

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor,  
N.Z. Journal of Forestry.

### Institute Policy.

Sir,

One of the stated objects of the N.Z.I.F. is to further the development of technical forestry in New Zealand. I wish to question whether the Institute is doing everything in its power to attain this objective, particularly in regard to its relationship to the public.

It can be taken as axiomatic that a prerequisite of good forest practice in any country is a highly developed forest sense in the community. N.Z. has not got a highly developed or, to be more accurate, a well-informed forest sense. It follows therefore that one means of furthering the development of technical forestry and thus of attaining the Institute's objectives would be to take such steps as are necessary to instil into the community an informed and intelligent forest consciousness. Without doubt this work should be a function of the Forest Authority—should it not be also, in a complementary manner, a function of the Institute?

The matter is important, for at the present time, in N.Z. as in other parts of the world, foresters are fighting a losing battle. On the one side they have the logging and milling industries with their strong and generally well-publicised case for a free hand in exploiting natural resources, or at least for a freedom from technical direction of their operations; and on the other side there is the large and vociferous body of protectionists and conservationists who, if they had their way, would protect and conserve so thoroughly that the forester himself would not be allowed into the forests. The job of holding a correct balance between these two sets of extremists is a delicate one and it is a job that the forester cannot do unless he comes out into the open and explains his position to the public in common sense terms. He is not doing this and, because he is not, he is losing the battle.

It is the conservationist group in N.Z. which is the more active in influencing public opinion. One has only to read letters and editorials in the daily press or resolutions passed by local bodies or statements parading as scientific fact made by amateur foresters to realise how widespread are the effects of this conservationist propaganda. It results, amongst other things, in more muddled thinking about the relationship of forestry to soil conservation than should exist in what is supposed to be a well educated democracy, and this at a time when the need for clear thinking on so vital a matter is more evident than ever before. It also results, most unfortunately, in a general antagonism to the professional forester and his work. But, and here is the important point, whatever form the conservationist propaganda may take, it invariably has its origin in a genuine

and deepfelt goodwill towards the forests. It is not only illogical that this general feeling of goodwill should be working against the forester instead of for him—it is also prejudicial to good forestry and, hence, to the nation as a whole.

In practical terms, what can be done to correct the position? I think there is a great deal, although the onus of doing it will fall on foresters, who are already generally fully occupied with their more immediate problems. It would call for a display of kneeness and idealism to a greater degree than has been evident in the past; but these qualities, after all, should not be foreign to the practising forester. I have some concrete suggestions myself which I hope to submit at the next meeting of the Institute of Foresters. In the meantime I am addressing this letter in the hope that other members will express their views and that, as a result, this important matter will be accorded the attention it deserves.

I am, etc.,

A. P. THOMSON.

To the Editor,

N.Z. Journal of Forestry.

### **Mycorrhiza.**

Sir,

Do we know enough about mycorrhiza and its significance in regard to forestry? Or should I say, do we make sufficient use of what little we do know of this confusing relationship between fungus and tree root? Without pretending to know anything of the more complex scientific aspects of the problem which for the past sixty years has caused so much controversy, confusion and disagreement, or claiming to know anything of the technique of pure culture, which is the mycologist's job, but having read with interest of soil inoculations carried out in many parts of the world, I put forward the following notes of personal results and correlated reading.

There are accounts of fourteen nursery failures in Western Australia alone, where afforestation on a large scale is still in progress. In each nursery seeds of pines germinated normally and produced seedlings which at first were healthy, but later, except for an occasional group of seedlings, the plants ceased growth, turned yellow, and thereafter gradually died (Kessell 1927). Although the trouble was first diagnosed as a nutrient deficiency, it was found that soil fertilization was of only temporary benefit. An examination of the roots revealed no pathological conditions, but it was noticed that, except for the few groups or islands of seedlings which grew healthily, the coralloid roots (mycorrhizas) which nurserymen in other regions had learned to associate with healthy stock, were absent. Small