

FORESTRY PRACTICE. O. M. Blatchford, Editor.

Forestry Commission Bulletin No. 14 Ninth Edition. Price £3.50.

The dangers associated with monoculture have been dramatically emphasised by the devastating attacks of the Pine Beauty moth, *Panolis flammea* on the lodgepole pine stands of North Scotland over the past three years. Obviously, this book was well in preparation before the scale of this infestation became apparent. Nevertheless, a word of caution is included, pointing out the vulnerability of a rapidly expanding forest estate, based on exotic species, to disease and insect attack. It might be expected that this word of caution should be associated with a plea for more imagination in species selection, calling perhaps for greater diversification both in

species and in provenance within species. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In the table of plant indicators, eight plant associations are common to both this and the last edition of the bulletin, published in 1964. Although the wording is practically identical in both editions, Sitka spruce now appears as an indicated species in seven of the eight associations compared with three in the earlier edition.

This is not to take from the merits of this excellent publication. To those in forestry who do not have ready access to "Forestry Practice", this edition is strongly recommended. And to the great number of Irish foresters who already have a well thumbed copy of an older edition on their shelves, it should be said, that this, the ninth edition, contains new material sufficient for it to be an original publication. New chapters have been added on roads, safety, management and administration, recreation, radio communications and careers in forestry. The bulletin is well produced with 27 line drawings and 17 well chosen and informative photographs.

The most serious criticism I would have is that the treatment of different topics is rather uneven. Site preparation and drainage are approached as if the reader is quite ignorant of the topic, yet the description of techniques is inadequate for the uninitiated. The discussion of the theoretical basis of drainage is quite confused and can hardly be of much assistance to the reader. Similarly, we are told that only 1% of the area fertilized by the Forestry Commission in recent years has received nitrogen. We are not told that nitrogen fertilizers applied to very young or phosphate deficient crops may be positively harmful, leading to high mortality. This would seem to be a serious omission for the reader approaching the subject from a background in modern agricultural practice. Contrast this lack of detail with the table of "Recreation Use Requirements" which, for 19 different activities lists the space requirements, the ground surface texture, climatic constraints and many other details. Did you know for example that for pheasant shooting soil pH should be greater than 7 and fog is a climatic constraint? Again, minute detail is provided on the features of a good chainsaw although much of the considerable detail in the chapter on harvesting would seem to be of value to those involved in this area.

E. P. FARRELL