

FORESTERS' ANNUAL REPORT

SPEYMOUTH FOREST

26th September, 1965.

A GENERAL REVIEW

The year has been generally wet with the resultant heavy growth of grasses and other unwanted herbage. In spite of this, and with the aid of Gramoxone, we have succeeded for the first time in controlling the weed-growth.

Extraction of timber by tractor has been unduly difficult and, of course, more costly due to the almost continuously wet conditions. In other cases, where lorry haulage was involved, some of the forest tracks gave way and repairs were necessary.

SUMMARY OF LAND USE (ACRES)

	<u>Planted</u>	<u>Plantable Land</u>	<u>Agriculture, etc</u>	<u>Unplantable</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Totals</u>
At Thinning Stage	1495 +2	509	71	190	163	2430 acres
Below Thinning Stage	8779					8779 "
Mature Conifers	38					38 "
Mature Hardwoods	127					127 "
	10439(+2)	509	71	190	163	11,374 acres.

The +2 shown on plantation is a small area which actually lies inside Aultmore Forest. On transfer of land to Aultmore this area was on a separate acquisition map and was missed, so - Speymouth +2, Aultmore -2 and this will remain the position until a transfer can be arranged.

B. THE YEAR'S WORK

1. Finance

Estimates F.Y. 65.

Susp. Acc.
Aultmore /

2

<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Aultmore</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Lossie</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Clashindarroch</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Roseisle</u>	<u>Speymouth</u> <u>Labour</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Estimate</u>
£4245	Nil	Nil	Nil	£19360	£23,605

Expenditure

<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Aultmore</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Lossie</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Clashindarroch</u>	<u>Susp. Acc.</u> <u>Roseisle</u>	<u>Speymouth</u> <u>Labour</u>	<u>Other</u> <u>Susp. Accs.</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Expenditure</u>
£5,116	£424	£35	£134	£20,417	£546	£26,672

Overspent

<u>Prep.</u> <u>Ground</u>	<u>E.U.</u>	<u>Drains</u> <u>New</u>	<u>Weeding</u>	<u>Felling</u> <u>Scrub, Etc.</u>	<u>Extraction</u>	<u>X Cut</u>	<u>Carriage</u>	<u>Total Overspent</u>
£705	£47	£630	£504	£640	£435	£130	£525	£3,616

Underspent

<u>Drains</u> <u>Repair</u>	<u>Brushing</u>	<u>Pruning</u>	<u>Prot.</u> <u>Other</u>	<u>Felling</u> <u>Thinnings</u>	<u>Wet</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>Transport</u> <u>Men</u>	<u>Local</u> <u>Supervision</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Underspent</u>
£377	£323	£98	£665	£374	£343	£220	£550	£2,950

Broadly speaking I have overspent by £1,000 but since I have spent £1,800 on felling and disposal of scrub Scots Pine (unestimated) and the same has been sold for £5,752 (details of which are given later), I consider that I am really inside my estimate.

The burning of brush following fellings, and in readiness for ploughing, caused the prep. ground overspending. Drains New - just sheer necessity. Weeding overspending was done at the end of last season. The rest were unestimated. A deliberate attempt was made to do the extra work without overspending hence the "Underspents".

B. 2. Organisation, Staff, Labour and Training

Labour Employed at present

<u>Forest</u> <u>Workers</u>	<u>Salmon</u> <u>Fishers</u>	<u>Juveniles</u>	<u>Gangers</u>	<u>Trappers</u>	<u>Mobiles</u>	<u>Forest Office</u> <u>Clerkess</u>	<u>Dist. Off.</u> <u>Clerkess</u>	<u>Dist. Off.</u> <u>Cleaner</u>	<u>Total</u>
15	25	3	3	5	6	1	1	1	60
15	25	1	4	5	1	1	1	-	

B. 2. Organisation, Staff, Labour and Training, contd.

Staff

CHIEF

Head Forester

Forester

Trainee Forester

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Local Supervision is first class - no complaints!

Labour Position is, as always, suffering from an excess of Salmon Fishermen. If we could halve the numbers of fishermen we could increase the Piecework. F.Y.66 estimate carries about 38% piecework and every effort will be made to increase this during the year.

Training - The tools Instructor just calls in here for petrol nowadays, but nevertheless the justification of the F.C.'s efforts in training is made evident when one compares the working efficiency of Operation and Power saws with local Contractors.

B.3. Developments in Technique

This is not one for which we here are famed but this year we developed the use of piecework on Arbogard sprayers thereby reducing the cost to £2 per acre. In addition we produced a plastic guard which made it possible to use the pressure sprayers for the spraying of grass around plants with Gramoxone at a piecework price of about 35/- per acre.

B.5. Seed Collection

From Seed Stand (4122)9 we collected 5½ bushels and from (4122)13 ½ bushel: Total 6½ bushels. We might have done better selling timber out of these woods when it was ready! There seems to be a little more seed this year but it is "pricey" stuff.

Seed Extraction

From 579½ bushels we obtained 20½ lbs. 9 ozs. of seed at a cost of just under 20/- per lb. The extraction cost per bushel was 7/- against 5/6d. in F.Y.64. The increase in cost is directly due to my being unable to work the 2½ hour shift system. Unless I get cones in sufficient quantities at one time I have to work ordinary day shifts in order to use up the cones before they begin to glue-up. Scots Pine cones collected after the middle of January can have the seed extracted from them in half the time that cones collected in November and December require. Mind you! if we don't collect early the "Tinks" collect and sell to other markets. We could collect early and store the cones but we don't have big enough storage sheds and unless the cones are spread and aired they will, as I said earlier, glue-up and become very difficult to extract.

B. 6. Plantation

1. Establishment

The Forest consists of the following acreages: /

<u>Mature Conifers</u>	<u>Mature Hardwoods</u>	<u>Thinning Stage</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Not Yet Established</u>	<u>Total Plantation</u>
38	127	1,495	6,600 + 2	2,179	10,439 + 2

The +2 is a small block of Sitka Spruce on Aultmore which was inadvertently not transferred with other plantation.

Between week ending 21/2/64 and week ending 15/5/65 156 acres were planted. In addition 4 acres of summer planting were recorded in F.Y.65. 40 thousand plants were used in beating up and the total plants used in planting, beating up and enrichment were 346 thousand.

<u>Classification (Acres)</u>	<u>Afforestation</u>		<u>Re-Afforestation</u>					<u>Total</u>
		1½2		1½				156
Summer Planting		Nil		4				4
Totals		1½2		18				160
By Counties	Morayshire		Banffshire					total
	160 acres		Nil					160 acres
<u>Plants Used (Thousands)</u>	<u>S.P.</u>	<u>C.P.</u>	<u>L.P.(c)</u>	<u>L.P.(i)</u>	<u>D.P.</u>	<u>S.S.</u>	<u>H.S.</u>	<u>Total</u>
	5	60	107.1	62.1	648	29.3	24	294.3

Planting was largely done on piecework and the average labour cost was 47/- per thousand.

11. Maintenance

Beating up (Thousands)

S.P.	L.P.(c)	L.P.(i)	D.P.	E.L.	S.S.	Ash	Beech	Total
10	9.9	1.9	.7	3	13.7	.4	.5	40.1

The cost of beating up was very high at 78/6 per thousand. Too much moving about was involved.

111. Improvement

Enrichment Plants Used (Thousands)

D.F.	Beech	Ash	Total
7.5	3.5	.6	11.6

Again a very high cost at 80/- per thousand. I'll need to look again at these high costing jobs.

B.6. 1V.

Protection Fire

Fires during F.Y. 65 - 2

	Compartment	P. Year	Species	Area Burned	Date of Fire
	125	56	J.L.	NIL	25/4/65
Adj.	319	Stopped on farmers land	-	NIL	30/4/65

The specifications laid down by the Annual and Standing Fire Plans were carried out.

The cost of Fire Protection over the year was 3/2d. per planted acre.

There were two other spot fires at the latter end of the year which did no damage at all and since no costs were incurred I made no report. Radio communication, mobile water and quick reaction seem to be the recipe but I now dread the day when we'll make a slip and let one of these fires away.

Protection Other

The following are the figures for vermin destroyed during the year:

Rabbits	Hares (White)	Hares (Brown)	Roe Deer	Foxes	Capercaillie
277	6	171	8	3	8

Although rabbits are now on the increase generally Myxomatosis is still active even amongst the younger ones.

B.7. Production

1. Preparation and Extraction

<u>Thinning Sale at stump</u>	65/6			
	Felled by F.C.	Cost per H/ft.	Carried over to F.Y.66.	
	71,188 h.ft.	3.75 pence	30,492 h.ft.	

Clear Felling Scots Pine 8 acres were clear felled giving a production of 9,600 h.ft.

Scrub clearance Scots Pine - Approx. 30 acres of scrub pine were clear felled producing 34,296 h.ft. Total from felling 43,896 h.ft.
Average size of trees = 1.93 h. ft.

Quantities and Costs per H. Ft. are as follows:

	Volumes	Labour Cost (Pence)	Labour Overheads (Pence)	P.V.M.
Felling	43,896	3.75)	1.5	0.25
X Cutting	41,671	.75)		
Extraction	41,323	2.5	.83	1.25
Haulage (including loading)	37,106	3.5	1.16	3.5
Total		10.5 pence	3.49 pence	5.0 pence

Timber Working Costs = 19.0 pence per h. ft.
Timber Receipts = 33.25 " " " "
Standing Timber Price = 14.25 " " " "

The portion on Marking and Measuring applicable to the Clear Felling is £50.

4,217 h.ft. were sold at roadside hence the lower haulage figure.

All extraction was done by Fordson Major tractor fitted with a Hiab Hoist and drawing, in the later stages, an inverted arch.

Haulage was done by two lorries - one using a 2 ton hiab hoist and the other a 1 ton hiab hoist.

All operations were on piecework and the costs are the best I could do.

The working conditions were often very bad due to wet weather.

11. Sale of Produce Markets & Prices

The methods of sale here are very good Bonawood appears to use inexperienced people for their, per ton, calculations and we come out rather well on this.

Logs are sold to Messrs. Riddoch as follows:

Woodwool Logs 4", 5" and 6" x 6" - 9" @ 3/- per h.ft. on roadside
Sawn Mining Timber Logs (Rough logs of any size above 3"-6") @ 2/3d. per h. ft. delivered at Mill
Milling Logs (clean) 7" and up x 8" and up @ 4/- per h. ft. delivered at Mill

8. Roads & Bridges

- a. Terrain - Relatively easy with difficult wet areas here and there.
b. Weather - Usually wet throughout - had more effect on gravelling than on formation.
c. Labour - Forest labour was used at first. This was later partly replaced by Engineering labour. Labour standard - good.
d. P.V.M. & Tools - I have no accurate P.V.M. figures but only the track Marshall dozer, the excavator on formation and the tractor and grader were F.C. owned. Tools used were forest tools.
e. Materials - Gravel excavated from within the forest by a hired excavator and transported by a hired team of tipper lorries. Approximately 350 culvert pipes were used in laying 51 Culverts.
f. Specification - The roads completed during the year are suitable for heavy transport.
g. Progress - New roads completed = 360 chains
" " under construction = 30 " (Formation completed)
Bridges = NIL
Gravelling only = 363 chains
Maintenance of F.C. roads = 160 "
" non F.C. roads = NIL
h. Costs - Formation including Culverts = 2450 per mile
Gravelling and completion = 2454 " "
Overall cost per mile = 2904 " "

9. Mechanical Equipment

	7 Ton Lorries	5 Ton Lorries	Workabus	5 cwt. Van	Land Rover L.W.B.	Tractor
Wheeled Vehicles	1	2	1	1	1	1
Machinery	Auto Scythe	Brush Cutters	Power Saws	Saw Benches	Fire Pumps	Cumby Peeling machine
	1	2	3 2	1	4	1

The 7 Ton lorry is fitted with a 2 ton Hiab Hoist and one of the 5 ton lorries is fitted with a 1 ton hoist.

The tractor is fitted with a 1 ton hiab hoist which has been very successful in the past but may be more difficult to fit into the programme when we are working on thinnings on difficult ground.

The lorry hoists appear to me to cut costs and reduce overheads by causing less labour to be used.

The mobile mechanic does most of the repairs - usually promptly and always well.

11. Working Plans - Forest work is completed.

14. Sociological Aspects

From February to August each year the F.C. contributes approximately £350 per week in wages to the spending ability of this area and between September and February this figure becomes £650 per week. This must have a considerable effect on the economy of such a small rural community.

Relations between forestry and farming have always been good here and the relations between Crown Lands and ourselves are even better than they were. The Factor, Mr. Taylor, is now surveying all the areas, large and small, which, as he says, are not being used, so that they may be turned over to F.C. for the growing of trees.

The status of the Forestry Commission Staff in the Rural Community? I've chanced my arm and written various things about this but I still don't know exactly what it means.

15. Forest Influences

I have nothing to report on this subject.

16. Amenity & Access to the Countryside

There are no organised recreational facilities in the forest but the local Amenities Association are now preparing an illuminated map of all walks in the area around Pochabers and many of these are in F.C. owned woodlands. A small annual expenditure could make these walks useable and pleasant.

Head Forester.

14/10/65