

State assets sales

Overseas buyers of State forest assets may have to reduce their holdings under a National Government. The threat came on January 23, 1990 in the first big election year speech by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Bolger. Speaking to the Orewa Rotary Club, he said that National was not prepared to let key State assets pass into foreign ownership, and buyers had been advised to take care. He added that National was not prepared to see New Zealanders end up as tenants in their own country.

"We may require them to divest down to a 24.9 per cent stake where we believe it's essential to secure New Zealand control over a strategic asset that they've acquired from the State," he said.

A National Party spokesperson clarified this statement with respect to the State forest sales. He said that National would not necessarily require divestiture by a foreign owner. It would depend on many factors, including the performance of the owner, and whether local processors were getting a fair allocation of the resource.

Dutch elm disease invades New Zealand

Dutch elm disease was discovered in Auckland just before Christmas and its identity was confirmed by the Forest Research Institute on January 4. A survey was begun in the Auckland area by Forest Health Officers of the Ministry of Forestry on January 9. An average of ten staff have been on the survey continuously, including weekends, from then until the time of going to press.

In that time a total of 78 infected, suspect, or neighbouring trees have been felled, fumigated and buried. The infected area stretches across central Auckland from Remuera to Herne Bay, with one outlier at North Takapuna.

The disease is caused by the fungus, *Ceratocystis ulmi*, which is taken into the tree by a small bark beetle, *Scolytus multistriatus*. The fungus blocks the water-conducting tissues and causes the tree to wilt and, ultimately, die. The disease has a devastating effect: it has killed about 90% of elms in the United Kingdom and North America.

The beetle probably goes through two life cycles a year in New Zealand. The Ministry of Forestry still hopes to eradicate the disease and, to that end, the four cities of Auckland (North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland and Manukau) have been declared an infected area under the Forest Disease Control Regulations.

Big jump for Minister of Forestry

The national sky diving championships were opened on January 10 by Peter Tapsell making a tandem parachute jump.

Maybe it was the rush of excitement, but foresters can be pleased that he told the press that he was the Minister of Forestry rather than the more appropriate title of the moment, the Minister of Sport and Recreation.

That way the forestry sector received a

bit of reflected glamour, but possibly it was partially entitled to it.

The stunt germinated in the fertile mind of Julie Collins, a forester with policy division of the Ministry of Forestry. She had already persuaded her colleagues and fellow NZIF members John Valentine and Hamish Levack to leap out of aeroplanes too. Later she won a silver and a bronze medal in the sky diving championships.

Forestry surgeon looks for Dutch Elm disease.



Some yet-to-be noticed Dutchmen clogged-up with Elm disease.