Review of Japanese forest and its implications

Sir,

1. I would like to change "enthusiasm" to the more appropriate deep interest (in Japan).
2. I would re-stress the unique (non-European) development of Japanese forestry. For example in the N.Z.J. For. of 23(1) p74,1978 Westoby, an experienced international authority, states, "Forestry science had its true beginnings in Germany in the 16th century and.... Forestry as a profession was born in Germany in the second half of the 18th century." This overlooks Japanese development.
3. The second point I should have stressed more is the forthcoming impact of the non-wood values in Japan. This will give that country an overwhelming hand in the inevitable growth of the whole global warming/ carbon sink/conservation syndrome. As so revoltingly entitled, "The operationalisation of the Kyoto Protocol with a focus on sinks" (p 293). is a sign of this. Equally it could be called a paradigm shift (a word I had hoped to avoid). Mr. Hunter acknowledges both these points.
4. Mr. Hunter wants "...ramifications of sub-optimal forest management on import volumes, product profiles and prices and hence for management of forests overseas." Much of this is covered in the companion book on "Japanese wood-based industries , wood demand and trade". This needs the last two years data, but is otherwise finished. It does not include much on forest management overseas. This could be covered if necessary, and my exiguous means allow.

P.S. Dr. Burdon tells me "weltanschauungen" is "world-view"/ "conception of life".

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Economic work on Douglas fir

Sir,

Firstly, in his review of "Japanese forestry and its Implications", Mr Hunter mentions my background in "silvicultural economics of radiata pine". In Dr. Kininmonth's excellent and magnanimous "History of Forestry Research in N.Z." p.177 it is stated "in the 1970s FRI was doing very little on Douglas fir" (Minor point p.167; I had five years in Conservancy/sawmill work on return from Oxford, not a direct posting to FRI). I have done mensurational and economic coverage of the (pre-needle-cast) Douglas fir*. By 1973 I claim information on Douglas fir was unusually extensive. This, with unpublished work on P. radiata, extended analysis to the sale of final products from appropriate utilization plants. This inclusive approach of forest plus industry should have been the main thrust of future economic research, not stopping analysis at the forest ride. (Some work is buried in a couple of theses. These included a basis for comparing the relative growth Douglas fir, radiata pine and Corsican pine. I had to write two for, amongst other reasons interference from a top Australian forestry official with any work on the Free Trade Agreement with Australia. I resigned from the NZIF when he was made an Honorary member.)

In any case, cleaning up NZ silviculture started with Corsican pine in Southland in 1960. (The tragedy was that the example of C.H. Brown, who immediately learnt from the grade studies that pruning should be on time, and that thinning Corsican pine was a waste of money, was not followed elsewhere. This has cost the country dear, both in disgraceful expense and a loss of potential overseas markets. In Japan the consultative mode of action might have avoided this. All parties involved should have met and discussed the matter at some form of retreat, with the essential evening get-togethers).

It is overdue to correct this impression of radiata exclusiveness on my part. (I also get fed up with people saying "I am against x species".)

Secondly, I must belatedly point out that, in all the furor that accompanied the short rotation proposals, no one, anywhere, came forward with any other idea on how to improve profitability to meet the Treasury requirements. I had to wage the fight with little help. Certainly no one suggested Douglas fir. As in Japan there were no alternative ideas. There was much less excuse in N.Z. as the theoretical ideas I was circumventing were less the 15 years old, not centuries.

The work done on eucalypts did not result in any proposals, for example. It is also worth recording (as it puzzled some Australians at the time) that I was sacked from I/C Economics of Silviculture. This was partly due to my intention to switch to evaluating hardwoods, a stagnant field then.

This was Tom Tiddler's ground. It took another 14 years before I got an increment. Fortunately I was able to work in tropical and International forestry, which often focused on Japan, and attempt the USSR enigma).

References:

1. The role of Douglas fir in Australasian forestry. New Zealand Journal of Forestry Xll (1); 4-41. 1967.
2. The economics of Douglas fir on the Maraetai Blocks April 1967 Silviculture Report 82. This weighs 0.75kg. It took six months to type; it was written in 1966. It goes right through to include the sawmill. It also includes: "It is feasible that financially optimal management

(for radiata) is of a twenty to twenty five year rotation without extraction thinning and with selective pruning of only a number of butt logs." This idea had been developing as I did more grade study analyses. It is, of course, the short rotation proposal.

The two papers above were part of a failed thesis.

3. Douglas fir profitability. New Zealand Journal of Forestry Science 6 (1): 80-100, 1976.
4. I wrote sections on risk; and marketing in the FRI symposium on Douglas fir (in 1973 ?)
5. Three papers covering a decade of trans-Tasman trade all included volume and value data on Douglas fir e.g. Trans-Tasman Forest Products trade after a decade of NAFTA. NZ J. For. Sci. 9(1) 100-123.

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Natural enemy unleashed on buddleia

The Chinese weevil Cleopus japonicus was released into Rotorua's Whakarewarewa Forest this week as the first step in biological control of Buddleja davidii (buddleia) in New Zealand.

The release marked an important milestone for Ensis Forest Biosecurity and Protection (FBP) researchers, government funding providers, the Forest Biosecurity Research Council, and members of the forest industry who have supported this initiative.

Buddleia is a woody species with attractive purple flowers that was introduced to the country as an ornamental shrub and has since become one of the biggest weed problems in New Zealand forestry.

Its capacity to out-compete young trees makes buddleia a serious problem for forest owners, particularly in the Central North Island.

Dave Little, Harvesting and Marketing manager of Crown Forestry, says that forest owners see the release of cleopus as a milestone in buddleia control, and they will be watching with great interest to what impact it may have.

"The industry is under constant pressure to reduce chemical use, and the cleopus initiative demonstrates how we are keen to support serious efforts to find alternatives."

Ensis FBP scientists based in Rotorua identified the leaf-eating weevil ten years ago as a potential biological control agent against this aggressive weed. Cleopus was approved for release by ERMA [Environmental Risk Management Authority] after a long and rigorous process to screen the insect's diet to ensure it does not have an appetite for native or beneficial species.

Ensis scientist and project leader, Dr Brian Richardson says if cleopus is able to establish successfully in the New Zealand environment, it has the potential to stunt the growth of buddleia through defoliation and enable young trees to out-compete the weed.

This could mean cost-savings to the forest industry, and a decrease in the amount of chemical herbicides required to control buddleia.

"Buddleia now costs the New Zealand forest industry between $0.5 and $2.9 million annually in control costs and lost production. It also compromises biodiversity in native forest areas where weed control is seldom carried out, including slips and river beds," he explains.

From left - Nod Kay, Ensis entomologist who initiated the project, Dr Darren Kriticos (Ensis) who is leading the monitoring of cleopus spread and Rotorua MP, Steve Chadwick

It is anticipated that the cleopus weevil will slowly spread into all areas where buddleia is abundant, a process that will be encouraged by further releases in affected forests.

Dr Richardson says the release of a new insect into New Zealand's environment is a significant occasion, so the cleopus weevil was liberated In Whakarewarewa Forest with the blessing of local iwi.

"We wish cleopus all the best, and hope it enjoys a good feast on buddleia in New Zealand."

Cleopus will be released at five study sites in plantation forests around the Bay of Plenty and Hawke's Bay.

"After the initial testing, cleopus will be made available to regional councils and others," Dr Richardson explains.

Despite the need for management tools to control buddleia and other weeds, Dr Richardson says biological control is never undertaken lightly and every effort is made to reduce risks to the environment. The Foundation for Research, Science and Technology has been a key investor over the last decade in the development of the science underpinning cleopus and will continue to provide funding to support post-release monitoring and research. The investment has been made through the Foundation's Environmental Research Fund.