

LEGISLATION CONCERNING FOREST AND TIMBER INSECTS

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Currently, the Termites Act 1940, the Forest Act 1949, the International Plant Protection Convention 1951, the Timber Preservation Regulations 1955, the Forest Produce Import and Export Regulations 1966, and the Forest Disease Control Regulations 1967 are relevant, at least in part, to forest and timber entomology.

In ratifying the International Plant Protection Convention the New Zealand Government undertakes to adopt legislative, technical and administrative measures to restrict the dissemination of pests and diseases of plants and plant products. Under Article IV each contracting Government is called upon to make, to the best of its ability, provision for a national plant protection organisation: (a) to inspect and report on diseases and pests of growing plants and plant products within its territories; (b) to inspect such material moving in international traffic; (c) to carry out disinfestation or disinfection of consignments; (d) to issue phytosanitary certificates; (e) to distribute information within the country regarding pests and diseases and means of their control; (f) to undertake research and investigation in the field of plant protection; (g) under Article VII, to co-operate with FAO in the establishment of a world reporting service on plant diseases and pests.

Prior to this undertaking the New Zealand Government had adopted legislation to control introduced Australian termites, and provision was made in the amended Forests Act for regulations to control both international and internal spread of forest and timber insects and diseases (sections 69 and 70). Regulations made under these sections appear to fulfill in part obligations under the Plant Protection Convention.

The Timber Preservation Regulations, made under the Board of Trade Act 1919, were promulgated as a result of a public enquiry in 1952 into methods of timber preservation. Their prime purpose is to protect the user of preservative treated timber, and at the same time, the reputation of timber preservation methods. Entomologists are concerned to the extent that approved methods are required to be effective against wood-destroying insects as well as decay fungi.

Measures employed under the Termites Act, at least in the first 24 years of its operation, failed to eliminate subterranean termites from some urban areas even though the frequency of new importations was reduced following implementation of the Control of Injurious Importations and Exportations Act 1948 and section 69 of the Forests Act 1949. Similarly, measures adopted under

section 69 and the regulations of 1956 made thereunder failed to completely prevent the establishment of insects arriving in imported forest produce. Although the aims of these legislative measures may not be equally attainable technically, in each case partial failure should be sufficient cause for critical reappraisal of the administrative and technical means used to attain the desired ends.

The aims of the Timber Preservation Regulations seem to be more completely achieved than those of other legislative measures. The administrative body, the Timber Preservation Authority, includes representatives of five government departments as well as those from professional and trade organisations. The relative success of these regulations would seem to be an argument for extension of the co-operative principle in administration of legislation.