

## REVIEWS

SILVICULTURE. By J. Köstler. Oliver and Boyd, 1956. 54/-.  
Translated by Prof. Mark. L. Anderson. (Advance proof copy)  
pp. 397.

This is one of the very few German texts on silviculture that is available in the English language. It is valuable, because, as the well-known translator says, "In Central European countries the study of silviculture has been undertaken for a sufficiently long period to enable that important branch of forestry to be viewed there in a proper perspective." In this country we are still grappling with the introduction and correct siting of exotic species or with the clumsy beginnings of the silviculture of native forest as far as the logging of them will allow it. A comparison with the intensively managed forests of Central Europe is therefore highly instructive although the lessons to be learned therefrom need careful interpretation for the very different conditions to be found here. The book is based on lectures given to students, but draws upon a wide range of literature, quoted at the beginning of each chapter, and upon Köstler's varied forestry experience.

Part one deals with "The Concept of the Forest as a Living Community" and deals with global statistics, the environment and tree growth, forest trees and forest sociology, which is a refinement, highly developed in Europe, of forest ecology. The European silviculturist usually places great stress upon the need to use a biological basis for his practice, because, where he has been given a reasonably free hand, he has been highly successful in increasing the sustained yield of his forests from what were once decimated areas. He has had a struggle to achieve this, for capital forest growing-stock is always a tempting source of raw material for industry and was one of the corner stones in Hitler's preparation for war. The author aptly expresses this struggle in the following words: "In many regions the mechanistic outlook, because of its ready adaptation to capitalistic and bureaucratic systems, is still the standard one even today."

Since basic science, particularly botany, is now part of all foresters' training, one might question the need to include much of the detail that is contained in Part One. Other essential background, less readily available in texts, is however included. Of first importance the author places soil science, and he states that: "Soil maps should be available everywhere as a permanent aid." Also included, is a section on tree genetics and its implications in silviculture. Reference is made to the German federal laws governing the use of forest tree seed. A most interesting historical account is given of forest tree introduction, and the statement made that, even though many were widely publicised at one time or another, most have disappeared "almost without a trace."

The part is completed by a lengthy section on "Forest Types and Stand Types" in which are listed numerous forest associations determined by plant sociological methods. This is a refinement we could well do with in New Zealand in dealing with our native forests.

Part two of the book, about equal in size to the first part, deals with "Silvicultural Treatment as Interference with Living Communities." The subject matter includes selection forestry, tending of stands, regeneration and miscellaneous silvicultural operations. The author issues a warning against generalising and systematising the art of silviculture, a warning, which, when unheeded has been the cause of many grievous mistakes in this country. He places great store on the selection forest, but it is doubtful if this system could extend to other European forests which do not contain the shade-bearing species, beech and silver fir. Of very great interest is the statement that between the 18th and 20th centuries the proportions of intermediate yields to final yields increased from about 1 to 10 to 1 to 2, a somewhat remarkable change. The author states that today the way is being prepared for a proportion of 1 to 1. In dealing with matters detrimental to forest practice, the following statement will "ring a bell" to many foresters, ". . . in the State services there are extremely detrimental short-dated changes of those in charge of forest units."

Both the student and practitioner of silviculture in New Zealand will find in this book much wisdom and a great deal of valuable material with which to make comparisons. The reviewer only regrets that the illustrations were omitted in the proof copy for these are a valuable part of any silvicultural text. Students of forest practice will again be grateful for the remarkable energy and ability of Prof. Anderson for adding yet another European text book to his translations.

A.L.P.

THE FORESTER'S COMPANION. By N. D. G. James. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1955. pp. xiv + 312. 12/6.

Foresters in Britain, for whom the book has been written, can count themselves fortunate on the appearance of this comprehensive pocket book, and the Royal Forestry Society of England and Wales is to be congratulated on what its President calls in the foreword "its first contribution to the literature of forestry." Obviously publications of this type must serve the interests of a restricted group of users: selection of appropriate material is otherwise impossible. Mr. James has made his selection judiciously, set his material out clearly, and covered all subjects that the working forester in Britain could possibly want when away from his text books. To the New Zealand forester the book is of interest to make comparisons with local practices and results, but there is naturally little that has direct application here. It stimulates a wish that there will soon be something of the same character written for this country.

—F.A.