



Graduates illiterate?

You might have observed that over the past couple of decades – give or take a year or two – this journal has contained a reasonably steady diet of material from people like Chavasse, Thomson, Fenton, Balneaves, Sutton, Bunn and others of their ilk. Not that there is anything necessarily wrong with this fare – but hasn't it got a bit of a monotonous ring about it? And are not these venerable foresters well into the formation of heartwood? And what has happened to those sappy younger forestry school graduates from the University of Canterbury?

A glance through back numbers of the journal will quickly tell you that the number of 'Pete McKelvey's boys' who have featured in this journal on more than a single occasion can be counted on the fingers of the right hand of a West Coast sawmiller. Peter McKelvey also gave birth to some girls; they were less numerous than their male colleagues, and even less conspicuous in the literature.

What has the School of Forestry been up to all these years? Is it that graduates are basically illiterate? Perhaps a strange conclusion when, as far as I understand, some graduates are now ensconced in relatively senior positions in both the private and the public sectors of the forest industry. If writing talents were so frugally bestowed how did they achieve such lofty heights, I wonder – was it all done with mirrors!

The Curt Gleason memorial prize was an initiative by the Institute, both to recognise the literary skills of the former President, and to encourage written and allied skills in younger foresters. The prize was awarded last year for the first time to Stefan Kincheff, a student at the

Forestry School in 1987. Without detracting from Stefan's achievement I am told that there were only two applicants for the award – hardly indicative of a flourishing literary talent about to blossom forth from amongst the emerging crop of foresters.

So, it's not that Chavasse et al. are necessarily outmoded or uninteresting, but rather that the journal would welcome contributions from less well matured practitioners. If you don't want to subject yourself to the rigours of referees and so on, a more informal piece – say 500 to 1000 words – would be welcome. You're letting Peter McKelvey down – he must have implanted in you some sense of the importance of the written word.

Thanks, Priestley

Priestley Thomson has been a member of the Editorial Board since "New Zealand Forestry" first rolled off the press in May 1986. This has not, however, been his first contact with the journal. He served a period as editor between 1955 and 1958 and, as you might have gathered from the above, has written an article or two over the years. Now, at the age of 76, he has decided to concentrate his efforts on other interests and leave the journal to the mercies of lesser beings.

Priestley has been an extraordinarily valuable member of the Editorial Board – writing material, refereeing articles, and doing many of those behind-the-scenes things which are essential but not fully appreciated until they stop being done. He has, for example, taken sole responsibility for the preparation of the "In our Contemporaries" section and done all the proof-reading.

Thanks, Priestley. Your contribution to the journal has been immense. Your presence at future Editorial Board meetings will be sadly missed. We know that there are at least a couple of forestry issues that you are currently pursuing with passion. We will expect to receive material for publication from time to time.

We are pleased to be able to announce that we have secured a high-calibre replacement for Priestley. Recently retired head of the Ministry of Forestry's research effort, Colin Bassett, has agreed to join the Editorial Board. We are delighted to have Colin's services. His links with the scientific community

and forest industry will be a valuable asset for the journal. Welcome aboard, Colin.

Presidential term

Wink Sutton has now been in the President's chair for a year. What has he achieved in that time and what are his aspirations for the future?

Realistically it's a bit early to expect dramatic evidence of giant strides forward. Some of the indicators are promising and the Institute is certainly faring better during this period of economic turbulence than several kindred organisations.

Wink's call for a more pro-active Institute, coupled with the strategies he has been formulating to bring this about, are a bright point in an industry beset with change and uncertainty. Read again his comments on page 28 of last year's August issue. He extrapolates the front-foot Institute theory to the entire sector.

"We must now rethink what forestry has to offer in New Zealand. If we put forward innovative and well-researched proposals they will be accepted by the New Zealand public. As this public is increasingly desperate for solutions to New Zealand's problems of employment, living standards and long-term security, we might be surprised at the support we can gain. We have much to achieve by such a pro-active course of action."

That is the challenge and the mission. Several problems in attaining the desired goal are apparent. Not the least of these is the possible rather fleeting tenure of its proponent. The present convention of a two-year term for Presidents is nonsense. This is scarcely time to get the feel of the helm before having to hand over to the next recruit.

Those sector organisations which have been successful in promoting the cause of their particular calling have been fronted by the same person for a considerable period. That person, the organisation and the industry are then identified by the power brokers, media and public as a single entity.

In my view, the Institute needs to consider a longer Presidential term. What do you think?

**John Halkett,
Acting Editor**

STOP PRESS 1989 CONFERENCE

Due to the fewer registrations received than expected, it has been decided to cancel this year's NZIF Conference which was to have been held at Waitangi during May.

For details on the 1990 Conference, see page 28.