BOOK REVIEWS

NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF FORESTRY SCIENCE. N.Z. Forest Research Institute.

After a gestation period of six and a half years a new journal has appeared. Congratulations and welcome!

The New Zealand Journal of Forestry Science is of mixed parentage. Credit for conception rests with a working party on forestry and forest research. This now-forgotten body spent some time trying to decide what to do with the increasing number of research papers on forestry which are too technical to be acceptable to the Editor of the N.Z. Journal of Forestry, yet too parochial for publication in international scientific journals. Some interesting suggestions were received and finally a recommendation was submitted to the National Research Advisory Council that a new journal should be created. NRAC accepted and endorsed the recommendation, but no action was then taken. The Forest Development Conference, more than four years later, resurrected the proposal, but it was left to the third progenitor, the Director of Research (encouraged by his branch heads) to get things moving. He must take the credit for the new offspring.

There is a tendency to murmur encouraging platitudes when faced with a new youngster. The present encounter calls for an honest appraisal and this the writer has endeavoured to do, identifying defects where they exist and giving praise where praise is due. On the credit side are listed:

1. The wide range of subjects covered by authors who published papers in the first issue. There are papers on entomology, ecology, tree nutrition, forest economics, wood anatomy, and pulp and paper research. If this balance can be maintained, then the Journal will gain popularity among a wide audience.

2. All the papers are of a high standard and report results that merit wide dissemination.

3. There is a general accent on applied science — on actual problems of growing and utilizing trees — rather than on subjects of academic or highly specialized interest.

4. The Journal is a nice size. It is small enough to fit into most bookshelves, but not so small as to make it difficult for an author to present large tables, plates or diagrams.

5. The instructions to would-be authors are given clearly and in a location where they will be noticed and can be readily referred to.

6. The layout, printing, quality of paper, and photographic reproductions conform with, and in some respects are better than, those of contemporary publications of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The pages are stapled together and the cover glued over, as is usual in low-cost publications. The binding is probably
adequate for normal use, but library copies will soon develop torn covers and will deteriorate. Use of heavier, more tear-resistant paper for the cover would remedy matters.

The less satisfactory points have been identified with difficulty, and most could be disputed:

1. Many people are still dissatisfied with the title. It is understood that discussion of what to call the new publication caused much soul-searching, and that some 80 suggestions, ranging from prosaic pedantries, through Maori names, to bawdy puns, were considered and rejected. My own feelings are that the use of the word “journal” in the title is unnecessary, and that “forest” is a simpler and a legitimate alternative to “forestry”; it would conform with the titles “N.Z. Forest Service”, “Forest Research Institute”, “N.Z. Forest Products” and so on. A simple title — New Zealand Forest Science — would be 30% shorter than the title selected and would have much to commend it. On the other hand, it is possible that the direct wording would scare off contributions from outside New Zealand.

2. There are more editorial and printing errors than one might have expected in the first issue of a new publication which will be read more critically than later issues. Most are trivial — for example “silvilculture” in the abstract on p. 60 — but less excusable is the indiscriminate interchanging of upper and lower case first letters on pages 39 to 42 and, to a minor extent on pages 8, 9 and 10.

3. No close examination has been made of standards of editing, but it was noticed that in one place, at least, an author had been permitted to use an unusual abbreviation (S.E.D.) without prior definition. Also, why was it necessary to give the taxonomic authorities in the title on page 5, particularly when one was named Bedding? Given without the usual parentheses, it introduces an ambiguity the author could not have intended. Lack of parentheses in a similar position also occurs on page 37. In most of the other papers in the Journal the taxonomic authorities for specific names have been omitted. One would expect a consistent editorial approach and possibly a ruling that such qualifications should appear only in the text and abstract, not in the title.

4. The cover has a pleasant appearance and the title can be easily read, as can the Journal serialization and date, but the reproduction of the photograph of the redwood stand at Rotokakahi has not been well done and is reminiscent of old NZFS calendars. The off-centre “medallion” featuring the rotunda of the new buildings has aroused blasphemous comment. One wonders whether this symbol has been adopted as the official FRI badge. If so, why? The tree motif used by the NZFS is pleasing and appropriate.

Summing up, then, the new arrival is most welcome. It is needed and should gain the enthusiastic support of both readers and contributors. One hopes that the standard set in the first issue will be maintained, even exceeded. A constant
effort should be made by all concerned to keep the publication alive and interesting. While it should be read and respected internationally, it is hoped that it will be sufficiently independent to publish views at variance with official policy, or controversial in other ways. One way of ensuring such integrity would be to appoint an editorial board made up of scientists from a variety of disciplines, as is usual for most scientific journals of international repute. This would remove any suggestion that it had merely Departmental approval. The official tone of the Journal could be reduced, too, if the NZFS placard could be moved from the cover to a less conspicuous place.

All in all, the Editor, F. Bodley, and the Director of Research, H. V. Hinds, are to be congratulated on having accomplished such a good start to a new project. We look forward to the next issue.

R.J.C.


The first lines of the preface state: “This book is a compendium of the significant pathological stress factors that are capable of inducing tree injury and disease; it is not a comprehensive account of the diseases of forest trees.” Thus, the forester looking for a full description of any tree disease need not look here, for the individual diseases that are given as examples (and they are relatively few) are there to illustrate a principle or to fill out the range of examples. In some respects this lends it an air of unreality — for example, it is maddening to find that the whole subject of foliage diseases of gymnosperms is dismissed in 16 lines when seven lines can be spared to discuss the damage caused to trees by the tendrils of grape vines. There is something tantalising, too, to be told that Armillaria mellea causes an “extremely important” tree root disease, and then finding that you are to be told no more.

It is unusual to find a book printed in 1970 citing some 1970 references, and there is no doubt that in some subjects this book is well up to date. It is all the more disappointing, then, to find that the section on chemical protection does not mention such examples as stump treatment with borax to prevent invasion by Fomes annosus, or the aerial application of fungicide against Dothistroma pini. I was sorry, too, to see that even the not-so-recent work on poplar canker has been overlooked, there being no mention of the role of Aplanobacterium populi.

This is much less, then, than a manual of forest diseases, but it is also in some respects much more than the usual forest pathology text, for the subject matter is extremely wide-ranging. Indeed, the reader may pick up a smattering of such diverse subjects as wood anatomy, photochemically produced gaseous pollutants, nematology, mechanisms of resistance, fungicidal chemistry, virology, nutrient excesses, and so on. The strong point of this book, and one that makes it