NEWS AND NOTES

TO THE EDITOR:

Your issue of September 1955 must assuredly be accounted one of your best. D. M. Fisher's remarks editorially were indeed a refreshing change. Such pointed observations as he makes, made cogent by truth, are as a clean cloth to a cluttered slate.

It has always been a matter of wonder to me how foresters, as a professional group, are able to maintain their identity. For, on consideration, it is seen that:

(a) they are technically trained in many disciplines though insufficiently in any one of them.

(b) their methods and practices are based largely on assumption.

(c) the answers to or the elucidation of these assumptions will predictably come from areas of scientific thought other than "forestry".

(d) as Mr. Fisher remarked, specialists in allied fields are continually robbing the professional tool box, and in a manner that is becoming increasingly difficult to understand.

(e) in the implementation of his science, the forester is curbed and curtailed by economic considerations and governmental intervention at all levels.

The only unity in this heterogeneous grouping of human skills, obscured by the term "forestry", would seem to stem from the fact that, for their justification, all of them require a tree or trees. That such a diversity of human knowledge should rest content under such a tenuous synthesis can only be due to "unreflective consolidation", as Mr. Fisher has it.

As a forester, I heartily endorse the editorial policy which makes possible the publication of articles, such as that by Mr. Fisher, which, by their controversial content, will ruffle professional complacency and initiate a re-examination of the tenets basic to the faith.

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TO THE EDITOR:

The comments made in the March issue of *The Forestry Chronicle* by Messrs. P. J. Haddock and J. H. G. Smith deserve some additional considerations. I must first state that this short manuscript was first intended for a semi-technical magazine and that due to certain circumstances, it was transferred to *The Forestry Chronicle*. Although, I had been notified of, and had approved this transfer, I did not, however, review the manuscript, at that time. This may explain why the description of methods and the bibliography were omitted. I would also like to mention that this paper, a translation from the French, was not submitted either to Drs. Lafond and Richard before publication.

The methods used for the soil analyses were those generally employed in agriculture: extraction with ammonium acetate, spectrophotometric determina-

tion of iron, manganese, phosphorus and magnesium, and flame-spectrophotometric analysis of calcium and potassium. The term humus was used for the Ao horizon, as in any study dealing with forest soil profiles.

Before starting the physico-chemical analysis of the Ao horizon, a study was made of the water-retaining capacity of samples collected in cut-over and in neighboring uncut stands by the centrifuge method. No significant difference was obtained. The seed supply from neighboring stands was found to be abundant, and many seeds were detected in the humus layer.

Thus it appears that factors other than the usual explanation for failure of black spruce reproduction in these stands must be looked for. It should also be noticed that other plants associated with black spruce stands, such as *Cornus canadensis*, *Clintonia borealis* or *Vaccinium canadense*, etc, find enough humidity to germinate and develop normally in these sites, while black spruce seed hardly succeeds.

Without assuming that the problem has been completely solved, we think that interesting trends have been found and that experiments in the field are indicated to complete our knowledge of this question.

The statistical analysis of the data is correct. It was made according to the theory of the "pooled standard deviation" (see Snedecor Statistical Methods, 4th ed., pp. 76-77 and 78 for the theory, and page 65 for probability table). The computations have been reviewed and the interpretation has been made according to that theory. No doubt that this part of Snedecor's well known text was overlooked when the appreciation of the statistical analysis was made by Messrs. Haddock and Smith.

HENRI LEBLANC

THE COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY BUREAU
AN INFORMATION CENTRE

The following report is intended to bring to the attention of foresters in this country an organization that has been established for our use and should be better known than it is, particularly among research workers. I refer to the Commonwealth Forestry Bureau which is one of the group known collectively as the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux. There are two reasons for discussing this matter at the present time: first, it is fresh in my mind, as during the past summer I was a member of the Canadian delegation attending a conference in Great Britain that had as its objective a review of the work of the C.A.B. organization; second, and more significant, is the fact that research activities in the fields of forestry and forest products are increasing rapidly in this country, and for this work to be most efficient, full use should be made of the services provided by the Forestry Bureau.

The rapid growth that has taken place in all phases of scientific research in recent years and the associated flood of scientific literature—far more in any one field than can possibly be dealt with directly by the individual worker—has emphasized the importance of authoritative documentation centres that will survey, index, abstract, and review the world literature in each branch of science and thus keep the scientists in that field informed of developments with as little time-lag as possible.