

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF NEW ZEALAND'S FOREST SERVICE, by F. Allsop. *N.Z. Forest Service Information Series No. 59*. Government Printer, Wellington. 123 pp., illus., maps, diagrams.

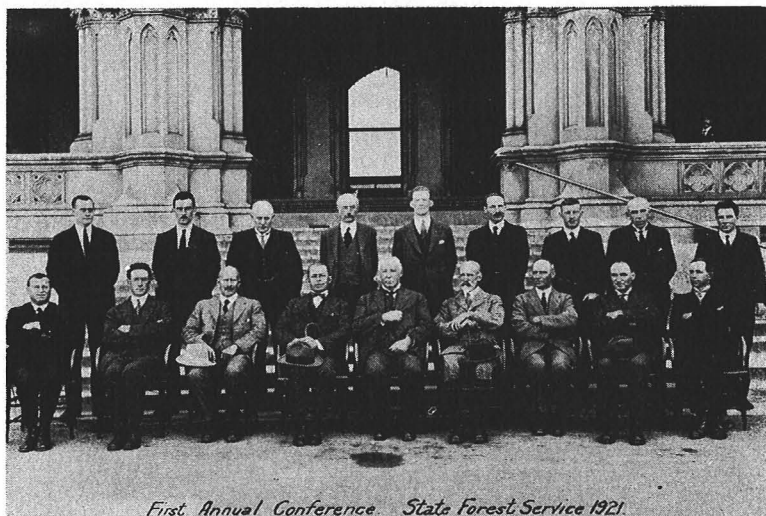
The publication of this slim volume is timely, supplying a historical record of forestry in New Zealand during the years 1919 to 1969, but also giving details of the tribulations and achievements of the N.Z. Forest Service since it was constituted as a separate Department of the Public Service. The dominant impression from the book is the painstaking thoroughness sustained by the author in sifting out events, dates, reports, etc., for inclusion, and the jettisoning of much material, in many ways interesting and of importance. Nevertheless, the author has followed instructions in using a "deliberately impersonal" manner and has condensed the story of the Forest Service into a tightly-written précis of 123 pages — an achievement on which he is to be congratulated.

Owing to the wide variety of information, and the various strands making up the history, it was clearly difficult to organize the book into a coherent story. The author starts off as if he is going to treat the subject matter in a historical way, grouping achievements under each Director (or Director-General) in turn. In Chapter 3, however, he breaks historical continuity to discuss briefly the man-made forests and their distribution, before again taking up the history of the principal people involved. From page 65 onwards (Chapter 6) various aspects are dealt with individually — timber use, safeguarding the forests, research, staff and training, and finally legislation. The treatment therefore appears to have fallen between two stools.

There are some useful maps and diagrams, but the photographs are perhaps not well chosen. MacIntosh Ellis certainly did not look so youthful during his tenure of office, and the photographs of Head Office buildings is of limited interest. The line-up of those involved in the first Annual Conference (illustrating this review) is surely more valuable as a historical record.

Having been involved, one can derive a little wry humour here and there. The "remarkably accurate" projections of 1925 (p. 13) were based on remarkably inaccurate and scanty information. County maps on a scale of 2 miles to the inch at that time often showed the "bush edge" at some unspecified date, and this was often the only survey data available as a basis for the estimates of merchantable timber. That any degree of accuracy was obtained speaks volumes for the local knowledge of the forest rangers recruited from the staff of the Lands Department.

The treatment of various Directors is rather uneven. Captain L. MacIntosh Ellis (as he then preferred to be called) deservedly emerges as the hero of the early days, an entrepreneur *par excellence* with remarkable drive; 1919 to 1928 are clearly shown to be "Ellis' years". However, because the history of private forestry was deliberately excluded, the part Ellis played in this has been under-estimated. He was essen-



*First Annual Conference. State Forest Service 1921*

*Back row:* A. H. Hansson, Chief Inspector. V. T. Fail, Surveyor. C. M. Malfroy, Milling Expert. J. W. Black, Private Secretary to Sir Francis Bell. A. R. Entrican, Engineer in Forest Products. A. H. Messinger, Draughtsman. A. D. McFarlane, Chief Clerk. R. McDonald, Timber Sales Clerk, A. W. Gyles, Accountant.

*Front row:* A. D. McGavock, Conservator, Hokitika. W. T. Morrison, Conservator, Canterbury/Otago. D. Macpherson, Conservator, Invercargill. L. MacIntosh Ellis, Director. Sir Francis H. Dillon Bell, Commissioner of State Forests. E. Phillips Turner, Secretary. H. A. Goudie, Conservator, Rotorua. R. D. Campbell, Conservator, Auckland. T. Douglas, Officer-in-charge, Nelson.

tially a propagandist. The plethora of forestry-promoting companies (good and bad) which mushroomed into existence during this period was the direct result of Ellis' successful propaganda campaign, which gained enthusiastic support from politicians, public and press, the valuable results of which are clearly apparent today.

E. Phillips Turner, gentleman and second Director, who had to handle the extraordinary acceleration and massive plantings at the height of the great depression, is scarcely mentioned. A. D. McGavock also emerges as a shadowy figure, and the role of C. M. Smith (who surely wrote the national forest policy on pp. 18-19 and must have played a key role during this period) is not acknowledged. McGavock's role was in any case ambiguous. On the one hand he was opposed to too much planting of radiata pine and was "apparently . . . blind to the value of professional training" (p. 98) on which Ellis and later Entrican put such store. On the other hand, he greatly increased the area of State forest and also insisted on the continuation of a separate forest service when the Economy Commission of 1931 tried to hand it back to the Lands Department (p. 18). At that time, so certain were some staff members that forestry had no future in New Zealand that they

obtained university qualifications in subjects that appeared to have more prospects.

A. R. Entrican, for all his outstanding achievements and vigorous personality, appears almost a flat colourless figure, and one is astounded that A. L. Poole, Director-General from 1961 to 1970, gets only one mention, although management of native forests (a matter of much lip service throughout the life of the Forest Service) made considerable progress in his day, and the exotic planting programme was built up rapidly under his guidance.

Forestry in New Zealand has been studded with colourful personalities, and there have been notable clashes, such as between Entrican and C. M. Smith. But these have been rigorously excluded from this book — a pity, for some information about personalities would make for lighter and brighter reading. However, if anyone wishes to read a succinct, factual account of the history of the N.Z. Forest Service, the book can be recommended.

V.T.F.

**THE OUTLOOK FOR TIMBER IN THE UNITED STATES.**  
*Forest Resource Report No. 20.* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, October 1973. 367 pp. Price \$US 3.25.

The first review of the U.S.A. forest resource, published in 1920, stated that the total national cut was five times as great as the annual growth and that the cut for trees of sawtimber size was ten times the annual growth. Opinions such as these must have contributed much to the general belief in the 1920s that a world wood famine was imminent. Subsequent reviews of the U.S.A. resource were not so alarmist and by 1962 the annual cut was reckoned to be only about 60% of the annual growth.

In October 1973 the U.S. Forest Service published its latest resource review — a full 367 page document with a mass of statistics and projections. All a reviewer can attempt is to highlight and comment on a few selected aspects which he considers may have some interest or relevance to New Zealand readers.

The first section of the report deals with recent trends, and the current position. The area of commercial timberland in the U.S.A. is 202 million hectares (22% of the total land area). Of this, the U.S. Forest Service owns only 18% (mostly in the west), other public agencies own 9% and the forest industry holds 14% (mostly in the south). The remaining 59% (some 120 million hectares) is owned by farmers (26%) and other private owners (33%). To have such a high proportion under such diverse ownership must present a considerable planning problem.

By area, hardwood forest types predominate (54%) but by volume and utilization softwoods are more important. The total volume of commercial timber in the U.S.A. is estimated at 20 thousand million m<sup>3</sup> (64% softwoods). The net annual growth is estimated as 527 million m<sup>3</sup> (303 million m<sup>3</sup> softwoods). This is equivalent to an average mean annual incre-