrongly ignored by his employer, it can act independently. There was general agreement that the Institute should continue to carry out investigations, particularly where we are acting as the conscience of the profession and as long as we are acting within the limits of our professional competence.

As a specific issue there was quite a bit of discussion on education, not only for keeping our own members informed, but perhaps pressing for more educational and retraining opportunities for our members, keeping them up to date as a specific objective of policy.

MOUNTFORD: This topic of public relations needs to be much better spelled out so that local sections know what they may say, whether on a local issue or a national issue. If it's a local issue, is someone from the local section allowed to make comments on it? I feel we have to organize our public relations a lot better so that we can capitalize on the use of the media to spread the aims of forestry, rather than fighting a rearguard action.

BARTON: I should like to quote a local example. Recently a local county council took an extremely flippant attitude, to my mind, on a matter of forestry. At one stage I felt I should write a letter to the editor about this but I felt that the local committee would not carry much weight, so I felt something might be done about this by Council. It would probably have been much better if I could have written a letter as Chairman of the Auckland Section, but I do not have that power, and I think I possibly should have.

SPIERS: This is relevant. Quite a few things have been brought to my attention that Council did not have either the
time or the opportunity to do much about. These sort of things can be handled very well by the local section. We need to define the sort of responsibility they have because they can play a strong part, in local areas.

MOUNTFORD: Let us decide what we are going to do here and now. We cannot wait another year. Things are catching up with us and before long we will find that foresters as professionals will be no longer responsible for managing the forests — they will be taken away from us.

WHYTE: I do not see any problem here. Council members are only as far away as a telephone call and if there is any problem which the local section President feels he wants to comment on, surely he can get in touch with the Institute President or the Vice-President and say: This is a problem; this is what I should like to say; have I got your permission to say it? The President and the Vice-President already have the power to act for the Institute in such matters.

BOWERS: I wonder whether in fact on any purely local issue the local President or section has to approach the national body to get permission. It should be up to the local section to decide whether or not he should approach the Institute President.

SPIERS: Generally speaking, in the case of the local section on local issues, this is reasonable enough but you need to be careful that the spokesman in a local section does not speak on a matter of national forest policy which could commit the Institute to that attitude.

ROGER CAMERON: I am concerned that local sections could pontificate on too many subjects. Some members feel that the Institute should act as a pressure group on a wide range of matters, but I am concerned that the Institute should act as a responsible informed body and so restrict its activities to its special field of competence. I believe that the future of the Institute lies in acting with discrimination and responsibility, rather than attempting to achieve publicity regardless of effects.

BOWERS: It would help a great deal if Council could provide more information so that local sections could judge whether a matter is local or national.

KENNEDY: If the Institute has a policy, the local section President can put that policy forward. It does not matter whether it comes from the parent body or the local section.

GLEED: If some of our people, who have the facts, would only care to use them — either to write to their MP or write to the papers — this would do just as much good for the forestry profession as if it came out under the name of the Institute of Foresters.

GLEASON: Some state foresters are not quite sure how bound they are by the Official Secrets Act. There may be conflict between their loyalty to the profession and to their employer.
SPIERS: I have a disquiet when people talk about loyalties and letting off steam. If you consider that your employer is on the wrong course, your duty is to argue with the chief in your organization to the best of your ability to try to convince them that their course is wrong. In most cases there are things that are influencing policy decisions that people at the field end are often unaware of. But once the decision is made within the organization, I think you have another loyalty. You have a loyalty to the person you are selling your services to. If, then, you find that what is being done goes against the grain of our total principles, you must have the courage of your convictions, and the only answer is that your boots are made for walking.

GLEASON: That is an extreme view. If you come across a brick wall, and if you still feel that your decision is the right one and your employer is carrying on with the wrong decision, you should have some means of expressing your opinion, otherwise you may do something rash like resigning.

SPIERS: Over the past few years we have had various instances where somebody has stated he is resigning from the Institute. In many cases they are resigning on a matter of principle. We refuse to accept these resignations in the first instance until we have had it out with the person. This has sometimes resulted in our changing our policy or direction.

GRAYBURN: Could I come back to the subject of public statements. Surely most of us recognize that the news media of the present time has got the developed world by the throat. It is high time we did not kowtow to them as much as we do. Nine times out of ten any public statements made will not be reported correctly anyway. Surely, what we will be judged by are our acts. If we act correctly and to our convictions and carry out the policies for anyone for whom we may work correctly, then that is what will count in the long run; not some statement which will be taken out of context half printed, half true — even if you do give them a written statement. As far as the subject of loyalty is concerned, you have every right to express your point of view, but for goodness sake in the first instance do it in committee. Then, if you find that you cannot get your point of view across and it still means so much to you then surely I hope you would resign, because you cannot work for an organization if you do not believe in the policies which it carries out. If you continue working for them, then your conscience will prick you for the rest of your life, so you would be better to find somewhere else to work.

D. A. Franklin

Colloquium 3: Code of ethics

A. W. Grayburn chaired a discussion on the subject of a Code of Ethics for the N.Z. Institute of Foresters which was attended by 35 to 40 members. It was based on a proposed Code of Ethics which had been prepared by Council, circulated to all