Labour Government did very little for plantation forestry

New Zealand plantation forest managers are unlikely to lose many tears over the defeat of New Zealand's fourth Labour Government. Especially despised was Labour's treatment of forest taxation. This is an example of one of New Zealand's most promising industries being sacrificed for an unproven taxation theory of neutrality. The result was that new planting has dramatically decreased. We cannot determine the exact amount because, in another economy measure, the Government has reduced the means of obtaining records of new planting, but one estimate is that new planting has fallen from 54,000 ha in 1984 to 13,000 ha in 1989.

The forestry taxation policy of the new National Government will allow deductibility of most plantation expenditure. Hopefully this will result in increased plantings.

It is hard not to be cynical of the Labour Government. It claimed plantation forestry as one of New Zealand's great hopes, but those plantations could never have been established if Labour's recent taxation regime had been in operation for the last 30 years. The market does not yet have the sophistication to make large-scale investments with the required long-term horizons, especially when there is a discriminatory tax disincentive.

From the President

This market limitation has been long recognised by the Chilenos. For nearly two decades they have had a positive approach to plantation forestry.

In 1974 Chile's military dictatorship adopted a free market approach in all areas of the economy except for forestry. Here the Chilen Government gave very preferable treatment - in the form of a subsidy - a grant of up to 75% of approved expenditure (and even up to 90% for a period). By the end of 1989 the total cost of that subsidy (without interest) over 15 years was US$80 million (SNZ$35 million). However that investment stimulated plantation establishment over the same period of one million hectares (from 386,000 hectares in 1974 to 1,386,000 hectares in 1989). In the same period New Zealand's plantation estate increased by only 672,000 hectares - from 468,000 in 1974 to 1,240,000 hectares in 1989. These comparisons are illustrated graphically in the figure below.

As the Chilen plantations mature the wood-using industry and the nation will reap a financial bonanza - well in excess of the subsidy plus interest.

We should be grateful that Labour's iniquitous forestry taxation policy was only in operation for about five years. If Labour's taxation policy had operated for the last 30 years, New Zealand would now have a plantation forestry industry only capable of satisfying local demand. Exports would be the exception. Not only would there have been little new planting but also there would have been almost no research and no training. Above all, there would have been little to attract the ambitious and the career oriented.

What must therefore be one of the great hypocrisies is the Labour Government's claim that plantation forestry is one of New Zealand's success stories and one with great hopes for future employment and the earning of overseas exchange. Plantation forestry will achieve those objectives but it is in spite of, not because of, New Zealand's fourth Labour Government. That Government did very little for plantation forestry.

W.R.J. Sutton

Fast-tracking of full members

At the 1990 AGM the Constitution was amended to allow the so-called "fast-tracking" of Full Members of the Institute, i.e. providing Council with the discretion to waive the requirement for a person to have been an Associate Member for at least two years.

This amendment was passed on the basis of guidelines being developed by Council for fast-tracking of Full Members.

Council, in liaison with the Registrar of Consultants, has considered this matter and envisages two categories of application for "fast-tracking":

1. Those seeking recognition as consultants, but who have not previously been members of the Institute; and

2. People in senior positions, particularly those returning from overseas, seeking to join the Institute as Full Members.
FORESTRY IDENTITY

Lindsay Poole

C.G.R. Chavasse

One can describe Lindsay Poole confidently as a forester, a scientist, and a man of wide interests. His mother was Scottish and Welsh and his father was Irish. He was born in 1908 at Whakatuku, Poverty Bay. During moves around the East Coast the family lived for a time at Tuparoa Bay. From there he and his brother went to school in Auckland, travelling by coastal vessel. It took five days once loaded aboard by basket – along with the farm animals. In 1921 he went to live in Rotorua, attending the Whakarewarewa School for two years, and King's College, Auckland 1923-26.

Influenced by his aunt and their neighbour H.A. Goudie, Lindsay began work at the NZ State Forest Service nursery at Whaka as a trainee in 1926. The next year he went to Auckland University College Forestry School, obtaining a NZ Perpetual Forestry (Smith Wylie) scholarship of £100 per year. Students there caught glimpses of Mackintosh Ellis and C.M. Smith.

Lindsay graduated in 1930 at the height of the Great Depression, and was then employed as a student labourer (earning two shillings less per day than a regular labourer) by the Forest Service. His experience was varied and useful for his later career; he was at one stage in charge of Wairapuaka Nursery in Kaihara Forest; worked with C.M. Smith in Head Office, Wellington (which he describes as "probably the most valuable year I ever had"); spent two years quarter-mastering in unemployment camps at Balnoral and Hanmer during which he learned the "value of cooks and how to buy Jersey cow beef at tuppence three farthings a pound"; worked on ecological survey in Iantehe Forest, Westland; had three months' deer culling in the Urewera; and in between times helped his aunt to set up Wythwood Nursery in Rotorua.

When in 1937 there was still no permanent employment for professional foresters in the Forest Service, Lindsay joined the Botany Division, DSIR. War came and he volunteered for service in the 15th Forestry Company, NZEF, which finished up in Petersfield, Hampshire. He was soon moved to London as Scientific Liaison Officer, DSIR, and travelled throughout Britain. When the war ended in Europe he joined the Forestry and Timber section of the Military Government in the British Zone of Germany, and worked closely with the German Forest Service. On returning to New Zealand he was appointed Assistant Director, Botany Division, in 1947, and Director in 1949.

Two years later Lindsay became Assistant Director, NZ Forest Service and was responsible for (among many other things) planning the expansion of the planting programme and for setting up the "Taylor Committee" to report on East Coast erosion. From 1961 until 1971 he was Director General of the Forest Service, presiding over the expanding planting programme and burgeoning timber harvest. He describes his duties, modestly, as "general administration and consolidation of the Forest Service."

Lindsay has remained very active since his retirement. By invitation he chaired the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Council, 1971-78. He served on the Board of H. Baigent and Son, Nelson. He designed and administered the Wairau North Bank afforestation in Marlborough for Scouty Forests. And he continued producing books and papers. His papers on forestry, botany and horticulture number nearly one hun-