nature of agriculture on this class of sand country is mentioned, but there is no comparable idea presented of, for example, the low costs of establishment at Woodhill, with its remarkable inventive flair, of the use of work study and of contract work in forestry or even of the possibilities of fertilizer response by trees. On p. 34 is a statement "The common argument that forestry provides profitable employment of labour and capital, additional to that in agriculture, because of the higher degree of processing of the raw product, is in the author's belief at least partly erroneous. Firstly, the point in the processing chain at which a comparison is made is only important when subsequent processing industries are obtaining a return to capital which is below or above the average market return. Secondly, agriculture has a higher quantity of servicing industries before the product leaves the farm gate; and thirdly, the returns from the subsequent wood processing industries will not be realized for 30 to 40 years and hence should be corrected to a present value." The third point is appropriate, if post treatments and sawing thinnings are allowed for, but no quantitative evidence is adduced for the second point — in fact the absence of employment figures is one of the disappointing features of the study; the first point is not taken further in the thesis and here one can sympathize with the author, who presumably wished to complete the study.

This review has been largely a list of adverse criticisms, but these should be interpreted mainly as warnings to readers not to quote the results as such, but to form their own opinions as to their value. Overall, this paper contains a great deal of interest; there is a minimal amount of economic floss, a very readable account of forestry as seen from the outside (although at times it seems as if from a great distance) and of agriculture from, presumably, the inside. One important result has been the publication of a large amount of forestry cost data, which, it is recommended, every forester spending money on forests should read in order to see just where the money goes.

R.T.F.


South African forest practice has always been of great interest to foresters managing exotic conifers outside the Union; in fact, the influence can be detected in other parts of Africa if not beyond the continent.

This attractive book, compiled by Mikael Grut, a lecturer in forest management at Stellenbosch University, is claimed to be the first to deal with the whole field of forestry and forest industries in South Africa and this it does uncommonly well. The author has drawn on a wide range of government reports and other publications to present a slim volume of 112 pages, more or less equally divided between the two major subjects.

There is a familiar ring about the history of forestry in South Africa. The cycle of devastation, conservation and afforestation started earlier (1711) and has long since reached the stage of total committal to an exotic forest economy, based on 2.4 million acres (1960).
More space is devoted to exotic silviculture and economic analyses of the profitability of pines, eucalypts and poplars than any other subject, *P. patula* being given particular attention in the Appendices where a number of rotations and regimes are compared.

The development of South African forest industries is not dissimilar to that of New Zealand; in fact, the consumption of 217 million cu.ft per annum is quite close to our 197 million cu.ft roundwood equivalent, but markedly different in composition. Some 50 million cu.ft is exported in the form of pulp and paper products.

The main value of this book is undoubtedly the succinct but comprehensive background it offers to any student of South African forestry and is a must for any forester fortunate enough to be able to visit the Union. It is also very readable and contains much of direct interest in the chapters dealing with silviculture and economics.

J.U.


Dr Eyre is a geographer, and his treatment of this complex subject is at the upper-sixth-form and first-year-university level, assuming no more knowledge of botany, chemistry, geology and climate than is contained in standard courses and general textbooks. This is therefore no reference book for specialists, but an ambitious attempt to “describe and outline the distribution of two of the most important elements in the landscape”, while avoiding over-generalizations and scientific untruths.

The technical background is covered first, beginning with the ecological concepts of succession and climax vegetation, and leading on to a concise account of soil-forming processes and the characteristic features of soil profiles, with a discussion of the zonal concept and its limitations. In the remaining sections, which are more descriptive, soil-vegetation relationships are surveyed together, region by region throughout the world. There are seven chapters dealing with vegetation and soils outside the tropics, then three more devoted to the British Isles in particular. This more detailed study illustrates the diversity and complexity of a relatively small area which happens to be better known than any other to the author and at least a section of his readers. The intention is that this should be a corrective for any misconceptions which might arise from the use of broad generalizations—and consequent false impressions of homogeneity—in descriptions of vegetation and soils on a continental scale elsewhere in the book. Passing to less familiar territory, tropical vegetation and soils are discussed in a section of seven chapters. Lastly, there is a chapter headed “The outlook for wild nature”. Ten vegetation maps of the continents are appended, showing the distribution of plant formations as realistically as possible with standard symbols for 34 major types, to demonstrate inter-continental affinities. Then follow some temperature and rainfall data, which incidentally emphasize the climatic diversity of similar vegetation types in different parts of the world; a glossary of technical terms; a brief bibliography; and two good indices.