

TREES, FARMS AND THE NEW ZEALAND LANDSCAPE, by George H. Stockley, illustrated by Clive Anstey. Northern Southland Farm Forestry Association, Dipton. 220 pp., illus., tables. Price \$4.50 approx.

If ever our complaisant attitude regarding the environment needed attention — this is the time. If ever a people needed guidance, after years of despoliation and neglect of our surroundings — we are that people.

George Stockley, in *Trees, Farms and the New Zealand Landscape*, goes right to the heart of the matter. His comments are obviously directed at the rural section of our community, the landowners — the people who, with very little cost and effort, can turn the tide against indifference to and depredation of the countryside.

Particularly impressive is the section on Trees and Landscape, written in an agreeable, matter-of-fact manner. From the outset, with his reminiscences of his native Wiltshire, the reader is gathered in to the quite rural word picture. Yet, as the chapter progresses with descriptions of our New Zealand scene like "a veritable forest of poles and wires", the urge to get out and do something about it is strong. One is reminded of the desk-bound thinking that placed the multitude of pylons twixt the eye and the mountains on the Desert Road, and similar scenes.

The section on Farm Landscaping deals mainly with site conditions, topography, objectives and procedure, with ideas towards more original thinking in farm amenity planting, rather than the geometric concept that has been all too apparent in the past. Whilst the choice of species is mainly for South Island conditions (with a description of each plant mentioned — its likes and dislikes), a pity it is that so many of the trees and shrubs considered hardy and which do so well in the North Island could not be included. However, by adhering at least for a start to George Stockley's "hardy" recommendations, much disappointment can be avoided.

The great depth of knowledge, experience and love of his subject shows in his chapters on seed collection, treatment of seed, cuttings, etc., with an absolute wealth of information that will assist "doing your own thing", and for extra measure there is a series of handy reference tables on when and how.

The line drawings skilfully portraying the feeling of "Guilty . . . or not" lend enchantment to the book. Clive Anstey, the artist, must obviously feel for the subject as does the author.

There you have it — concise, enjoyable reading, a handy reference for all, yet with a certain quality and use of soft words and phrases that make it sheer delight. Where else would you read: "Thank God for the elderberry — food for the birds, not forgetting a nip from the bottle before bed"; or "the gentle art of potting"; and a more subtle change — using the centre of barbed wire coils for a container of another type — bird nesting boxes.

D.P.H.