

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF TROPICAL FORESTERS, INC.
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NEWS NOTES NO. 18

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Lure of New Lands: Not very long ago, the government of a tropical nation announced a plan to clear large areas of forest and devote the land to agricultural crops. The stated purpose was to relieve a food shortage made acute by increasing populations.

The Government rejected all suggestions that it might first be advisable to make a survey and determine whether soil and other factors rendered the areas suitable for agriculture. It appeared that Government had neither time nor funds for "purely scientific refinements". In the interest of speed and economy, the program had been placed in the hands of "practical men".

And so it will be left blind chance whether the harvest from those hectares is to be food or wrecked lands and wasted pesos.

Throughout the tropics of both hemispheres, the cry for new lands becomes louder, especially among emerging nations with rapidly multiplying peoples. No forester is likely to oppose a program of agricultural development provided - and the proviso is vital - provided the long-term result is a gain in food production. Too often it is not. Too often forests are destroyed on lands which any forester or soils scientist could have foretold were doomed for agriculture from the start. Lands, which once exposed to rain, wind and sun, would soon cease to produce even a self-respecting weed.

There is nothing new in all this. The crop-producing limitations of many soil types are well known and for years foresters have pointed this out. Aubreville in Africa, British and French foresters in the East, Tamesis in the Philippines, Holdridge and Budowski in the American Tropics - all have stressed the necessity to distinguish between lands that will support agricultural crops and those that will not. It is not the knowledge we lack, it is the unwillingness of governments to apply what we already know. For to do that may involve "impractical expenses". One wonders how much this "practical" approach has already cost in wasted effort, blasted hopes, and irreversible damage. One wonders if in dealing with our resources, the "practical man" is not becoming a luxury this modern world can ill afford. --- T.G.

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Sixth World Forestry Congress: Latest information regarding progress in preparation for the Congress indicates that its main theme will be "The Role of Forestry in the Changing World Economy". Prominent items will be the FAO appraisal of world wood resources, the planning of the intensive use of forest potentials

and financial aspects of forestry development. Four plenary sessions will be devoted to these subjects.

The program will provide for detailed review of technical progress under the following headings: afforestation techniques; forest protection; silviculture and management; wood harvesting and transport; labor questions in forestry; tropical forestry; forest products; national parks and wildlife; soil and water conservation; tree improvement.

A variety of study tours through Spain are being provided to take place before, during and after the Congress.

The amount of time allotted thus far to tropical forestry is not impressive. Already a number of letters have been sent by ISTF members stressing the need for adequate provision for tropical forestry. Further suggestions (in duplicate) should be addressed to the Director, Forestry & Forest Products Division, Food & Agriculture Organization, Via delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome.

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Latin American Forestry Commission Meets: The Commission held its 9th Session in Curitiba, Brazil, November 5-12, 1964. Eighteen countries were represented, together with a number of organizations. Over 200 members were in attendance.

Among the resolutions adopted was one urging member governments to secure strong participation of all Latin American countries at the 6th World Forestry Congress. It was the unanimous desire of the Commission that the 7th Congress be held in Latin America. The Commission also invited the forestry associations of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela to form a working group to draft statutes for a Latin American Association of Forestry Societies. ISTF members Harper, Wadsworth and Donaldson represented the USA.

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Pine Destruction in Honduras: Infestation of Honduras' pine forests by the bark beetle (dendroctonus frontalis) already covers an area of about 3,000,000 hectares, and a total volume of over 3½ cubic meters of pine has been destroyed. This is by far the worst epidemic of its kind that has ever been recorded and it is extremely doubtful that further destruction can be stopped at this late stage. Remaining stands of pine are already threatened. Present plans are to send a team of foresters from the U.S. Forest Service to Honduras in cooperation with FAO, to examine the possible genetic resistance of the trees that are left. There remains a fair sprinkling of trees unaffected by the beetle to serve as seed trees for a future crop and aid in reforesting the denuded area, but unless intensive measures are taken to keep fire out, the loss may be complete.

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Activities in the Philippines: Two bills of unusual significance have been presented to the Philippine Congress - one provides that only graduates of a college of forestry shall be Director of Forestry. The other, a "Forestry Professional Act", provides for the qualifying and licensing of persons desiring to engage in the practice of forestry.

The Philippine Reforestation Administration, which was formerly a small division in the Bureau of Forestry, now has an annual appropriation of 9,000,000 pesos with which to step up the tempo of replanting critical denuded areas. As a result, the old rate of 1,000 hectares a year has been increased to 35,000 hectares.

Meanwhile, competition for forestry technicians in the Philippines is getting keener. Government agencies and private lumber companies are vying with one another for the services of forestry graduates. The expanding activities of the forestry agencies and the compulsory use of selective logging in all operations makes necessary the use of forestry technicians.

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Publications: One of the best sources of current news of interest to tropical foresters, especially in Latin America, is the FORESTRY BULLETIN FOR LATIN AMERICA, published by the Regional Forestry Office of FAO, Casilla 10095, Santiago, Chile. The original issue is in Spanish, with a limited distribution in English. It is a well-edited and comprehensive bulletin.

COMMON TREES OF PUERTO RICO AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS by Elbert L. Little, Jr., and Frank H. Wadsworth, describes in detail 250 of the commoner and more important native tree species. Identification of each species is aided by large drawings of the leaves, flowers and fruits and a description that emphasizes the distinguishing characteristics. The book is a valuable addition to the literature of tropical Latin America. It is for sale by the Supt. of Documents, U.S. Gov't. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., and the price is \$4.25. An additional \$1.07 is required to cover foreign postage.

The following publications are now available at the Centre Technique Forestier Tropical, 45^{bis} avenue de la Belle-Gabrielle, Nogent-Sur-Marne (Seine), France: NOMENCLATURE GENERALE DES BOIS TROPICAUX, price 25F; and DOCUMENTATION ET USAGES RELATIFS AU NEGOCE INTERNATIONAL DES BOIS TROPICAUX, price 20 F (deluxe binding 30 F).

BULLETIN NO. 15 of the Latin American Forestry Institute at Merida, Venezuela, gives a full account of the meeting on technical forestry education held in Merida under the auspices of FAO. Dean Hardy Shirley presided and his address "Priorities in the Forestry World" is carried in Spanish.

FOREST ROADS IN THE TROPICS by Jean Le Ray, is a well-illustrated article which appeared originally in

UNASYLVA and is now available as a reprint. It is the most complete study of tropical forest roads that has been made available to the profession.

HOLDRIDGE'S WORLD CLASSIFICATION OF LIFE ZONES: In 1947 Dr. Holdridge published a system or classification scheme of world plant formations based on simple climatic data. The system has been taught at the graduate school at Turrialba, together with other systems. Gerardo Budowski has made a reappraisal of the Holdridge classification which has been used by the Interamerican Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the OAS.

An important addition to forestry literature is VOLUME I of ELSEVIER'S WOOD DICTIONARY by Dr. W. Boerhave Beekman, Director of the Netherlands Wood Academy, Amsterdam, and a long-time ISTF member. This Volume contains a nomenclature based on 2500 botanical terms with 3700 English derivatives. Of special interest to the timber world is the detailed listing of sources of supply of 2500 different wood species. The Volume may be obtained from the Elsevier Publishing Co., P.O. Box 211, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Price £ 5.10.0.

A 450 page volume, THE TROPICAL RAIN FOREST, by P. W. Richards, was first published in 1952 and remains a classic in its field. No later work has supplanted it. At the request of specialists, it is still being kept in print by the Cambridge University Press, 32 E. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Price \$11.50.

Tropical foresters will be glad to learn that the NEWSLETTER of the FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR AFRICA has been resumed as of June 1964. The reappearance of this timely and interesting source of information covering the African region will be welcomed by foresters in the tropics of both hemispheres.

FOREST ECONOMICS-AFRICAN TIMBER TRENDS STUDY AND PROSPECTS was prepared by FAO for the Sixth Session of the Economic Commission for Africa. It has been described as a landmark in regional development in forestry, and represents the first stage of a composite study covering most of tropical Africa. A fuller and more complete appraisal will be made when the information for Africa has been assembled and analyzed. --Newsletter No. 12, FAO Regional Office for Africa.

Prof. G. S. Puri presented two papers on Forest Savanna boundary questions at the UNESCO Forest Savanna Boundary Symposium in Venezuela. The meeting was attended by 30 international experts. He is also the author of a study entitled THE PRESENT POSITION OF FOREST ECOLOGY OF AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA.