

BOOK REVIEWS

Forest Map of New Zealand. 1:63,360 (one inch to one mile). Sheets N58 (Tauranga), N66 (Matamata), N67 (Te Puke), N75 (Arapuni), N76 (Rotorua), N77 (Tarawera). J. L. Nicholls. Govt. Printer, Wellington. \$0.75 each.

These six maps produced by the Ecological Section of the Forest Research Institute are the first of a series with which it is proposed to cover the indigenous forests of New Zealand.

The maps are based on information obtained from the N.Z. Forest Service's National Forestry Survey of 1946-55 but the forest outlines are mapped as they were in 1943-48 when the aerial photographs used in the survey were taken. The provisional classification of North Island forests published in 1957 by P. J. McKelvey and J. L. Nicholls has been adopted with only minor adjustments so that the basic mapping unit is the forest "type", defined rather loosely and vaguely in their paper as "any clearly distinct unit of forest vegetation". The classification is in fact based essentially on composition of the physiognomically important species but even so, a total of 78 types in 18 groups has been recognised for the North Island.

The maps are attractively produced in colour, which, with the exception of the Rotorua sheet, is well matched between the six sheets produced to date. The colours are used only to emphasize the symbols which actually designate each area. Type boundaries are clearly demarcated with dotted lines but subtypes, although similarly separated, are not distinguished by colour. There is no lack of clarity in placement of the symbols despite some very small tracts of forest.

In addition to the map, each sheet contains a concise and useful description of such pertinent features as physiography, soils, climate, animals and history as well as some, rather less pertinent, on land tenures, timber resources, water resources and recreation. Indeed, the few lines given to this last topic are essentially repeated in all six maps: few members of the public enter the forests; no areas are managed for recreation but this may become necessary because population pressure is increasing! The only apparent justification for this statement is to inform the reader that our forests should, or could, serve a multiple use. In addition to this information there is a legend section where the types are designated (although the significance of slashes and dashes here, e.g. rimu-rata/tawa-kamahi, may not be obvious to

all readers and these should have been explained under "symbols"). For each forest type there is a brief statement on total area, distribution, densities of dominant merchantable species and even timber yield, thus providing a distinct applied slant to the function of these maps.

Unfortunately, all of the written information is printed on the reverse side so not only is it awkward to relate the legend to the map, but moreover, it cannot be salvaged if, as so often happens, the maps are used in a composite to paper the corridor or office wall.

The standard and general appearance of these forest type maps could have been enhanced by adopting certain features of the extremely well-presented series of 1:250,000 Geological Maps of New Zealand. These include: (a) presentation of legend and text alongside the map rather than on its reverse side; (b) use of colour boxes with symbols in the legend (or at least the symbols offset and printed in bold-type); (c) provision of grid lines to enable exact designation of sites of any future intensive studies; (d) provision of a bibliographic reference, especially desirable for the forest maps since neither the title nor date on the jacket agree with those on the map itself.

With the McKelvey and Nicholls system of type notation, only the last eight letters of the alphabet remain to cover the South Island forests for which no comparable classification has yet been published. Presumably a modified notation system will eventually be required before the series can be completed.

Unlike geological maps, but like all those dealing with vegetation, these forest type maps have become out of date even before publication, and especially so here, since logging has continued in many areas throughout the 20 years since the aerial photographs were taken. However, some indication of the extent of reduction in the original area of each type up to the time of publication is included in the legend.

These criticisms, however, should not obscure the outstanding contribution which these maps will undoubtedly make to the evolution of forest ecology in New Zealand, especially when the series is completed. They will obviously form the basis for all future intensive studies of our indigenous forests as well as producing an accurate inventory of the extent and distribution of our indigenous forest resources during one stage of their long and continuing exploitation. — A.M.