

EDITORIAL

ON THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY OF CROATIAN FORESTRY

At the 101st Annual Assembly of the Croatian Forestry Association held on 9th May 1997, (188 participants), **June 20th was proclaimed the Day of Croatian Forestry**, which will be celebrated annually by the Croatian Forestry Association starting from 1998 (Conclusions, item 15). At the 96th regular meeting held on 20th June 1991, the name of the association was unanimously changed from the Association of Engineers and Technicians of Forestry and Wood Industry of Croatia into **the Croatian Forestry Association**. The Day of Croatian Forestry has been marked interminably since 1998. Regular reports on the activities and financial affairs of the Association have always been accompanied by discussions on current specialist topics. The specialist topic of the said Assembly was „the Croatian forestry today and tomorrow“. An introduction to the discussion was given by Professor Slavko Matic, PhD, the then president of the Croatian Forestry Association, and Anđelko Serdarušić, BSc in forestry, director of the company „Croatian Forests“. To provide food for thought, we shall mention only some parts of these introductions and discussions summarized in 15 conclusions.

First and foremost, Professor Matic stresses that the CFA is the most competent professional organisation to discuss the condition of Croatian forestry, particularly in view of a growing number of acute problems. However, nobody expects overnight solutions. The most important problems include the employment of graduate engineers and the declining number of those employed in forestry in general; unnecessary conversions of large forest areas into national parks and nature parks and their management by managing boards consisting of anybody but foresters; a subordinate attitude towards the profession, reflected in the fact that the Croatian Roads, Water Management and Electrical Utility Company, contrary to the Forest Law, enter forests without any monetary compensation; wood assortments are distributed per commissions at low prices despite the fact that we all staunchly support the free market economy; forests are treated by uneducated and poorly equipped entrepreneurs with unqualified labour force; particular effort should be invested in the promotion of the profession that is based primarily on professional ethics; those who have „wandered“ into the forestry profession by accident with the only goal of making easy money should be removed from forestry.

Director Serdarušić followed his introduction with some ten proposals for the conclusions. These include the following: a request should be submitted to the Croatian Radio Television to allocate a fixed term for programmes on Croatian forestry; representatives of the CFA, the Faculty of Forestry, the Forest Research Institute and Croatian Forests Ltd should draw up a modern Forest Law and a Long-Term Forestry Programme and submit it to the Ministry. The Programme should be

accompanied by a demand to abolish so-called „finalist lists“, re-programme debts, allocate shares, postpone payments, etc; the relationship between forestry and other fields should be coordinated; more financial means should be ensured for the management of private forests and the recovery of war damage; and forestry experts should invariably be included into spatial management and nature conservation activities.

Tomislav Starčević stresses the need to analyze whether the basic conceptual prerequisites for the development of Croatian forestry have been implemented and to what extent, considering that the application of these prerequisites is not guided by a clear forestry policy; the forest office, as the basic organisational unit, is not given sufficient importance and competences, hence the loss of motives; the quality of silvicultural treatments is visibly declining; by adding to management plans the assortment structure of cutting plans is increased, resulting in changes in the planned amounts; and finally, he considers this Assembly an incentive for the overall development of forestry.

Professor Joso Vukelić points out that the Croatian Government does not have a clear concept of the development of forestry and public enterprises, does not accept professional opinions, and appoints incompetent management boards; the Ministry is inadequately organized; while forestry and hunting management should be placed under a separate State administration, similar to water management. He particularly expresses dissatisfaction with the socio-moral position of the forestry profession.

The first forestry minister Ivan Tarnaj states that no organisation is final, and consequently the forestry organisation is not final either; he maintains that the current organisation is good in view of the fact that it was difficult to survive in hard conditions, but after seven years it is perhaps time to launch a new organisation.

Professor Branimir Prpić expressed dissatisfaction with the subordinate position of forestry in the Croatian Strategy of Spatial Planning and with a reduced volume of forest activities, particularly in spatial planning and nature conservation and environment protection, where forestry activities are performed by inexperienced personnel.

Twenty years have passed: looking at this brief review of the topic (find a more detailed analysis in Forestry Journal No. 5-6/1997, pp 323-332), let us try and answer at least two questions: what has changed since and have we all „by improving our work, given the best contribution to the condition in forestry“, as Professor Matic suggested in his introductory discussion.