

been the most destructive force in the story of the tussock grasslands. The control of fire and the revitalising of the tussock grasslands is one of the major soil-conservation tasks.

Conservation thinking is bringing about a remarkable change in man's outlook towards the use of the forest and grasslands in the upper catchments of important rivers.

On sloping arable land mechanical "contour" practices have been introduced and the value of regulating the runoff of surface water has been clearly demonstrated.

A happy outcome of the application of soil-conservation practices on many of the farm properties has been increased production with increased gross income to the farmers. This is by no means always so. However, by fair and competent judgment of the onsite and offsite benefits of different conservation practices, subsidy money from the taxpayer can be used to assist the local land occupier in maintaining and improving the asset—the land.

I conclude with this thought.

I suggest the changing times and the continuing increase in the population of this country warrant an inventory being made of the soil and the water resources.

The land inventory would provide a readily interpreted source of information on the soil, the different types, location and extent, the extent and degree of soil erosion, the slope, the vegetation on the different parcels of land, and the present use being made of the soil. The quantity of water available for hydro-electric development, irrigation of land, industrial purposes, household requirements, domestic and stock requirements is limited. Plentiful supplies in the past are today sometimes no longer adequate.

Segments of this information are available today—e.g., certain information about the soils, the discharge of water in some rivers.

The information contained in a national inventory of the land and the water resources, collected and presented as an integrated whole, would be of great value in guiding the growth and development of N.Z. in an orderly fashion.

MR R. D. DICK,  
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