

Jim Cayford reports on a readership survey conducted by the CFS in relation to their publication

Forest Regions of Canada

The typical purchaser of *Forest Regions of Canada* is a university student or graduate between the ages of 16 and 30 who has specialized in either forestry or general biology, and is a member of a conservation group. This is a sample of the information received from a survey of those people who have purchased the book.

Ninety-five percent of the purchasers were from Canada; the remainder were from the United States and various locations around the world. Nearly half of the Canadian replies were from Ontario (45%), 20% were from Quebec, 11% from British Columbia and 9% from Alberta. As expected most buyers live in the large cities, but in proportion to population there were more buyers in Toronto and Ottawa than in Edmonton, Montreal or Vancouver. And there were a disproportionate number of readers in university cities. For example, 25 replies were received from Fredericton but only 1 from Saint John — and 31 from Saskatoon and 2 from Regina.

More than half of the purchasers have returned a completed questionnaire. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were between 16 and 30 years old, another 18% were between 31 and 45. Sixty-two percent were students, of these about 80% were attending university. Other occupations listed by appreciable numbers of respondents were foresters (7%), librarians (7%), professors (4%), teachers (4%)

and biologists (3%). However, replies were received from a salesman, a marketing manager and an ethnologist.

Eighty percent of the replies were from people who had attained a university education, while another 14% had attended high school. Thirty-six percent had specialized in forestry, 16% in biology and 6% in geography.

Forty-three percent of the respondents belong to an organized conservation group. Those most frequently mentioned include the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Canadian Nature Federation, Canadian Institute of Forestry, Boy Scouts, and the National and Provincial Parks Association.

One thousand reasons were given for purchasing the book. Most people bought it because of their interest in the subject matter. But many students bought it because of an educational requirement. And some people bought it because the price was right, for use as a professional reference or for library use.

About one-third of the readers found the book to be satisfactory as published. But many readers wanted more information — expanded descriptions of the forest sections, more illustrations, and more use of colour photography. Still other readers wanted more information on fauna, more detailed descriptions of plant communities, more information on succession, and more detail on forest section maps.

The survey was carried out by the Canadian Forestry Service as one means of seeking information that would be useful in upgrading the quality and usefulness of its publications. It was initiated in

conjunction with publication of the 1972 revision of *Forest Regions of Canada* by J. S. Rowe. We sought to find out who was buying the book and why, to determine what other forest conservation subjects were of interest and to solicit suggestions for improvement in the book.

In each copy of the book we placed a prepaid postcard which offered readers an opportunity to obtain a 66 × 76 cm black and white wall poster of either the Coast or the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region. Upon receipt of the postcard, each respondent was sent the poster plus a questionnaire with a return, self-addressed, prepaid envelope. By early August, 1695 postcards had been returned. And by the end of August we had received 725 completed questionnaires.

The survey has provided much useful information for the Canadian Forestry Service. It has indicated that the book has been well received, that it is well written, well organized and is a useful teaching aid. However, numerous suggestions have been offered concerning improvements which will be carefully considered in the next revision. Additionally, we have learned that there is an ever-increasing demand by Canadians for information on their natural resources and the various suggestions with respect to subjects to be covered in subsequent publications are already assisting the Service in continuing its publication programs.