



Beech forest: "the light reflects in high points from a million small leaves as in a Seurat painting."

fides, like the watermark in a bank-note?

Some are assuming, and Maruia among them, that the chipmills at Invercargill and Nelson must now close. They judge the small private and Maori holdings insufficient to make sustained yield management economic. But increasing pressures on beech may come as prices from Japan get higher, export needs more exigent, or chipmills hungrier. A future Government – on economic or local employment grounds – might find it hard to resist clamour for a bigger cut. Having conceded that beech can be up for logging at all, we'd have to be joking to believe most

owners or exporters would willingly forego the maximum yield for reasons of green conscience.

One holding that won't be held too small for sustained yield management is the 77,000 ha of West Coast beech, controlled by West Coast Timberlands. Japanese companies may look to the West Coast for their future resource of New Zealand hardwood. The plan is to take out 170,000 m³ annually, most of it in chips. Bill Gilbertson, of West Coast Forest and Bird, is alarmed: "The way foresters practise beech management means the forest is progressively clear-felled. The wildlife values

plummet and the landscape is marred by an ugly patchwork of forest clearance."

Just as disturbing is the Government's new forest policy as it touches podocarps. They plan to allow export of sustained yield managed podocarp logs (though mercifully not kauri). The whole allowed cut of totara, matai, rimu and kahikatea might thus go to high-paying overseas markets. The prestigious value and increasing scarcity of such timbers would make helicopter logging viable. It could give the incentive to move into isolated private stands at present untouched. Angel Harvest – a would-be log export com-