

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FORESTRY LITERACY

Sir,— I have tried, on several occasions, to bring to the attention of your readers that foresters are illiterate in their own technical language. Apparently, my pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Presumably the forestry schools no longer teach their students the correct meaning of technical forestry terms. As Editor of the *Journal*, you are no less casual; in the latest issue (28 (3), page 367) we have “. . . schedules of activities . . . covering new planting, silviculture and harvesting” (and this is only one example in this issue).

As I have noted before, if foresters cannot use their own language correctly, we cannot expect the general public to understand us.

Clearly, the NZIF does not care two hoots; but I shall, as a last despairing attempt to rectify the position, draw their attention to the Orwellian thesis about language as exemplified in the novel *1984*.

Now I shall retire, like Voltaire, to horticulture my garden.

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ECONOMICS OF EARLY CLEARFELLING

Sir,— Most of the points raised by Andrès Katz in his letter (Vol. 29 (1), p. 149) have been covered in the original paper.

It would, of course, be perfectly feasible to continue the analysis for an infinite series of silviculturally “optimal” rotations (thereby equalizing the terminal point at infinity) but it was stressed (p. 164) that, at the high contemporary rates of discount, the quantitative differences are slight. This situation also applies to the expensive land preparation costs mentioned by Katz, where these occur in subsequent rotations, although of course the expense of pruning may lead to extended rotations required for sufficient premium-priced clearwood to be laid down after occlusion.

The paper emphasises the present value at the moment of decisions, the situation at the end of the existing rotation under the “*laissez-faire*” choice is a new time with new circumstances and is theoretically another opportunity for new decisions. Differ-

ent starting points are not negligible in the way different terminal points often are, and there should, in our view, be an identity between the SEV and the PNV approaches, although this would not, of course, apply to the "forest rent" approach.

We agree with Katz that rotation length is an essential variable (p. 171 shows a sensitivity analysis for this variable) and also agree that the method is not suitable for analyses above the stand level (the last sentence, p. 173, sounds a strong warning on this issue). Probably no forestry analyst has yet dared to incorporate a poor export scenario into his stumpage assumptions for the next decade.

Finally, Andrès Katz repeats the statement (pp. 165-5) that CNW and PNV are synonymous. We agree that PNV does not have to be applied to bare soil, but most foresters are so accustomed to doing this, that some mental "flag" appeared necessary. The definitions of "technical term" and "jargon" differ in that the former refers to our discipline, the latter to someone else's. Faustmann was a forester.

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STOCKING RATES

Sir,— I feel I ought to comment on the paper by Whiteside and Sutton in the *Journal of Forestry* (28 (3): 300-13). This is another attempt to claim that the magic stocking figure of 200 stems/ha is the best for all sites in New Zealand. As such, it is misleading.

Table 1 in the paper shows that the results are "rigged" by (a) planting excessive numbers and (b) by late pruning and thinnings. A very different picture would be obtained if in Regime B only 1000 stems/ha were planted, if the numbers pruned were initially the same as in Regime A, and if pruning and thinning were undertaken at the same heights as in Regime A. Regime B, in effect, contains excessive costs and thus, I presume deliberately, favours Regime A.

It seems most likely (Table 4) that timely pruning and thinning would have improved revenue (sawn timber value), while