in their coverage of overlapping material, but the only example found by the reviewer was a reference to the gourd brought to New Zealand by the Maoris as *Lagenaria* in one chapter and *Cucurbita* in another. A tribute to the editing.

One thing which will irritate many foresters is the Editor's Introduction in which, after stating that some 95% of the fauna of the lowland biota of New Zealand are confined strictly to the indigenous forests and thus "have no chance of survival without this plant cover", he says: "Thus the clearing of vast and continuous land areas for farming and the replacement of indigenous forest with exotic trees, particularly with pines and other conifers, is absolutely catastrophic for the native fauna."

One should resist being turned away by this example of editorial prejudice. The book itself is first class: mandatory reading for the educated forest — and for the uneducated one looking to change. But, at the price, see if the office will buy it.

G. B. Sweet


Any forester worthy of the name will find this booklet completely absorbing, and the eucalypt fan will acquire a copy as soon as he can. As a clear and stimulating compendium of Dr Pryor's knowledge of this genus, it is worth every cent of its price (current N.Z. equivalent $4.80).

The title should not be interpreted too narrowly: the chapters cover geographic distribution, the many peculiar features of morphology and classification of this remarkable group; breeding; hybridisation; site adaptation and ecological associations; physiology (with a separate chapter on the influence of fire); and the introduction of eucalypts to alien lands. This last section is somewhat perfunctory and New Zealand (perhaps appropriately?) rates a mention only as an example of the influence of insect attack (in this case *Paropsis*) on growth. One would have liked to see, in a book about such a widely planted genus, much more about its behaviour in overseas habitats, to complement the brief notes that are relegated to a two-page appendix.

However, these are a silviculturist's preferences. The Institute of Biology, which sponsors these "Studies in Biology", states that the aim is to provide a series of booklets to enable teachers and students to keep abreast of research on selected topics. Given these educational objectives, it is a pity that the editorial standards are not up to those of Dr Pryor's text. At least one of the illustrations (Fig. 2.4) is incomplete and there are typesetting or grammatical errors on the third line of the preface, as well as
on pages 15, 18, 25, 34, 57 and 59. There are also some obscure passages (particularly on pages 37, 45 and 65) which should have been clarified before printing. An index would have been useful, too.

The booklet is available in a paperback as well as a hard-cover edition.

D. S. Jackson

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir, — I was disappointed to read in your Journal a commonly expressed supposition that the expansion of plantation forestry in New Zealand would remove land from the production of food essential for the sustenance of the impoverished peoples of the world (Wendelken, N.Z. Jl For., 21 (1): 17-20). Frequently this argument is used to justify the exclusion of forestry from potential or existing agricultural land.

New Zealand, of course, predominantly grows costly and high quality foodstuffs especially prepared for wealthy customers. And milk powder, the only significant export to developing nations, accounts for a small proportion of our total production. Indeed, the “marketing” of milk powder is fraught with difficulties since “... the hungry populations of the earth ...” (Wendelken, p. 18) cannot afford our price!

There is no evidence to suggest that farming in New Zealand will be less costly-based in the future or that farmers themselves will be more altruistically motivated. On the other hand, while forestry is no more altruistic than agriculture, it is conceivable that the produce of forestry in New Zealand could supply directly and indirectly essential materials for shelter, fuel and literacy in the developing world.

When one considers that agriculture already utilises some 50% of the total land area of New Zealand, then the marginal productivity of an additional 3 or 4% of land area to farming would be minor compared with that resulting from a doubling of the exotic forest estate. Indeed, if agriculturalists and their supporters were to be truly sincere in proposing to feed the Third World, then the solution lies simply in restructuring our existing agricultural system to meet the present-day needs of millions of starving and undernourished peoples.

Given our present economy, society and political system, I can only conclude that a land-use policy based on the assumption that land denied to plantation forestry today would be supplying foodstuffs to the developing world tomorrow is essentially mistaken.

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