

occur in the near future. It has been noted that some of the new job descriptions seem to be just new titles replacing old ones with little real change.

(6) It is also seen that with two main streams, *i.e.*, Management, Utilization, it could become hard for people to cross from one stream to the other. This will lead to two separate structures, divorced from each other. This is the direct opposite from what must be found, flexible structures that can meet the changes and increased demands of the future.

This is a summary of the main points that we, the undersigned, feel should be seriously considered when deciding upon how the NZFS will operate and be staffed in the future.

34 Students at the School of Forestry

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Mr Lange, — I consider myself fortunate to have been associated with forestry all my life, and, in view of this association, consider it necessary to approach you personally to acquaint you with some of the background of the New Zealand Forest Service, of which I am sure you are not aware.

The recently announced decision to establish a Conservation Department and a Forestry Corporation would indicate to those closely associated with forestry, like myself, that the New Zealand Forest Service, as a Department, will disappear. This is a tragic victory for the environmental people, who have virtually come out and claimed a victory in the media. Where was the victory won? I say this because it indicates a one-track approach, which is not in New Zealand's best interests.

The New Zealand Forest Service was established in 1920. Prior to this, all Crown lands in New Zealand were administered by the Lands and Survey Department. One of the major components of the Directors' Brief in 1920, was the conservation and management of our indigenous forests. Prior to this, forests in New Zealand had been slaughtered, not by sawmillers, but by persons wishing to establish farms.

We were indeed fortunate that someone saw the need to control this wholesale clearing of our indigenous forests, and even more fortunate that Mr McIntosh Ellis took it upon himself to introduce numerous pine species into New Zealand for the establishment of forests in other areas which were then wastelands.

In 1935, the first Labour Government was elected, and, as you would be aware, that government immediately set into motion a massive housing programme. To meet the requirements of this programme our indigenous forests were forced to provide all the timber for what were predominantly timber houses.

In 1940, the indigenous forests were again pushed to provide timber for the war effort. This was considered to be of such importance that the timber industry was classified as an essential industry. Accordingly, industry personnel, along with farmers, were not permitted to go overseas.

In 1946, greater pressure was put on the sawmilling industry, to provide timber for housing which had once again fallen behind. During most of the period 1935 to 1955, whilst government put tremendous pressure on the sawmilling industry, A. R. Entrican, the Director of Forests for the greater part of that period, introduced and exercised a very strong conservation policy.

Pressure came on the Forest Service and the sawmilling industry from all angles for more timber. We did not have the money to import any significant quantities, and during the 1946 to 1955 period, when housing was really accelerated, import licencing was rigidly enforced. We were very fortunate that the Forest Service had established the Waipa and Conical Hills exotic sawmills. These were the forerunners of the introduction of exotic timber into the New Zealand housing industry.

The battle put up by the personnel in the Forest Service responsible for the introduction of grading rules and acceptance for radiata, was tremendous. The production of the Waipa sawmill was railed through Rotorua, at a time when the Rotorua Borough Council would not approve the use of radiata in housing. All of these prejudices had to be overcome, and as late as 1960 customers, builders and specifiers, including the Ministry of Works and the State Advances Corporation, were insisting on indigenous timber flooring, sheathing, joinery and finishing lines.

At the time environmentalists set out on their campaign, the Forest Service were well on with their indigenous forest management plans. Not all of these were necessarily right, but the areas of indigenous forests available to New Zealand today are what they are because the Forest Service was more right in its policy of conservation than wrong.

The pressures on the department for additional indigenous log supplies have been constant, and have come from many courses. Figures today show that our indigenous usage has dropped 60% in

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-