After 68 years the New Zealand Forest Service, originally the State Forest Service, has gone. What did it achieve during these years? How did it evolve and how did its roles change? Why was it disbanded? How well will the new organizations perform?

Were the changes a forward step?

These and many similar questions are on our minds these days and each of us will have her or his opinions. It is probably too soon to answer some of them partly because many of us are too closely involved. However, it is important to try both to document the changes and attempt to make judgements so we can learn from them, and to make adjustments to our thinking. Also foresters and historians of the future will need this background information.

In this issue there is a range of papers which focus on the past performance of the New Zealand Forest Service. They do not cover all aspects, although the journal intends to extend the coverage in later issues. There are also opinion pieces which it is hoped will stimulate thinking around these questions and about the future. As in past issues, there is further material recording some of the changes.

In my opinion foresters and others involved with land management or industries based on primary produce need to learn to be much more critical of their actions. We need to be more outspoken, to call for a halt to bad practices, to criticize poor organization structures (especially during this period of change in Government and Industry) and to question what has generally been considered 'correct' in the past. This does not necessarily mean throwing away old concepts, but rather re-examining their applicability. We need to be more open-minded, to be ready to change, and to be innovative. We must also continue to be sensitive to the needs and wishes of society while retaining our professional integrity. To do this we must develop our communication skills.

I believe the Institute of Foresters can be a catalyst and an important focus for this change in attitudes. It can act as a forum for discussion and action at the local and national level. The re-examination of the multiple-use concept at this year's A.G.M. is an excellent beginning. The Institute's long existence, its stability within the changing scene, is important in assisting members to make the transitions more readily. However, to be fully effective it requires members to be involved. We are fortunate in encompassing a wide range of expertise with people coming from many backgrounds.

This journal can also be a useful medium for criticism, new ideas and discussion. It has been pleasing, for example, to see the debate continuing on discounting methods and decision making. This was sparked off by the article by J. Fitzsimons a year ago. The editorial policy is to try to cover the widest range of forestry related issues and to promote debate.

Finally, I would argue that we should all welcome an on-going, in-depth review of forestry-related activities. It will not only keep us on our toes but make for an interesting, vigorous, sector to be involved with.

Don Mead,
EDITOR

CORRECTION

In the comment on the dangers of user pay research (Vol. 31, 4) it was suggested that the cost of the Timberbelts video was $250. This is now being advertised at $165 incl. GST.

Structure of the Forest Service and its economic performance

The Forest Service was primarily an advocate for wood production and its production goal generally took precedence over its secondary environment protection goal. Consequently the Marsuia Declaration, supported by 341,000 signatories in 1976, called for the splitting up of the Forest Service and the establishment of a Nature Conservancy with a clear and undivided responsibility to protect most publicly owned native forests. The problem for forest conservationists was to achieve greater public accountability to popular environmental goals. The solution was seen as a new department of State to function as a protector of natural lands and advocate of nature conservation.

In practice the Forest Service resembled a one-party state and presented bureaucratically integrating economic, social and environmental goals as "balanced use" forestry. It was impossible to achieve adequate accountability for any one of these goals because:

- the goals were mutually conflicting
- the structure of the department promoted internal resolution of these conflicts by individual managers
- the outcome was backed by the collective ideology of forest managers and promoted by the institutional power of the whole structure.
- this ideology, rather than society's agreed objectives, came to dominate the resolution of conflicts in forest resource management.

By conferring multiple objectives on management, the departmental structure could be, and was, used to shield managers against accountability to any particular objective. For example, forest proposed by conservationists for reserves was claimed to be needed for production for economic and social reasons, whilst the fulfillment of environmental and social goals was said to preclude the most economic production of wood. Such conflicts were internalized and usually resolved in favour of timber management, variously presented as an economic, social or environmental desideratum.

As part of the Government's "opening of the books" exercise, Treasury (1984) repeated earlier dissatisfaction with the level of economic accountability practised by the Forest Service and proposed that it shed essentially non-commercial environmental and social activities and concentrate on becoming an efficient commercial enterprise.

To develop the potential of collaboration between conservationists and economists, the Forest Service's economic performance was examined in some detail. The paper summarized below was prepared for the public seminar "Native Forests — The Next Steps", held in Victoria University, Wellington on August 3, 1985. This comment has benefited from the criticisms of forest economists and Forest Service staff.

The economic analyses referred to are from the national point of view, and dollars are expressed in terms of their March 1984 value.

Growing costs for plantations

The justification for the second planting boom of pines, begun in the 1960s, was to capitalize on our relatively low growing costs to increase overseas earnings and to broaden our export base (Wije-Wardana, 1983). The