

Queen's Speech 20146th June 2014

The speech and the State opening of Parliament on 4th June have come and gone with no mention of forestry throughout the day. This is a massive relief to the hard working staff in the FC and we now have more time to consider the current Government's proposals and look forward to influencing the next incoming administration in Westminster.

The Minister for Forestry in England stated that the legislation to create a new management body to run the estate in England would only come about with continued stakeholder support and without any significant opposition. The coalition government has shied away from forestry yet again and decided that the political climate is still too volatile to consider pushing this legislation through the last session of this parliament.

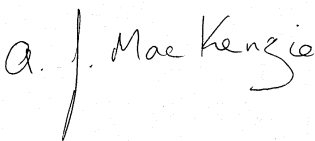
The parliamentary work carried out by the trade unions should be recognised in that it kept politicians well informed, allowing them to ask key questions of the Government and particularly DEFRA Ministers.

The mandate given to FCTU by union members who believe that a fully integrated, adequately resourced and evolving Forestry Commission would provide the best way forward for all our woods and forests has remained for the past two years. This same message has been carried into the halls of Westminster and lofty corridors of the House of Lords by our parliamentary groups.

The continued threat of the current policy still exists and therefore we need to be ready to influence the major parties in the run up to the 2015 General Election. We will need to provide clarity on what our mandate actually means and to obtain clear manifesto commitments on the delivery of a credible alternative. This means that our constituent unions will have to work even harder in the political arena, ensuring that union members in the FC have their voice heard loud and clear and that this excellent organisation remains in place beyond 100 years in 2019.

We still have much to do within FCTU to provide a clear alternative but we are well on the road to achieving that objective and will be able to provide a draft policy to the constituent unions very shortly so that they can consult with their members.

Once we have a final document we can then campaign through the constituent unions on influencing politicians and other stakeholders, and see the delivery of your mandate of a fully integrated and sustainably resourced FC take effect; delivering all that our nation demands and meeting the aspirations of the public.

**Allan MacKenzie***FCTU Secretary*