

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS. OUR JOURNAL

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In 1948 the late Owen Jones delivered a Presidential Address entitled "Our Institute". In this he reviewed the period up to the "coming of age" of the Institute, and he exhorted members to take their institute affairs much more seriously. Since then the solidarity of this body has greatly increased and the cohesion of the small number of foresters in the New Zealand Institute of Foresters is a matter of envy by many other societies. Such solidarity undoubtedly springs from the fact that foresters are essentially managers of land and crops and there is a sense of achievement in any activity to do with the improvement of these. The first loyalty is to these, and it is reflected in the cohesion of the people who endeavour to bring the improvements about.

Whatever the achievements of this society may be, the story of them and of the society's doings is enshrined in the journal it publishes. This is so with most societies, so that their journals become amongst the important, if not the most important, of their activities, and invariably absorb the greater part of their funds. A good journal will record all possible aspects of a society's ramifications and so leave an adequate record for posterity. There is no need for me to point out the importance of this in forestry because of the long term nature of most ventures in connection with it.

I have, therefore, plagiarised Owen Jones' title, and thought it might be appropriate to review the New Zealand Journal of Forestry very briefly; and although presidential addresses, if this short address can be included in such a category, are not normally open to discussion, it is hoped that at some time during the meeting a discussion will take place on whether or not our journal fulfils the functions it should.

Any such review must begin with the present journal's forerunner, Te Kura Ngahere, "The Sacred Lore of the Forest", produced from 1925-34 by the Forestry Club of the Canterbury School of Forestry. The professed aim of this journal was "... to discuss forestry in all its aspects ... extend the range of technical articles and publish researches conducted by the School". Te Kura was a remarkable effort for the club of a small school, and there is little doubt that the standard it set gave the Institute journal, when it followed Te Kura, an impetus it would never otherwise have received. It was a herald of the cohesion of foresters once the Institute was formed in 1929. It is a matter of history that the Canterbury Forestry School closed its doors in 1934, but until that date Te Kura published Institute news. In 1935 the Institute's journal was published under that name, but in 1936 it became the more prosaic "New Zealand Journal of Forestry".

Te Kura contained all manner of jottings, including personal, which disappeared, to my mind regrettably, in the journal of the Institute. In present journals we only seem to learn about members from the excellently written obituaries. The 1926 number of Te Kura makes a reference about one of the students, H. Roche, as having an "inexhaustible fund of breezy anecdotes", a description that would be very apt today, over thirty years later. Photographs also appear of the School's personnel, and in one of them is a keen-faced young student, Dave Kennedy. This might well have been followed by the reproduction of a certain photograph, containing a benign-faced Dave Kennedy, taken when the Institute met in his Conservancy three years ago.

Editorials should reflect current, topical and important—as seen at the time—matters of the day. Those of Te Kura did so in spite of the fact that we might well have expected an immaturity from so youthful a school. In 1930, at the height of exotic afforestation, an editorial questioned the amount of money being spent on exotic forestry. Another of the same year commented on the need for a quarantine on imported timber. Reference was also made to research in biology and the setting-up of a forest biological research station. In the previous year there is an editorial about the arguments on the good or otherwise to the country of opossums in which the statement is made that the forest authority must have the say, a fact that always seems to have been overlooked until last year. In the 1933 journal there is a courageous editorial on "A forest policy for the future". This poses many of the forest problems of the day.

With the demise of Te Kura, part of the breadth and the sting was taken out of editorials, because the officers of the newly-formed institute were mostly officers of the State Forest Service. In addition, the burden of editing the journal was left to a willing few.

Turning to the meat of the Journal, the contributed articles, I could attempt no more than comment on some subjects. I might state at the outset that the journal is regarded highly, both here and overseas, as a repository of good sound writing on general forest practice, principally of New Zealand practice. To achieve such a standard, any journal is largely dependent upon its editors so that the Institute has reason to be grateful to those members who have performed this onerous, honorary service. It is the most burdensome of all offices and demands the most meticulous work, particularly as many manuscripts are sent forward in an indifferent form.

If we look at the journal as a repository of technical information, we find that in many directions it reflects the progress of forestry work in New Zealand very well; in other directions it leaves notable gaps. We can take as an example of the former the investigations in the Westland rimu forests. Those undertaken by the Canterbury School of Forestry are fully recorded in Te Kura, and in an article entitled, "An Approach to the Management of Rimu Forests", by F. E. Hutchinson the case for permanent management is argued.

The author refers to the young growth destroyed in logging and says, "What is urgently wanted . . . is a forest survey of representative areas, showing the amount of such young growth, by size groups, which may be found on an average throughout the forests". He concludes by saying; "The most radical change is necessary, not in logging methods, but in the administration of the forests. The forester must know his forest". These words, are, alas, still partly true today, a quarter of a century later, though our technical knowledge of these highly important forests—to say nothing of the large area of permanent forest soils—has increased greatly and is well documented in the journal. A clear statement of this progress and of the problems remaining, both administrative and technical, were set out by D. Kennedy in his article in the journal of 1954 on "The Role of Forestry in the Land Use Pattern of the West Coast". In the same number, an account is given of the results of the forest survey of Westland and of the "Potentialities for Indigenous and Exotic Forestry in Westland".

Our exotic forests suffer many pathological ills which is only to be expected because of the numerous forest tree species introduced to New Zealand and the wide range of sites, many of them unsuitable, over which they have been planted. It is important that these pathogens should be well recorded and the pages of the journal offer a suitable place, at least for the more general accounts. Once again we find that Te Kura set the pace, for A. F. Clarke first began his writing in that journal in 1927.

This is followed a year later by an article on *Sirex* from the pen of Crystal, a British forest entomologist who visited New Zealand about that time. Reference is made to the collecting of the parasite *Rhyssa*. In the following numbers of the journal, contributions by Clarke are frequent and are later followed by those of Birch, Rawlings and others. One comment might, however, be made on the debit side, and that is the omission of any account of timber quarantine work or of the discovery and destruction, in timber imports, of potentially damaging forest and timber insects.

In contrast to the subjects just discussed, forest law is not touched upon in Te Kura, but the Institute's journal, on the other hand, contains a number of contributions which have kept readers well informed. Apart from editorials on new enactments and the recording of forest law by Boardman, mining law, as it has affected indigenous forests, has been ably expounded by Foster. Cooney has given the history of the Selwyn Plantation Board and Perham an account of the operations of the Wellington Water Board under working plan. A highly original contribution by C. M. Smith entitled "Forestry Down The Ages" was included in the 1936 journal. It was an address to the Wellington Philosophical Society and is a rare balance of forest history and forest law.

While all this and much more besides is a good record for a journal published but once a year, the Institute must be self-critical and examine the other side of the ledger as well.

Any reader of a New Zealand forestry journal would expect to find a great deal about radiata pine. Their hopes would be dashed, for the record in our journal is meagre to say the least. A good start was made, again in Te Kura, by Hocking's observations on the variation of the tree. There, this work, on one of the most promising of all forest trees, ceased until recent years. No account of this recent work has yet appeared in the journal. The next contribution was Field's account of his successful propagation of radiata pine cuttings; a small contribution that quickly drew much overseas attention. Not until fifteen years later did the next item appear; this time it was Ure's account of the natural regeneration of the species in Kaingaroa Forest. This was followed in 1953 by contributions from a symposium on radiata pine held at the Institute's annual meeting. Much prominence was given to the drawbacks of the tree as far as the greater part of the South Island was concerned; but beyond that and a summary of the timber properties by Reid, little was discussed. One might well have expected an analysis of those properties that have made it the most versatile of forest trees, or an analysis of growth and yield characteristics obtained from whatever management and experiments that had been carried out to date. Such contributions might have served the purpose of showing that we had hardly begun to plumb the silvicultural depths of this remarkable tree.

A very large part of the forest growing stock in New Zealand is contained in the forests of afforestation companies. The history of these is peculiar in that most of them commenced as land companies whose primary interest was to turn over, at a profit, low-value, unoccupied land. The crop, in the initial stages, was of secondary importance and was in various parts of the country tung oil, fruit trees, phormium or radiata pine. The financial structure of many of these companies was also peculiar; in fact, upon occasions, highly irregular, and one company at least did not have ownership of the land with which it was supposed to be dealing. All this is recorded very fully in the 1934 Commission of Inquiry into Company Promotion Methods, Etc. It was somewhat a matter of chance that brought together radiata pine and soils upon which it could grow lustily, and money. There were many failures in attempts to establish forests. Some of them complete, but these are seldom remembered except by the irate shareholders.

This very important chapter in the history of New Zealand forestry is wholly unrecorded in the pages of our journal. It is not merely a matter of history, because the origin and structure of all these companies will determine their action for a long time to come.

The Tasman sale has been a major event in New Zealand forest history insofar as it involved about half the growing stock that the State had taken some fifty years to establish. The effects on New Zealand forest practice are, therefore, destined to be far-reaching. Yet there is but one brief reference to the sale in an editorial of the journal. Perhaps this reflects the absence of a forest economist in

the country, though such a large sale could be analysed in many ways.

I had better not dwell too long on omissions because I have no intention of recording them as such. Rather, I have dwelt upon these few to show how readily gaps, if they can be regarded as such, can occur. It has been too much to expect a solo editor to exhort members of the Institute to produce all the material he requires. The type of editorial committee that can be got together now, because of the growing numbers of members in some centres, should do much to increase the coverage of subject matter of the journal. But it is the function of the Institute as a whole to take an active interest in these matters. While on this subject I might say that it always seems strange to me, and must be somewhat discouraging to editors, that there is usually an almost total absence of comment on the editor's report to the Annual Meeting.

I would like to make some brief reference to the future of the journal. Its good standing as a publication of general forest practice has already been pointed out and it would be possible to single out the writings of one or two individuals as being without peer in this field in any forestry journal of my knowledge.

We have now much research being conducted on forest practice, and the research worker in this field is frequently perplexed as to where to publish his findings. For instance, results of silvicultural investigations do not generally fall within the scope of material accepted by research journals. The research worker, therefore, falls back on departmental publication or on the journal. As far as the latter medium is concerned, there are some drawbacks and dangers which should be recognised. The acceptance of too many research papers would deprive the journal of that general nature that has come to be highly regarded. How to guard against this trend, or rather, how to find some satisfactory solution, is one of the matters about which the Institute should apply some thought in the years immediately ahead of it. Some foresters may not agree that the trend is undesirable. To them I would suggest that they study overseas forestry journals and be honest about the time they spend or can find to spend, in reading and digesting the research articles. There is another aspect which might be even more controversial than the one just raised; it is that a research worker does himself an injustice by presenting a piece of detailed research to a general journal if he is seeking to establish a professional standing. The reason for this is that the methods and degree of refereeing for the two types of journal are quite different.

All this does not help forest research workers in getting their papers published. A solution that I have sometimes thought of is that the Institute, when the volume of papers warrants it, and funds permit, publish two numbers of the journal a year, one containing research papers only.

I trust that this brief review will cause members to be helpfully critical of the journal that absorbs so much of their funds.