

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Journal and its Role

With two separate articles of Member's Comment in this issue, Editorial Comment can be brief and will be introspective.

In the current editorial view the *Journal* has several major roles. The first is informative and interpretative: trying to focus on the major issues and policy matters of the time, either editorially or through articles or Member's Comment. A second role is to provide a forum for Institute opinion and Institute happenings. A third is to provide a voice for members who have something professional to say, who wish to draw to wider attention their work or their thinking. One aspect of this latter role is the provision of a platform from which to launch new and innovative ideas which may, if they prove worth while, influence future forestry development.

W. J. Wendelken, in Member's Comment in this issue, stresses the need for the Institute to provide new thought in what is left of the 1970s; and in the light of his concern it is interesting to examine the content of this and the preceding two issues of the *Journal*. One finds in those issues several ideas not in current forestry practice.

For perhaps the first time in the New Zealand forestry literature an attempt is made to examine New Zealand's future forest policy within the context of the entire South Pacific area (A. J. Leslie, *N.Z. Jl For.*, 20: 254-71), and the implications of this are obvious. Not a wildly innovative thought, perhaps, but nonetheless refreshing in terms of the fact that forestry development in other countries was seldom mentioned in the recent Forestry Development Conference planning and discussion. (In fact, possible developments in other sectors of the *New Zealand* economy were seldom mentioned either!)

S. D. Richardson's pointing to the need for the development of small (50 tonne per day) pulp and paper mills, fully competitive with those 20 times that size (*N.Z. Jl For.*, 20: 238) must strike a chord in the minds of people concerned with the pulping of New Zealand beech species. An innovative thought? Perhaps not, but the Government's answer to the fact that there was insufficient timber to supply a 600 tonnes per day kraft pulp mill on the West Coast was certainly not to send the mill designers and economists back to their drawing boards. It was to enlarge the resource!

An article by R. Grant in this issue stresses the economic advantage to be gained from deciding in advance the end use of our forest, and managing it accordingly — not just on a local scale (as is already being done in some places) but on a national scale. Again, perhaps not a completely new thought, but such management is not being done and the economics look impressive.

F. J. Newhook and C. G. Shaw use a book review in this issue as an opportunity to propose that the Institute press for the preservation of the native stands of *Pinus radiata* as a reserve gene pool in the case of future disease problems in New Zealand or other countries. (They could have further extended this to query by what means the considerable gene pool of *P. radiata* within New Zealand will be preserved, as the genetic base of the species becomes progressively narrowed by the Forest Service tree breeding programme.) The *Journal* is a valid place to make such proposal and query.

A. J. Leslie, in Member's Comment in this issue, provides perhaps the first thoughtful analysis *by a forester* of the current issues dividing forestry and conservation. Dissecting out the environmental case against forestry, he reassembles it in the compellingly simple form of four sequentially derived allegations by the environmentalist that require — and have not yet received — an answer from the forester. It may be that in attempting to answer them (and perhaps we will try since this time they have been put by a forester!) forest policy may be re-thought.

Time alone will tell whether or not any (or all) of these papers will influence the development of forestry thought or policy in New Zealand — the answer could well form the subject of an editorial five years hence. But if any of them do, then the *Journal* has a valid function outside the simple one of providing information. That is good, both for the *Journal* and for the Institute.