THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II NATIONAL TRUST
Its works and hopes.
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There is proper reason to be suspicious of scientists, including, of course, those of the discipline of forestry. Reared in the rewarding days of classical education, I was constantly told by budding scientists that theirs would be a life based on observation, exploration and deduction. But, instead, I have found that scientists are pulled hither and thither by myths. One of those myths touches me closely. It is that because some person chairs an organisation, he must therefore know something about the fields in which the organisation operates. In truth that conclusion is absolute nonsense.

Take my case. As a youth I was, in W. S. Gilbert's words, put to the law, and I stayed so put during the whole of my paid working life, as a clerk, barrister, judge of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the Privy Council. True, I escaped fairly frequently from being shut in, by chairing Royal Commissions — seven in all. They were on subjects I knew little about — most often the format and administration of the State services in their numerous complexities. But sometimes the diet was varied by such exotics as nuclear energy, or even horse racing. I quickly learned that it did not matter greatly whether one was familiar with the subject at issue. What would happen to one's report was known from the beginning. If one recommended in a way that coincided with the aspirations of the government department concerned, one could not fail. If one took a contrary view to the departmental one, one could expect the Minister to be pressed into taking no notice of it. My experiences have demonstrated that the same rule applies to other advisory bodies besides Royal Commissions, such as advice given by a National Trust.

All this palaver is, of course, to demonstrate how presumptuous it is for me to be here today amongst men whose training and experiences supply those qualities which I lack, and especially to open a conference whose theme calls for something more fundamental and scientific than my amateurish emotional approach can bring to the topic.

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Professor McKelvey, who has experienced my inadequacies, has suggested that I confine myself in this address to an exposition of the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust which I chair — how it came to be established; its functions; its organisation; and its struggle to establish itself in the life of this country. I shall try to do that, justifying myself by pointing out that land use is the very heart of the Trust's life and activities. Its work in that field is at least some excuse for my being here today.

The origins of the Trust lie in proposals for an all-embracing and election winning manifesto. The environment and its protection was then emerging as an incoming thing. Rachael Carson, and the Club of Rome had really started something. What was suggested was a top level advisory body on environmental concerns with co-ordinating functions, which would be independent, as far as practicable, of the executive. It was all somewhat indefinite, and Federated Farmers were contemporaneously advancing another case. They wanted some better machinery to achieve permanent protection of land forms and values on their much loved farms, or portions of them — an area of bush saved from fire and the axe, a clear line of a cape or hill, a wetland, and so on. True, there was already statutory procedure for this by means of a covenant with the Lands Department under the Reserves Act, but farmers, you may think rightly, look askance at government institutions — they wanted a body wholly independent and more closely attuned to farmers' hopes and sensitivities. So both these concepts were combined in the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act, 1977. The name of the Trust was to have been the National Trust for Open Space which would have given some indication of our purpose, but it was decided by the government to celebrate the jubilee and the visit to New Zealand of Her Majesty by giving us the name we now have. Doubtless this was an estimable show of loyalty and devotion to the Crown, but it was nevertheless one which has led to much confusion about what we are and what we do.

Independence was to be our distinguishing feature, and so it has been and continues to be. The Act provides a directorship which is unchallengeable in this respect. Although all the Board of Directors are formally appointed by the Minister (except the two elected by the members of the Trust, for we do have public membership) most are nominated by organisations and that means really appointed by such organisations. So we have today the Chairman and two members, currently Professor McKelvey and Stuart Masters, appointed by the Minister on his own initiative.
and we have those nominated by the Maori Council, two by Fed-
erated Farmers, one by the Counties Association, and one by the
Municipal Association. Then we have the two elected directors. In
each case these are senior people in their different walks in life.
It is this feature of a Board comprised of men and women, not
there as members of the State services, but independent in stature
and thought which attracts public support to our operations.
Though we have had tremendous backing from the Lands Depart-
ment, the department charged with the responsibility of launching
and supporting us, it would be an exaggeration to say that this
quality of independent thought and action makes us always a happy
bed-fellow with departmental thinking. But if we are to be but
another instrument of departmental action, then I say to you, un-
hesitatingly, that our existence is not only not worth while, but a
deception. My great hope is that in time we may reach the posi-
tion now achieved by somewhat comparable institutions over-
seas, such as the National Trust of England and the Scottish
National Trust, with sufficient financial support coming direct
from the public to enable us to stand entirely on our own feet.
It took these two overseas institutions, and similar ones in the
United States, many long years to achieve such a position. We
cannot hope for many years ahead to do other than look to
government for our finances.

Our constituting Act of 1977 confers numerous functions and
powers. These are, indeed, as all-embracing as the Lord’s Prayer
and read literally could entitle us to undertake any operation in
relation to “open space”. That is defined in the Act as meaning
“any area of land or body of water that serves to preserve or to
facilitate preservation of any landscape of aesthetic, cultural,
recreational, scenic, scientific or social interest or value”. I regret
that I find the definition another example of environmental
gobbledygook. In the end, of course, we have had to decide for
ourselves the areas in which we should operate and I should
perhaps spend a few minutes in giving you a picture of what we
have tried to do in the three years we have been in business.

I shall endeavour to group our activities and powers under a
few comprehensive headings. This is not an exciting exercise, but
my aim is to inform rather than excite.

1. ADVISORY

Our Act imposes a duty to advise the Minister of Lands on the
preservation, protection and use of open space, not only in rela-
tion to the acquisition and development of areas of open space, but also the co-ordination of the activities of interested government departments and other bodies. When we, the Board of Directors, were asked to serve, we understood, rightly or wrongly, that this advisory function was to be a very important feature of our activities. But we experienced what appeared to be some reluctance on the part of government to turn to us in this capacity, and when eventually it did, we met the resistances which seem an inherent part of the departmental structure of this country — perhaps that was inevitable. A Minister cannot divest himself of final responsibility to make decisions by turning to some outside organisations such as ourselves, and it would be unreal to expect him to free himself from the influences of his departmental advisers. But it does make the performance of one's duty to advise rather frustrating and unrewarding. After many years of experience I now seriously question the wisdom and the necessity for the enormous host of advisory bodies which surround the administration of the State services in New Zealand. Such evidence as I have leads me to think that much of this advisory work is an unnecessary drain on time and money. It would be interesting to know what has been the experience of men who have served on the Forestry Council. Certainly some of them have been left extremely critical, as are many who have been on others. The new Energy Advisory Committee could be already experiencing the type of thing I am talking about. So for a variety of reasons I feel a little uncertain about the development and value of our advisory function in the years ahead.

In the area of co-operation of the activities of government departments and other bodies in the preservation and the use of open space, I have much greater hope. I think we can claim with some justification that already we have achieved a measure of success in specific locations and on specific issues.

There are other regional and national activities in which we are becoming involved and which I believe are stimulating, and which, hopefully, will produce long-term benefits for the country. These include investigating, at the government's request, a landscape study of the whole of the country to determine what areas are calling for special protection, what values are to be used in making the selection, and especially how protection is to be achieved at central and local government levels. Other bodies, in particular the Environment Council and N.Z. Institute of Landscape Architects, are also involved in the project, with the Trust as the co-ordinator.
2. COVENANTS

I have told you that a central purpose of the establishment of the Trust was to provide machinery for conservation covenants, for farmers primarily, but actually for everyone. I imagine it is unnecessary to tell you what a conservation covenant is. The number of applications indicate that there is plenty of evidence that farmers in particular value this service which we give.

These covenants range over the whole of New Zealand and are most diverse. They cover small areas such as a piece of moa swamp, a threatened wetland, and, at the other end, extensive areas of bush and farmlands. Our attitude is not to pester people for covenants. We see ourselves as offering a service to those people who want to see preserved for posterity some portion of their holdings which for them has a particular emotional value. And we offer considerable assistance by providing the necessary surveys, and in many instances by contributing to the cost of fencing. We can approach local government for reductions in rates when the area of land involved is likely to merit some worthwhile reduction. Covenants are infectious. One finds that when one or two have been established in a district these supply encouragement to other owners to seek them too. This is an area where I am sure foresters can help us. I am sure that foresters, especially those in private practice, have many opportunities of recommending the use of our covenant services.

3. GIFTS

We are authorised to accept gifts of money or land and these are exempt from gift duty or, if made by a will, estate duty. Already it is pleasing to be able to tell you that we have several offers of valuable properties under consideration.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Our Act and regulations provide for membership on a quite low subscription. The growth of membership is a slow process, disappointingly slow to some, but that has been the experience of all overseas organisations of like character in their early years, including such prestigious bodies as the National Trust in England, or the Scottish National Trust. It takes years to establish a public reputation of the kind which attracts solid public support.
What of the future? It is dangerous to forecast. I have seen so many institutions set up which wither later as the needs of time change. We have tried to keep our headquarters organisation small, engaging local correspondents or agents in areas away from Wellington to assist us in publicising our activities and attending to the enquiries of people in their localities. The last thing we wish to do is to develop a large bureaucracy. We prefer to rely upon existing departments and institutions to help us in our activities. Included as non-voting members of our Board are the departmental heads of a number of government departments, including, of course, Lands and Survey and Forest Service. These two departments in particular have been generous in their help and support, especially Lands, to which we are attached for rations and quarters.

I am convinced that we shall grow, but as I have said the areas and character of our activities could change. I personally hope that as we become more and more known and accepted in the community we will derive sufficient financial support from that community, to be less dependent upon government for our needs. But, as I have tried to indicate, we are at this time still somewhat finding our way and seeking our best roles. We endeavour to adopt a sober and responsible pose. That is fraught with numerous difficulties. The more radical conservationists see us as disappointingly "middle of the road". The departments are bound to see us, sometimes, as a pressure group. All this is the inevitable fate of he who strives to be balanced. If I personally have a philosophy it is that the no-growth scenario is completely unrealistic and unacceptable. However, this does not mean that I accept the doomsday syndrome which many preach. New Zealand must, of course, develop, and that inevitably means some use of natural resources presently untouched. But there is no need for waste and greed: we need neither consume nor conserve everything. We surely must learn from the past and encourage and promote belief in stewardship, responsibility and accountability. But I must not preach to you. Nor does time permit me, even if I could, to spell out a philosophy to cover the numerous complexities of conservation. In any event I recall the alleged Roman saying quoted to you last year by A. J. Leslie of FAO, that at the third stage of life one becomes aware that the little one does know is probably wrong.

It is sometimes put to me, why do people like me who should be out to grass involve ourselves in areas which are the battle grounds of conflicting and often violent attitudes. My answer is a
simplistic and perhaps emotional one. I hope it is not offensively flowery. It is this: My people were early settlers in this country. When I was born in 1907, New Zealand was then officially 67 years of age. I have consequently lived through more than half of New Zealand's official history. I recall this land when much of it was still in its virgin state. I have seen great change. The years have implanted in me an affection for our islands and our way of life which has kept me here when I could easily have gone elsewhere. I would not want our children and grandchildren to be denied the joys which I have been privileged to have in large measure, and I believe that the time to ensure that is now, before it is too late.