

the last decade, and as at March 1984 accounted for only 6% of the national timber total.

I bring these matters to your attention in order to protect a department which has been consistent in its approach, and which has achieved results which are available for all to see. The establishment and utilisation of our exotics has always been pioneered by the Forest Service. The record, in so far as New Zealand Forest Service's ability to handle its exotic forests, is well known to all, particularly the Australians who actually introduced dumping charges as a means of keeping us out of their market, purely and simply because they "could not compete".

The Department, I believe, has been condemned for its actions in the past, and I consider this to be completely unwarranted. It has now built up a strong professional approach in forests and land management, and I do not believe the Conservation Department concept has taken into account many of the activities of the Forest Service. The formation of a Forestry Corporation is very simplistic and needs to be very carefully analysed. The continuation of the Forest Service along very similar lines to those under which it operates now is in my opinion, vital to New Zealand.

—R. J. J. PERHAM

FRI NEWS

Sir, — On several occasions in recent years I have applauded the quality of the bulletin series, *What's New in Forestry* and similar pamphlets dealing with insects and pathogens, etc. In the same vein I welcome your new series.

On my appointment to the New Zealand Forestry Council in 1977 I made a serious plea for greater investment in public relations. As one who has been on the fringe of forestry for 25 years or so, and personally familiar with a wide range of regional development issues, it did appear to me that the sector deserved a much higher public profile.

The NZFC appointed a subcommittee to investigate this issue but I regret to say that members were not prepared to commit themselves to a major review without the wholehearted support from top management, both in the public and private sector.

What is the message? To whom should we be directing the appropriate themes?

First of all the message . . . Essentially it is the story of good land management and husbandry. Amongst other things it means regu-

larly putting into perspective the relatively small area of land (often of poor quality for alternative crops) devoted to commercial tree crops bringing real wealth and employment to thousands of New Zealanders.

It means that we need to offset the several myths that are regularly propagated about the risks inherent in placing continuing emphasis on radiata pine as a commercial tree crop.

It means conveying to the public at large that foresters are not "ruthless philistines with bulldozers" and that they lack any soul regarding our stewardship of the inherited indigenous environment.

It means creating in the minds of farmers and others a better balanced perspective of alternative pastoral/agricultural crops and tree crops.

Nowadays that attitude of prejudice is changing but it is not only the farmers that need to be informed. The messages will be increasingly important for accountants, solicitors, bankers, valuation specialists, "stock and station" agencies, school teachers, and young people looking for jobs. In view of the importance of town and country planning controls, the messages are relevant to local government administrators and councillors. And because the key operators — namely the forestry companies, the New Zealand Forest Service, and a handful of local bodies engaged in forestry — have relatively few voices among them, the forestry political lobby cannot be compared with that represented in pastoral farming, horticulturalists or the urban-based environmentalists.

I have for the past three years been serving on the Dunedin City Council. This organisation manages the largest local body forestry operation in New Zealand, but as councillors we receive very few pieces of paper on forestry matters. No wonder, then, that councillors serving on the key rural counties have been inadequately informed in the past decade.

My family includes three children, one of whom I am proud to say is now serving on the staff of FRI at Canterbury. But their introduction to forestry at secondary school level was quite inadequate. This is reflected throughout our centres of learning as any comparison with agriculture demonstrates.

In more recent years we have seen some excellent and brave endeavours by the N.Z. Forest Owners' Association to offset public misunderstanding with the production of several informative brochures and pamphlets. This is, indeed, most welcome.

The dismemberment of the N.Z. Forest Service that has served this country for so many years might well be seen in retrospect as a

general failure to take the public with us in the progressive development of the forestry sector. The abolition of "hidden benefits" that we have all taken for granted will inevitably harden the relationships between the public and the administrators as every service is counted in dollar terms.

And let me here add that my lifetime commitment to forestry was given a great impetus by the generous assistance I received from Keith Prior and George Stockley in the early 'sixties, and that provided subsequently by numerous other officers in the N.Z. Forest Service. And like other countless forest lovers our family owes a great debt to the NZFS for the enjoyment gained from well-managed forest parks.

Is it not time, therefore, that the thousands of beneficiaries of this great service gathered together and determined that in 1986 the stature of our foresters, from the Director-General down, is restored and that wherever they serve in this rapidly changing employment environment they are enabled to stand tall and again reflect a proud tradition handed down from previous generations of foresters in this country.

—JOLYON MANNING
Dunedin