EDITORIAL

PROGRESS IN MENSURATION

In last issue of Te Kura Ngahere editorial complaint was made at the inadequacy of our attainment in forest mensuration, and a plea was put forth for an advance, first in the drawing up of a uniform standard procedure and second in the actual prosecution of studies of volume and yield. It is therefore most pleasant to record that the past year has seen a real advance along both these lines, in spite of the blighting effect of economy and retrenchment. Along the first line, representatives of the State Forest Service, School of Forestry and Perpetual Forests Ltd., in an informal conference agreed upon a standardised procedure in regard to sample plots for formulating yield tables for exotics. The conference limited itself to only one aspect of the subject, and did not attempt to carry matters too far.

Enough was done to ensure that all three interests were organising their work along lines that would secure comparability of results, and details of method were then left to be tried out and subsequently discussed. The important thing is the acceptanee of the guiding principle that as each problem is reached by any of the organisations concerned it will be discussed with the others and a uniform procedure decided upon. As we advance in future, therefore, it will no longer be in narrow isolation but on a common front.

Along the second line, the School of Forestry can record the compilation of a standard volume table for insignis pine in Canterbury, and the beginning of a normal yield table for the same species and region. Though much has still to be done before the data are ready for publication, tentative but authentic figures are now at hand for this province, the home of the
earliest extensive forest planting in New Zealand, and the first centre of utilisation of the exotic timbers.

The State Forest Service, in the face of a most depressing curtailment of all investigative work, has still managed to continue the establishment and remeasurement of sample plots in most of its exotic plantations.

Finally, arrangements were made to establish a number of sample plots in the extensive stands of the Perpetual Forests Ltd., the first, so far as we know, to be arranged for by any of the private forestry companies. This development is perhaps the most important of all, as indicating in the company a bona fide interest in the possible returns to bondholders, for signs of which foresters have been rather critically watching and waiting, so far as commercial forestry in general has developed in this country.

It is therefore a matter for satisfaction that a start has been made along co-ordinated lines. It remains now to amplify and extend the work as fast as possible.

LOCAL BODY SHARES

The recently published Report of the National Economy Commission, in its section dealing with the State Forests Account, contains among other passages giving food for thought to all interested in forestry in New Zealand, a most welcome statement on an important matter of policy. That is the definite recommendation that the payments of timber royalty shares to local bodies out of the State Forests Account should be abolished.

Few people know of these financial servitudes operating over our State Forests, and fewer still realize the extent of their burden, and the magnitude of the hindrance they represent to the development of a sound and stable forest policy. The present position is decidedly complex, and an adequate treatment of its development is impossible here. It may be put briefly, however, that the State Forest Account is now not receiving the full royalty from sales of indigenous timber through various forms of local body subventions operating in two ways.

The first is the diversion of 90 per cent. of the royalties on the "Warden's areas," where but 10 per cent. goes to the Forests Account for administration. This is, on its face, a temporary matter in that it applies to areas now Provisional State Forest over which the mining wardens had granted sawmilling licenses prior to the transfer of administration to the Forest Service. With the extinction of these licenses,