

## BOOK REVIEWS

WESTLAND'S WEALTH. By J. H. Johns and C. G. R. Chavasse, 59 p. of photos. Wellington: Government Printer, 1959. (N.Z. Forest Service Information Series No. 29.) 20s.

As never before, the spotlight of publicity has been on Westland in 1960. There has been a series of centennial celebrations in the main towns and the West Coast Commission has investigated the area and produced its report and recommendations. The story of gold and of coal and of timber exploitation has been told and retold as the old days have been relived. Land improvement by individual farmers and land development by the Department of Lands and Survey have given farming a certain amount of new hope; but the realist must be convinced that the future of Westland is closely tied to her forests. It is appropriate that No. 29 in the information series of the New Zealand Forest Service should be entitled *Westland's Wealth*, and should draw attention so dramatically by picture and story to the importance of recognising that Westland's future depends basically on her forest resource and how it is managed.

This is a book of some 70 pages (but you find that out for yourself by counting as there are no page numbers). It adopts the most effective modern method of educating the masses—striking, large illustrations and a minimum of descriptive text.

In a foreword, the Minister of Forests, Sir Eruera Tirikatene, claims that timber will unceasingly bring greater prosperity to Westland than gold ever did. He mentions that the National Forest Survey has already largely accomplished the demarcation of forest categories: exploitable forests or the low country that constitute the timber resource, protection forests necessary to protect the restricted areas of farmlands against accelerated erosion in the mountain hinterland, and the forests that are an integral part of scenic reserves and the newly created Westland National Park.

Sir Eruera deplors the wasteful and ruthless methods of exploitation in the past and calls for the cooperation of Government, saw-millers, and timber workers in ensuring that the remaining exploitable forests are properly managed to give perpetual yields of timber, regular employment, and continuing prosperity. This is the general theme of the book—deploring past mistakes and calling for a new philosophy, the philosophy of conservation defined as the fullest use of land for production, protection, and enjoyment. In dramatic photographs, areas of virgin forest are contrasted with scenes of devastation.

No attempt is made to excuse the Forest Service itself for its part in what has happened and it is not made clear what it proposes to

do to change the practices described. The Service is in charge of most of the remaining forest and what happens to Westland in the future must depend largely on official policy and its implementation. The casual reader must wonder what he is supposed to do about it all; he must certainly be pardoned for wondering if Government is alive to the position. If "200 men could halt the destructive tide" which has devastated 200,000 acres and is adding 5,000 acres a year, it is a challenge to the Government to provide the finance *now* to employ those 200 men and get on with the job. It is a challenge also to the Government to provide such facilities, men, finance, and (if necessary) legislation as will ensure the practices of "strip felling" and "selective logging", the planting of exotics in suitable areas, and the reclamation of the stony wastes left by giant gold dredges.

The book gives due attention to the protection forests and the thin soils of the steep mountain sides, and the problems of noxious animals, especially opossum and red deer, are vividly described and illustrated.

The truly magnificent photographs are the work of Mr J. H. G. Johns, who produced them under pressure in a very short period. He has used the aeroplane in obtaining some striking effects. Reproduction is excellent. The text by Mr. C. G. R. Chavasse is admirably brief and lucid. Read alone it would probably appear rather emotional; in association with the relevant photographs it does not exaggerate. End pieces consist of large-scale maps of Westland showing in three colours, with a clarity no statistical tables could emulate, the proportions of farm land, production forest, and protection forest. The Government Printer must be warmly congratulated on the high quality of the production and binding. The reader constantly bewails the fact that no location for the photographs is given for so many landscapes, but apart from this minor complaint one can do nothing but commend the author and photographer for their graphic picture of "a magnificent area of unparalleled natural scenery combined with a valuable economic resource".

—L.McC.

DECAY OF TIMBER AND ITS PREVENTION. By K. St. G. CARTWRIGHT AND W.P.K. FINDLAY. 332p., 57 illus. London: H.M.S.O., 1958 (D.S.I.R. Forest Products Laboratory). £1.17s.6d.

Since the appearance in 1946 of the first edition of this book, there has been notable progress in development of improved preservatives, especially water-borne types, and in the diversity of their applications. The emphasis given in New Zealand to damage caused by insect borers has stimulated the growth of the preservation industry which is unique in that attention has been focused primarily upon immunisation of building timbers. While it is expected that the treatments will provide adequate protection against rot fungi in well-maintained, light timber-