



Rather is it a public relations response to immense disquiet. Replanting is hazardous and expensive on logged corridors. The place for it will be on open, clear-felled areas, as the Native Forests Restoration Trust is using at Pureora. This won't bring back a giant forest for many centuries. But it can atone for some of our ruthless past, and tell us a lot about the growth and succession of the podocarp species.

Stage Four:

Salvage logging and its problems

If selection logging has been the third stage, Forest Service at Whirinaki are showing signs of moving to **Stage Four**. Since the windthrow of Easter 1982, they have been getting most of their timber by Salvage Logging, pulling out trees already fallen and accessible from the tributaries of the whole complex of forest roads.

There are strong reasons why dead or senescent trees shouldn't be taken out at all. Kaka and kakariki (yellow-crowned parakeets) rely for food on insect larvae in old trees. Like our two rare New Zealand bats at Whirinaki, they nest on wood-powder in holes of old trees. Such trees are integral to the habitat, and rich sites for epiphytes. When they fall, their nutrients go back to the soil. Constant threat of intrusion for log salvage violates the whole ethos of a sanctuary. In Whirinaki, one of the great forests of the world, today's need is to get rid of the pretensions and obsessions of commercial management altogether. It is man — not opossums or deer — that has been Whirinaki's worst enemy, and his continued exploitation must stop. There would be plenty that Forest Service could still do well, properly set up on real environmental goals.

Salvage logging — we are being told today — could be refined to the point where machinery is dropped in by helicopter and logs taken out the same way. High economic cost, and low return for rimu, with the difficulty of the canopy and terrain, make helicopter logging unviable at Whirinaki. At least where it is being threatened in Northland, there could be developed a prestigious demand for high-priced kauri, whatever the host of other objections to logging.

But at Whirinaki, not only would selection logging be unavailing to save the forest (if it could truly be said to be 'falling down'). Its economic basis has been questioned from within the Service itself. In short, no one really believes it is needed.

The 1979 campaign for Whirinaki was bedevilled by two sorts of fears among the local people: First, there was the spectre of loss of employment with the threat to close the Minginui saw-mill. Second, the proposal — at that time — to add lowland Whirinaki to the Urewera National Park, threatened the leisure-style and livelihood based on deer-culling, opossum-trapping and pig-hunting.

These fears were played upon by Government during the campaign; and conservationists are still resented and unwelcome at Minginui.

Today, neither the threat to jobs or life-style exists, as most of the locals will concede. The present campaign to stop logging would have that one objective alone. With the forest safe for the future, all the other options could come up for

discussion, hopefully with full local participation, particularly of the Maoris.

Permanent protection for use and enjoyment

The foremost option could be tourism, with experience ranging from education to enjoyment of wilderness, in one of the greatest natural communities on earth. Potential employment opportunities could be enormous with a centre conveniently close both to Rotorua and Taupo. Tourism of this kind is already developing in the forest. It could be immensely enriched with ecological and educational input. The small village could have a renaissance in its way comparable with today's holiday centre of Ohakune.

Forest Service people could still be employed, entrained not to exploitation but conservation. Instead of road-building, there would be track and path maintenance. The planting programme would be enhanced, not in logging corridors but on clear spaces.

At the Minginui sawmill, employment would continue, using pine logs from Kaingaroa, that even today amount to nine-tenths of the mill supply. The consortium of three companies that formed Minginui Sawmills Ltd in 1975, were well aware of

The Whirinaki river flows through the Te Whaiti-nui-a-Tou canyon at the start of the Whirinaki river track.