The Editor has received the following letters bearing upon matters of nomenclature raised by the 1932 issue:

1. Professor Fritz, Professor of Forestry, University of California, and Editor-in-Chief of the (American) Journal of Forestry, under date of 11th February, 1933, writes:

"I was glad to note your championship of the use of local Maori names. They are distinctive, and enrich our language. To call a New Zealand tree or wood "white pine" is misleading indeed. I am enclosing some notes which will show how much confusion has been caused in the United States by borrowing the names of well-known woods to place new woods in a better light before the public."

—Emanuel Fritz.

2. Mr. C. M. Smith, Chief Inspector of the State Forest Service writes, under date of 5th September:

"In the 1932 issue, two forestry terms were discussed about which I venture to question your decisions.

(a) Ricker:

On page 92 you state that this is an Anglicised form of a Maori word “rika” meaning “a young tree.”

Such authorities as are available to me (including interpreters of the Department of Native Affairs) reveal no knowledge of the existence of a Maori noun “rika.” I am aware that northern newspapers for the past few years have been using the term in popular articles on forest subjects; but until you gave it benison last year, I had met no reputable authority who regarded it as other than pseudomaori. On the other hand, the English form of the word has been known in New Zealand forest literature and in the spoken language of the kauri bush (almost a distinct “patois”) apparently since the beginning of white settlement. Further justification for the opinion that the word is of English origin is to be found by consultation of diverse authorities, e.g.:

(1) Haynes’ “Timber Technicalities” (1921 edition). This work does not define “ricker”—but under heading “boathooks” it gives as a sample specification for a mixed order “poles, rickers, and boathooks, graded according to size.” (“Boathooks” is here used as a current abbreviation for “boathook shafts” or “quants”).
(2) The Timber Trades Journal advertisement columns regularly make mention of "rickers." One instance from several in the issue of June 3rd, 1933, may be quoted here:

"and Sons, importers of prime Oslo poles, rickers, and rustics are offering 20ft. to 50ft. poles, with "2in. to 2½in. tops, and rickers and rustics 9ft. "to 24ft. with 1in. to 1½in. tops."

(3) Ogilvie’s “Imperial Dictionary”—edition undated but probably not later than 1880, contains the following definition:

“Rickers, n. pl—the stems or trunks of young trees cut up into lengths for stowing flax, hemp, and the like, or for spars for boat masts and yards, boathook staves etc.”

(4) Other dictionaries giving practically the above definition are:

(b) Funk and Wagnall’s New Standard Dictionary.
(c) Encyclopaedic Dictionary.

All of these are hesitant about the etymology of the word, but agree that it is of nautical usage. More confident are:

(a) The English Dialect Dictionary, and
(b) The Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language.

These two authorities concur in attributing the word to the Shetland Islands where it is used for the haft of a fish spear, or for a small boat spar.

The above evidence, when taken in conjunction with our knowledge of the early kauri trade in New Zealand, appears to me to afford good grounds for assuming that the word is a legacy from the North Sea element amongst our early visitors, whalers and settlers: and that the form "rika" is as unjustifiable as the ludicrous "titri" for "tea-tree."

(b) Kahikatea or White Pine:

On page 52 you plead for retention of the vernacular name by technical foresters. Botanical nomenclature—both scientific and popular—must ultimately rest on authority, be that authority the Rules of Vienna which decree that Picea excelsa shall now be Picea Abies: or the Courts
of the United States which decree that "Western Yellow Pine" shall henceforth be sold as "Ponderosa Pine" and as nothing else. In the case in point, New Zealand foresters accepted the jurisdiction of the Nomenclature Committee of the Third Empire Forestry Committee in 1928. This Committee's decision as published in the Empire Forestry Handbook was "N.Z. White Pine" with Kahikatea as the alternative name. Local trade custom is, moreover, quite strong enough to justify this decision of the Nomenclature Committee. Technical foresters, unfortunately, are not consistent enough always to bow to the authority of any Committee; but in the case you cite, it so happened that official forestry did make its obeisance, albeit clumsily with a non-regulation hyphen.

The organ of academic and technical forestry opinion might, therefore, have seen fit to give forestry officialdom credit rather than rebuke. If rebuke were merited, it was for inconsistency in listing Matai, instead of the prescribed Black Pine of the Empire Handbook."

C. M. SMITH.

P.S. Since the above was written, word has been received that the "Ponderosa pine" verdict cited has been reversed by a Court of Appeal decision; and that California White Pine is therefore again a permissible trade name for P. ponderosa. The point seems to be that every authority can in the long run have an over-riding authority, and that Kahikatea may even yet be the standard name. Mean-time, however, the main contention that New Zealand White Pine is the name approved by the existing authority still holds."

C. M. SMITH, 26/9/33.

Editorial Reply.

1. Ricker:—The Editor is deeply grateful to Mr. Smith for correcting his misuse of this term, and for pursuing so exhaustively the origin of this, one of the most interesting, but hitherto obscure words in our bush terminology. The Editor must say that he passed the spelling "rika" in our last issue, on a definite statement made by one whom he had regarded as an authority, that it was a genuine Maori term, applied not only to the kauri but also to saplings of others of the larger trees. Mr. Smith has established a very clear case for the belief that the probable origin of the term "ricker" as applied to the young kauri lies in the nautical element of our earliest European settlers, while the Editor must concur with Mr. Smith that a
search of all available authorities, both written record and present living authorities on Maori forest lore, fails to reveal any knowledge of such a meaning for the word “rika.” The Editor is therefore forced to the conclusion that his informant was in error, and apologises to all readers for a solecism as repugnant to himself as to Mr. Smith and all other lovers of precise diction.

2. Kahikatea:—

In this case the Editor is forced to withstand Mr. Smith’s criticism.

In the first place, Mr. Smith pleads that the Department is following accepted authority, to wit the Nomenclature Committee of the Third Empire Forestry Committee, and complains that we did not “give officialdom credit rather than rebuke.” But last year’s Annual Report, which we criticised, did not conform to the authority upheld by Mr. Smith. Reference to the Empire Forestry Handbook will show that “White Pine” is the standard name, not of *Podocarpus dacrydioides*, but of *Pinus strobus*. For *P. dacrydioides* there are two common names available, yet the Report used neither, but instead, used a name which by all authority belongs to quite another tree.

The important points in the case seem to be these:—First, we all agree that uniformity of usage in nomenclature is desirable, that we may have definiteness and precision, free from any misunderstanding in both trade and scientific circles. To secure such uniformity, where there is already duplication or confusion, we accept the ruling of some generally recognised authority. For the British countries, the Nomenclature Committee of the Third Empire Forestry Conference is our recognised authority, and Te Kura Ngahere follows that authority in its usage, seemingly somewhat more closely than the Department has yet done. The Committee has given us for *P. dacrydioides*, New Zealand White Pine as the standard trade name, with Kahikatea as the “other” or alternative name. Similarly, in regard to *P. spicatus* we are given New Zealand Black Pine as the trade name, with Matai as the alternative or “other” name.

Our contention is that in the case of both these timbers, the trade name given is definitely unsuitable and it is urged that the Empire Forestry Association be approached, to have these unsuitable names removed from the list, leaving the names now listed as alternative names to be the sole
and standard trade names for these two timbers throughout the Empire.

Provision has been made for annual revision of the list under the auspices of the Timber Names Committee of the Empire Forestry Association, and it may be assumed that if New Zealand foresters asked definitely for such a step to be taken, the recognised authority would give the matter due consideration.

In the case of botanical names, the Rules of Vienna are our authority, and they lay down a binding and unalterable rule of precedence. It will be noted that the International Botanical Congress, 1930, declined to conserve specific names violating this rule, even though they had become firmly entrenched in scientific literature for many decades. In the case of common or trade names there is no binding rule of precedence, and it is competent for the recognised authority to sanction whatever name meets the primary requirements of a trade name, viz:—a name definitely applying to one particular timber only, and one which does not, by close resemblance, or other means make possible substitution or establish a false impression of similarity to, or connection with any other timber.

It is maintained that the terms "New Zealand White Pine" and "New Zealand Black Pine" do not fulfil these requirements for a suitable trade name. They establish a false connection with the pines, from which they are structurally very distinct. Further, the names are far too cumbersome. The prefix "New Zealand,"—in itself an implication that the timbers are not the "genuine article,"—is clumsy, yet if dropped, makes for worse confusion, in that "White Pine" means a 5 needle pine throughout the whole English speaking world, and by our Empire authority, *P. strobus* only.

Professor Fritz's letter is most timely. The great confusion that has arisen in the United States through the re-application of old names to new trees instead of incorporation of a new name into the language, can be appreciated by anyone familiar with American forestry literature.

The policy pursued by the New Zealand Government in the past, of using local names for the local timbers, is therefore greatly to be commended, and it is hard to understand why this policy was not upheld by the New Zealand representative on the Committee on Nomenclature.

The matter is important first in that we are attempting to work up an export trade in some of our timbers,
which will make them known abroad, and second in that changing conditions here in New Zealand are already making it advisable to have a clearer nomenclature in the domestic trade.

Our timber delegation of this year reports that the trade authorities at Home classed two of our podocarps as hardwoods on their general structure. Can we attempt to sell such timbers as varieties of pine without risk of serious confusion?

Also in New Zealand we are now actually milling true pines from our plantations to the extent of about ten million feet a year. Further, this pine timber goes wholly into the field of boxing, crating, and woodenware, where it is in direct substitution for the more valuable *P. dacrydioides*. There are, however, a few avenues of use for the latter which the pines are unable to fill. It is essential that this difference be clearly indicated in the names.

The Editor maintains that there are strong arguments against calling any New Zealand timbers “pines,” and he cannot see any valid objection to the adoption of “kahikatea” and “matai” as the sole standard names. Both names have been in official use for many years. “Matai” is used in practically all timber price lists in this country, and is the more general term in conversational use by millers and bushmen throughout the North Island. “Kahikatea” is admittedly in less general use, but is known to everyone in bush, mill or yard in both islands, through its long use in all official and scientific publications. It would need only a continuance of this policy to bring trade circles throughout New Zealand to a general adoption of this name.

The Editor therefore appeals to Mr. Smith, whose nicety in matters of speech is known to us all, to consider whether he will not support an appeal from the Institute of Foresters, to the timber Names Committee of the Empire Forestry Association that these inaccurate and misleading “pines” be deleted from our recognised list.