

EDITORIAL

YOUR JOURNAL

My brief, on being persuaded to take over the journal editorship in mid February, was to change the journal format to A4, make it more readable and relevant. Statements like "articles are to be pithy", "more photographs", "amalgamate the newsletter" and "advertisements" were suggested. So here it is, your first 'new format' issue. Is it what you expected?

On taking up the job I was not clear on what was needed. With the help of the editorial committee and comments by John Holloway, we defined the Journal Policy. Read it — it's on the title page. However, the journal is still evolving and these first issues should be seen as part of this transition. For example, we are currently relying on papers al-

ready submitted and written with the former style in mind.

I am not sure what you are looking for and would therefore appreciate your comments. My feeling is that we need to be flexible and should try various options. As you see from the policy statement, the journal is trying to meet several objectives ranging from keeping you abreast of Institute news to presenting learned papers, to provoking thought about new issues.

I believe it is also important that high standards are maintained. Therefore we have decided that longer articles and technical notes will still be referred and carefully edited. Attention is also being given to layout and design.

However, I believe the journal should be stimulating and easily read, and this

suggests changes in the way articles are written and presented. Some ideas to achieve this are given in the 'Advice to Contributors' to be found on the back page. I also hope we will see a wide range of topics covered. Most articles should be shorter than in the past, but I am keen to have feature articles (or perhaps reviews) in which particular subjects are highlighted.

There are to be four issues a year. We are therefore depending on receiving a good flow of material. Currently we are aiming for sections called: 'Comment', 'Recent Events', 'Letters', 'Institute News', 'New Information' as well as 'Articles and Feature Articles'. Please feel free to contribute to any of these.

Don J. Mead
Editor

ENVIRONMENTAL ADMINISTRATION CHANGES

How will they affect rural fire legislation and control?

A.N. Cooper, Chief Fire Control Officer, NZ Forest Service

The Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 is administered in the New Zealand Forest Service on behalf of the Minister of Forests.

The Minister is the rural fire authority for all State land, which includes national parks, scenic reserves, maritime parks, indigenous and exotic forests administered by the Forest Service (including leased land) and other lands of the Crown within the meaning of section 176 of the Land Act 1948, e.g. unalienated Crown land.

The Forest Service has had the legal authority to prevent, control and suppress fires in all State areas. The organisation to do this, since 1955, has been mainly based on the exotic forest infrastructure. The Forest Service has also had other responsibilities in rural

fire control such as collecting fire hazard data, training, organising meetings, standardising equipment, coordinating fire plans, declaring regional fire emergencies. Administrative responsibilities have included maintaining a panel of rural fire mediators and register of voluntary fire forces, preparing orders and notices for new, or changes to the dozens of rural fire districts, many of which do not include state forests, proposing and assisting with legislative changes and other work for the Minister. Forging links with other Government departments and agencies (Defence, Fire Service Commission) and national organisations working to improve fire control in rural areas (Federated Farmers, Forest Owners, NZ Counties Association) has been an important facet of Forest Service work.

Establishing the Department of Conservation, the Forestry Corporation and the Land Development and Management Corporation will change all that. State lands not allocated to production uses (national parks, scenic reserves, most forest parks, open indigenous and protection forests, etc) will become the responsibility of the Minister of Conservation and control will pass from the Forest Service. Similarly control of indigenous and exotic forest production lands will pass to the Forestry Corporation.

Changes to the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 will be needed to meet this new situation.

This would mean dividing the State fire control organisation into two fire authorities. The Act will need amending, mainly by name changes — in-