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THE IMPINGING PERIPHERY

The "broader task" described by Herb Fleischer in Volume 6, Number 4 of *Wood and Fiber* implied that members of our profession have a major potential "... as materials scientists of the future, who know how wood can best serve the needs of mankind in a world where all materials are scarce." As each of us considers the implied challenge, we cannot help realizing its scope and our personal limitations based on training, experience, and job responsibilities.

The challenge is very real, and it is ours. Certain questions that typify easily overlooked aspects of the challenge come to mind as we begin to consider "... how wood can best serve ..." These include:

How shall harvest of wood fiber be managed?

How will modifications of world trade in forest products affect local and national planning?

What limitations and/or opportunities will be posed by trade barriers, tax policies, and environmental regulations?

What are the responsibilities of suppliers to users?

How should we respond to a rising chorus of questions relative to hazards of use of various wood products?

Answers to these questions impinge directly on our forest products industry and on the scientific and technological advances necessary for its well-being.

I suggest that these are only a few of the questions that should be mandatory in our anticipatory planning and in our agendas if we are to meet the challenge. Let's emphasize these needs and encourage students to consider blending the necessary academic disciplines into and on top of basic wood science and technology. Let's support and promote joint efforts with other professional groups so that we may understand each others' advances. Let's invite the regulators to engage in open discussion of the controversial issues. I believe that the "broader task" will be met only by positive effort to build within the profession an awareness of the effect of these impinging peripheral factors.

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