

BOOK REVIEW

TERMINOLOGY OF FOREST SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, PRACTICE AND PRODUCTS. English-language version. (*The Multilingual Forestry Terminology Series No. 1.*) Edited by F. C. Ford-Robertson. Society of American Foresters, 1010 16th Street NW, Washington D.C. 20036. 1971. pp. xxii + 349. 63 refs. (Available from the publishers at \$US10.00, post paid.)

This book effectively replaces the two standard English-language references dealing with the special vocabularies of forestry and forest products—that is, the two-volume *British Commonwealth Forest Terminology*, 1953-7 (BCF) and the *Forestry Terminology* (third edition, 1958) of the Society of American Foresters (SAF). Its welcome appearance marks the culmination of the first stage of a very large international undertaking, initially proposed as far back as 1949, to produce a multilingual forestry terminology. The latter is in turn only one of three major long-term objectives of the Joint FAO/IUFRO Committee on Forestry Bibliography and Terminology, which authorized this work.

No one should underestimate the difficulties and complexities involved in completing the English-language part of the project. In a period of 7 to 8 years from the mid-1950s, volunteer editors were able to settle only about 500 terms and definitions. Progress from this exploratory phase was accelerated through finance provided by the governments of Canada and the United States; SAF agreed to administer the funds and see to publication; and late in 1964, Mr Ford-Robertson began work at Oxford as full-time Director-Editor. Around the world, literally hundreds of specialists in forestry and its related fields have since contributed in some measure, through a carefully planned sequence of stages, to produce the first terminology in its subject-field which combines Commonwealth and U.S. usage. Yet there was no question of imposing standardization, and the scheme has been applied flexibly, differences and divergences of usage being indicated where necessary.

Endless argument can be generated over what should or should not be included in a work such as this. Suffice to say here that the Editor explains quite fully the criteria used, both as to the range of subjects and the completeness of their treatment. Thus the scope of the old BCF volumes is enlarged by adding such fields as geology and physiography, range, recreation and wildlife management, operations and work study, and computers. As to completeness of subject-matter, no term is included that can be found, and is for forestry purposes adequately defined, in *both* the Concise Oxford and Webster's Seventh New Collegiate dictionaries. On the other hand, there is a generous sprinkling of concepts from the many sciences and technologies employed in (broad-sense) forestry—this with the needs of the developing countries in mind, and with the thought that the average forester and student may not have ready access to other terminologies.

What is the outcome? In statistical terms, the vocabulary comprises more than 6,800 defined concepts contained in over 5,150 main entries. The close and critical scrutiny accorded previously-published definitions is illustrated by the fact that comparatively few have been accepted here without amendment—in round numbers, only 150 from BCF (out of a content of 3,900 entries) and 100 from SAF (out of its 3,000 entries). Well over 2,000 concepts are additional to those in BCF and SAF; at the same time several hundred have been dropped.

The presentation of the material is admirable. A large-format (21 × 28.5 cm), rather slender (2.5 cm) volume has been chosen in preference to a smaller fat one, and the double-column layout is commendably spacious with plenty of white on the pages. Type faces are particularly clean, and there is a pleasing and readily-apparent typographical scheme. Key terms are set in boldface capitals as main entries, each of which is allotted a Universal Reference Number. (The latter are of marginal interest to the user of this volume, but are a permanent and essential linking feature of the whole Terminology Project.) Between these are entered a variety of cross-references—mainly synonyms, “secondary” terms (in bold type) and abbreviations—the whole body of material being arranged in a single letter-by-letter alphabetical sequence. A great deal of useful information is given in the appendixes. Chief of these are a collection of figures to illustrate terms and concepts more readily than can be done by description alone; and a series of 31 “families” of related terms.

Although the typesetting is complex, few misprints are apparent. An exceptional error noted is the insertion of terms 3466-7 nine lines out of their proper sequence.

On the opening page, the Editor immediately nails his colours to the mast: “Good terminologies reveal differences,” he proclaims; “bad ones conceal them”. Judged from this standpoint if from no other, this work is a remarkable achievement. A feeling of completeness and unity is brought about largely through the use of various cross-referencing devices which, among other things, point to similar and related terms for comparison and contrast. However, the user also needs to allow his imagination free play, and for best value should consult several possible avenues of entry for his enquiry. For example, an explanation of electrical capacitance and resistance in measuring moisture in wood is found under **ELECTRIC**, rather than under **MOISTURE**, where the only cross-reference for **MOISTURE METER** is to the **HYGROSCOPIC** kind, surely not an important one on the world scene.

As befits a truly international undertaking, there is evidence of a spirit of compromise—as in the nice balance struck between Commonwealth and U.S. spellings. While entry 119 reads **ALIGNMENT** (Cw, USA), **ALINEMENT** (USA), we find that under entry 2245, **FIBER** (USA) has precedence over **FIBRE** (Cw, USA). Further, the entry **FIBER-TRACHEID** is continued overleaf as **FIBRE-TRACHEID**—but perhaps the latter is simply an uncorrected slip of the typesetter’s finger, in Cambridge, U.K. (not Mass.!).

A period of trial use of this book, by the writer together with several colleagues, both generalists and specialists, has generated some spontaneous praise along with some critical comment. The main lesson learnt is the importance of consulting all possible entries around a *concept*, rather than merely a single familiar or special *term*. This implies also the need to "follow through", tracing all likely leads suggested as cross-references. Thus, the idea of COST-BENEFIT is included, but in what some might regard as an inverted order, as BENEFIT-COST RATIO. Secondly, users will need to bear in mind that this terminology is designed to supplement rather than overlap the standard dictionaries mentioned above. This may not be much comfort to those who can point to some of the resulting anomalies: PHOTOSYNTHESIS, TRANSPIRATION and TRANSLOCATION are included, but RESPIRATION—for which the dictionary definitions were presumably thought quite adequate—is not. Thirdly, a substantial gap is felt because colloquialisms and slang synonyms are included only sparingly, and dialect and local terms are ignored, as of course are words derived from trade names (JIFFY POT, LOWTHER). Some important concepts appear to be missing or are poorly developed (RESISTANCE; SUSCEPTIBILITY; EPIDEMIC—only the adjectival use is included). There can be disagreement with some definitions (GRADING RULES—framed in consideration of the needs of buyers, but not of growers or merchants), and dislike of some expressions used (WEIGHMENT). Perhaps the main complaints about balance and coverage are likely to come from the specialists—for example, the feeling that the genetics field is better represented than, say, plant physiology or morphology. To the latter, the Editor replies, (mis?)quoting from the C.O.D. (1911), "The most that can be hoped for is that any one conversant with any special vocabulary may consider us, though sadly deficient in his subject, fairly copious in others".

Foresters in New Zealand could with advantage be guided by this terminology in clarifying and consciously improving their day-to-day jargon. For instance, WRENCHING is a much-discussed topic with us yet this word is more often than not used loosely, confused with or applied in place of the term undercutting. We could also ponder the list of 70-odd deprecated terms (and spellings), a number of which figure prominently in our national vocabulary. Thus for the deprecated term DIAMETER LIMIT the Editor suggests, for preference, diameter-class limit; for FIRE SEASON, closed fire-season; for HEART, core wood; for PROVENANCE, source; for SNOWBREAK, snow breakage; for WET WEIGHT, fresh weight; and for the spelling of TARIFF (table), tariff.

To supplement the main terminology volumes, the Project administrators recommend that others containing terms of strictly local and dialectal use should be compiled and published as the responsibility of national or regional groups. In our own country, the Institute of Foresters itself once made a brave and independent start in this direction when in 1946 it appointed a committee "to compile a glossary of terms used in New Zealand forestry with a view to standardizing

technical terms and listing and explaining local and vernacular ones". After four years of work by several subcommittees, a draft 15-page cyclostyled glossary was produced for final comments, but the matter was allowed to lapse pending publication of the BCF terminology in the fifties. Perhaps the time is now ripe to revive this project and bring it to a conclusion. A New Zealand terminology might prove to be quite brief, but it could usefully supplement the new SAF work by explaining the local applications of certain listed terms—CONDITION (vb, of seedling trees), COMBINE (n), GAUGE (vb), WIDE (n), REFINE (vb, of wood pulp)—and also recording the colourful vocabulary both old and new that enlivens our particular style of forestry—RICKER (or RIKA?), FIFTHS, SAILER, TOPPLE (or TWIZZLE?!), PACIFIC (log carriage), FIDDLE (vb), OUTROW (n), JUNK (sizes), DROPPER, TAIL OUT (vb), LILY PAD—not forgetting the Maori enrichments—KONAKI, PAKIHI, and others. Meantime, there is much pleasure to be had in browsing through the new English-language terminology, increasing one's word-power by study of such other oddities as FAG STATION, SLADE, PATANA, GUN-HOUR, MULTIVOLTINE (adj), TRABECULA, SHEUGH (vb) and WHIFFLE TREE.

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