

South Westland, south of the Cook River

A resource management study – September 1988

With the release of the final report of the South Westland Forests Working Party, Government decisions on the area are imminent (expected December 1988). This Ministry for the Environment's report (available from P.O. Box 10-362, Wellington, cost \$11) is essential reading for those interested in New Zealand's natural land management opportunities.

The report is structured to review "Resource Management Opportunities" under ten headings including Timber Production, Nature Conservation, Agriculture, Minerals, Fishing, Tourism and Recreation, and came down with 19 specific recommendations for action.

Consensus was reached on most issues, by a working party mixing local and national interest groups, except on the question of whether timber harvesting should be permitted. The region has outstanding natural values with high conservation ranking, but also contains indigenous forests with potential for sustained yield management. Kahikatea is the species much in question, including debate on its intrinsic wood values. Substantial protection by reservation is nationally desirable, but here too is New Zealand's only opportunity for forests dedicated to the supply of small annual harvests of this New Zealand species in perpetuity.

Two final options were put forward for final consideration. The Department of Conservation and Joint Campaign on Native Forests recommended that all of the study area of 311,000 hectares be

allocated to the Department of Conservation as conservation areas. The Ministry of Forestry, NZ Tourist and Publicity, DSIR and local Maori, citizens, regional government, timber and forestry interests supported the substantial allocation of lands in the study area as conservation areas, but sought some 20,000 hectares for timber harvesting by "sustained ecosystem management".

A number of "key issues" are identified in the report. Community viability was stated to be of permanent importance. Protection of nature conservation values and provision of rateable income to local authorities are desirable. Majority support for world heritage status was given, although perceived as a threat by many West Coasters. Of considerable concern, however, was a proposal by local interests to remake the sustained yield gazettal of Saltwater and Okarito State Forests, for further clearfelling, although this was not supported by Government agencies or the NZ Forestry Corporation.

An analysis of submissions (available from Ministry for the Environment, at \$9) showed most support for conservation options from the cities of Auckland and Christchurch, while support for the mixed production option was highest on the West Coast itself.

Many critical issues are at stake here, which can only be resolved through debate, discussion and full understanding of the extensive resource material available. It is important for the demo-

cratic process that concerned members write to the Minister for the Environment (Geoffrey Palmer), or their local MP to further express their own professional point of view.

Mike Orchard

Forestry Corporation privatization

Government announced, on July 28, its intention to sell the Crown commercial forestry assets. A press statement accompanying the budget papers noted:

"It is quite clear that there are no social reasons for the Government to retain its holding in the vast forestry estate, amounting to over 50% of the nation's commercial forests. Given the global strategic nature of the forestry resource and its relative immaturity, the Government's preference is to cash up now and let a purchaser, who is so prepared, carry the related commercial risk. For these reasons and because of the likely impetus which will be given to much needed industry restructuring, a positive contribution will be made to Government's economic objectives from the sale."

Subsequently a Forestry Working Group was set up to advise Ministers on the most appropriate form in which and process by which the Crown's forestry assets should be sold, given the requirement to maximize their sales value to the shareholders.

The Working Group comprised John Chetwin (Treasury), Paul Baines (Jarden Morgan), Keith Chandler (Forestry Consultant) Brian Gaynor (Consultant, PM's Department), Tim Saunders (Consultant, Treasury) and John Valentine (Ministry of Forestry). It was to report in mid October.

The Group was required to address the merits of direct asset sale or selling the Corporation after the assets have been transferred and whether the afforested land or management/cutting rights should be sold. Other issues to be considered included ongoing management, industry considerations, legislative requirements, the Treaty of Waitangi, conservation matters and timing.

John Valentine

INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY

The next issue of "NZ Forestry" (February 1989) will be a theme issue. It is intended that most of the space will be devoted to forestry activity undertaken by New Zealand foresters offshore. It is planned to focus on Pacific and Pacific-rim countries, but some material which ranges further afield may be included.

Several articles have been, or will be, solicited. The post box will be expectantly checked on a regular basis early in the new year!

Additional contributions, particularly short, informal articles or comment would be welcome. A black and white pic or two would also be appreciated, if possible.

The Editorial Board would also like to draw the attention of interested organizations to the advertising opportunities that this theme issue will present. Advertising from organizations working in the international forestry consultancy and allied fields would be welcomed. Such advertising will add appeal to the issue, and convey information which complements the articles. Advertising enquiries should be directed to the journal's Business Manager.