

THE NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL OF FORESTRY

Published annually by the N.Z. Institute of Forestry Inc.

VOL IV.

1940-1941

No. 5

EDITORIAL.

INTROSPECTION.

At the Annual Meeting held recently in Wellington, the affairs of the Institute were critically discussed and several members, as was their right, expressed dissatisfaction with the part which the Institute was taking in promoting the interests of the profession. In this Editorial an attempt will be made to review the problems confronting the Institute and to offer some lines of constructive thought and action.

The main objects of the Institute and this Journal are identical, namely to further the development of technical forestry and the interests of the profession in New Zealand.

To what extent is it possible to measure the influence of the Institute over, say, the last five years? Real progress in the development of technical forestry in any new country is inevitably slow, as it depends primarily upon the cumulative influence of individual foresters; upon the quality of their training and character, and the opportunities which they are given to make their influence felt. Apart from these and other limiting factors, it must be admitted that the Institute has in the past largely failed to inculcate a feeling amongst members (and potential members) that the active co-operation of foresters within the Institute is to the advantage of the profession; for example, although provision is made in the Constitution for the formation of Local Sections, the objects of which are to hold meetings "for the advancement of technical forestry through the presentation of professional papers for mutual discussion and for the promotion of good fellowship," no such sections are at present in being.

Criticism, even though introspective, must however be tempered with an appreciation of existing circumstances. There are at present 67 members of the N.Z. Institute of Foresters, 40 of which are on the staff of the State Forest Service; actually the preponderance of Forest Service influence is even greater than these figures show, since of those not in the Forest Service only 10 are actively engaged in forestry in New Zealand.

A rather special problem, therefore, faces the Institute; how to shape its destiny, with a membership the great majority of which owe allegiance to one Department of State.

Without in any way belittling the services rendered to the profession by members in private or non-Government employment, it must be admitted that the progress of technical forestry in New Zealand, however small it may be, is to all intents and purposes reflected in the report annually submitted to the House of Representatives by the Director of Forestry. An annual report, however, merely summarises progress and without media for exchange of ideas on professional matters, the practising forester finds himself out of touch with developments beyond his own sphere.

It is the privilege of the Institute to provide these media, the first of which should be the establishment of Local Sections referred to previously. There are admittedly difficulties to be overcome, not the least of which is the widely scattered locations of most foresters, but the appointment of energetic regional representatives would go far to achieve the objective, namely, maintenance of professional contacts.

The second medium of expression is this Journal: its purpose is obvious, since it is the only technical forestry journal published in the Dominion. A perusal of the general index to Vol. IV at the end of this number, will indicate the range of subjects covered during the last five years; the range covered is admittedly wide, but there is little evidence of continuity in recorded investigations, each article apparently having no relationship to previously published work. In this, the Editorial Committee must share the blame and consideration is being given to the planning of subject matter for several years in advance.

The Editorial Committee is particularly anxious to receive more contributions from foresters not in Government employment. Suffice it to say that of the 54 main articles contributed in Vol. IV, 40 were written by officers of the State Forest Service and six were contributed from overseas sources by Honorary Members and others only indirectly connected with N.Z. forestry.

The war has increased the difficulties of the Institute (seven of our members are on Active Service), but with the almost inevitable expansion of technical forestry after the war, the scope and membership of the Institute should increase correspondingly; in spite of present difficulties, our immediate duty is, therefore, to look to the future and stimulate greater interest in the Institute by encouraging the enrolment of new members, raising the standard of articles in the Journal and giving support to the formation of Local Sections.

When it is felt that the Institute is not fulfilling its functions to present satisfaction, it should be remembered that progress is the result of collective **individual** effort over a long period and that members' obligations to the profession do not cease with the payment of Institute subscriptions.