

# Landowner's misleading statements over Monymusk tree planting plan

9/162/2

Sir,

In statements reported in the Inverurie Herald of June 9, Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk poured scorn on the attitude of the Bailies of Bennachie regarding his proposed tree planting on the Monymusk Triangle of Bennachie.

May we, on behalf of the Council of the Bailies of Bennachie, make the following points.

In a letter written to Malcolm Bruce MP in January of this year, Mr J.G. Francis, director-general of the Forestry Commission, stated that "the application to plant 7.4 hectares of land in the Monymusk Triangle could not be approved on the grounds that planting there would adversely affect an amenity that has been enjoyed by the public for many years".

This is precisely the view of the Bailies.

That letter should have been the end of any attempt at obtaining a Forestry Planting Grant.

However, that is not how the system works and a fresh application can be, and has been submitted by Sir Archibald.

In support of his plans he is making statements which are misleading.

We present below some of his points with the facts.

1 — there are only one or two places in the triangle where there is any real view to see.

From the bottom of the triangle there is a superb view of the Mither Tap.

As one climbs, this particular view is initially lost, but sweeping views to the south-east and west replace it and as one gets over the first rocky bluff the Mither Tap emerges again and remains a dominant view to the summit.

2 — broad leaved trees would not grow very well.

There are broad leaved trees there already. Certainly with shelter from some conifers they would do very nicely and we feel that they should be on both sides of the path, not forming an even corridor but widening out in places with, in other places, clearings to provide views.

## Letters



3 — "I am trying to preserve the lives of all the organisms on this planet".

Everybody knows that sitka spruce is a non-native tree which is so dense and prickly as to be impenetrable. Nothing grows under it.

The Monymusk Triangle is one of the most varied habitats on Bennachie with a wealth of interesting plant species. These would all be totally killed and permanently lost.

4 — the importance of protecting the environment.

What Sir Archibald must realise is that large numbers of people need the experience of walking through a lovely environment like the Monymusk Triangle to unwind from the pressures of everyday living.

There are plenty of other places on Bennachie and elsewhere where they can have the experience of walking through a sitka spruce tunnel.

Bennachie is a very special hill as Gordon District Council rightly recognises and must not be treated just like any bit of nondescript upland moorland.

5 — "I am trying to plant more trees and being stopped from doing it".

Nobody can stop him from doing it AT HIS OWN EXPENSE. What he is being stopped from doing is getting public money to plant trees against the public interest.

We would be prepared to support him if he were to consider planting native Scots pine and broadleaves to recreate a Caledonian type forest which would be scenically attractive, would be a haven for wildlife and absorb the same amount of carbon dioxide.

Yours etc,

Bert Cadenhead, James Mackay, Algy Watson, Mike Davidson,

Members of the council of the Bailies of Bennachie.