

# EDITORIAL

## STATE EXAMS FOR INDEPENDENT MANAGEMENT OF A FOREST ENTERPRISE

In the last double issue of Forestry Journal, which was dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Croatian forestry, we reviewed the texts from the first years of its printing and drew a parallel with the present. In order to gain an insight into the historical sequence of the forestry profession and the interesting and contemporary nature of the texts, this double issue will focus on three texts from 1880 and 1881 dealing with the subject title. The first text refers to the "Instruction of the Ministry of Agriculture of February 13, 1875, B 129/A. M., R.-G.-Bl.No.9, dealing with the exam for technical service in the state forestry administration (according to this Instruction, state exams were taken by civil servants in the competent ministries in Budapest and Vienna, which qualified them for work in the public service). The second text refers to the "Letter of November 3, 1880, No. 24509, in which the High Royal Government invites the Administration of the Royal Forestry and Agriculture College in Križevci to form a special commission for the purpose of drawing up a basis for the reformation of the governmental instruction of January 10, 1850, relating to forestry state exams in general". The Basis of the new instruction for state exams for independent forestry administration in Croatia and Slavonia was drawn up by a commission consisting of F. Ž. Kesterčanek, Dragutin Hlava and Vladimir Kiseljak. Like the instruction of 1875, the new instruction was also primarily based on the already mentioned Instruction of January 16, 1850, as well as on the experience from neighbouring countries. The exam was held in May every year. A candidate had to have completed a study of forestry and received good grades in the main subjects, and had to have at least three years of working experience. The exam was in written and oral form, and the subjects included: a) Silviculture, B) Forest protection and forest service, c) Forest technology and use, d) Geodesy, e) Establishment of forest control, Management plans, ..., f) Forest inventory ... with particular reference to the calculation of forest value, forest-financial management ..., g) Forest civil engineering (forest roads and vehicles, as well as forest structures ..., h) State forest legislation (forest laws, instructions, and similar), i) Relationship between private rights on forestry and hunting, j) Basic principles of direct taxation, k) General principles of hunting management, and l) General review of farming". The 8-hour written part of the exam was followed by a two-hour public oral exam for each candidate. Several days later the final exam was taken in a "nearby forest office or a forest". After the exam, the candidate might receive the following grades: "excellent" or "just competent", while those found incompetent could retake the exam on a date set by a three-member examining board". The Instruction of 1875 contains a part of the paragraph stating the following: "An examiner who is a candidate's blood relative or a relative-in-law must not be present at the exam of the said candidate". It is interesting to note that in order to take the exam, the candidates had to submit not only their diploma and a document confirming their work in the profession, but also professional comments and notes they kept in the course of work.

These two texts show that the method of taking state exams and the amount of the matter examined were regulated very early. The third text (related to the present politically-based appointments) gives an answer to the question raised in the article:

**"Does passing the state forestry exam qualify a candidate for an independent running of the highest forestry service?"** If we answer the question ourselves, the answer is "yes", but if we are honest, "we must admit that there is a great difference between being a forest manager and a managing high servant. Those who are aware of what is happening day by day will find that there are very many foresters who, supervised by a competent and conscientious superior servant, become not only the best managing servants but also the best workers; however, if removed from their sphere or if appointed to run the highest administration, those otherwise competent servants display such ineptitude and begin to manage in such an inappropriate manner that one cannot help but conclude that they are utterly incompetent. **Not everybody is capable of being what he wants to be; try as hard as one might, one's own natural abilities tell you: you can get no further than this. Needless to say, it is the forest that suffers most in the aftermath of such errors**".

The text goes on to recommend moderation, an awareness of one's own abilities and individual advancement through practical work, step by step, "up to that honourable position which can be best fulfilled by one's abilities". As for the status after passing the state exam and lifelong learning, the text critically reviews "foresters that have passed the state exam. The majority of them, satisfied with the fact that "they have achieved their purpose", do nothing, throw away the books, forget ambition and turn into simple and well-meaning citizens who plant their cabbage in peace and only carry out their service as foresters in passing. Others, on the other hand, are restless and full of ideas, of which none are realized; their whims are followed by their changing priorities; ... they avidly read all the books but remember hardly anything, ... their work is sometimes excellent but never of long lasting ... and is rarely useful for anybody. This is where the majority of our, so badly "appreciated geniuses" originate. The third part, the smallest one, is the crown of forest managers. The reputation of the profession which they have chosen is their utmost priority. They do not bask in the glory of passing the state exam, but, knowing that this is where the true study begins and that the things learned at one time are usually forgotten later on, broaden their knowledge and educate themselves as men with a purpose firmly in mind". Yet, there are differences even among this elite of the forestry profession. Each of them has their own limit, so "some are in honourable positions that do not rightfully belong to them, nor would they achieve them if their knowledge was the foremost criterion." Our profession will advance and benefit "when we finally do away with the geniuses of the profession, and when every member of the forestry profession creates the service himself according to their abilities. This moment will mark the dawn of a splendid future of the forestry science!"

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