

F.Y. 54 Annual Report

Black Isle District

5. The Year's Work

The following were the monthly rainfall figures, in inches, as recorded at Channonry Point:-

Oct. .86	Apr. .72
Nov. 2.29	May. 3.06
Dec. 2.18	June. 1.79
Jan. 1.83	July. 2.61
Feb. 1.30	Aug. 2.90
Mar. 1.47	Sept. 2.11

Total for the Forest Year 23.12 inches.
This was 1.6 inches less than in F.Y.53 when 24.70 inches were recorded.

Seasons

Autumn was warm and mild and growth in the nurseries carried on until December.

Winter there was very little snow and frost and on the whole it was very mild.

Spring started at the end of February and for 4 months it was either warm or hot with regular intervals of short spells of showers. This resulted in the ground always being moist. There was never more than about 6 consecutive days without rain.

Summer !!?? overcast and "heavy" with very little sunny weather. As a guide to the state of season Bees had to exist on the honey collected before the middle of July as from then on there were very few days that it was good enough for them to collect. Growth in the Nurseries and also agricultural crops have been about 2 weeks behind normal years.

There was a hard frost on the night 26/27 Sept. and although no damage has been seen, a similar one in F.Y. 52 caused considerable damage in the nurseries.

12. Plantations made in the year under Report

In the newly formed plantations the weather during the three months following planting was perfect for root developement, the weather was generally warm to hot with regular intervals of light rain which prevented any drought, but if from July onwards there had been a normal summer the plants might have grown much better. Due to the favourable spring the survival rate has been good.

The allocation of species has been adequate although the planting of E.L. in mixture with S.P. was less than had been hoped for.

Now that the use of seedlings has been reduced the size of the transplants for planting is quite satisfactory.

Preparation of Ground

At Millbuie (Flowerburn) scrub and granny SP had to be felled and burnt but this did not cause much delay. At Kilcoy however the cutting of Birch and Alder in the Blackhills section and in Holy Wood, and its conversion into firewood employed more men than was anticipated which resulted in the Kessock squad being used to do the planting in these areas.

As most of the areas were ploughed the drainage and other preparation was undertaken without much trouble.

Weeding in the new plantations was not very serious.

(a) Beating Up has been taking place mainly in areas which were planted with seedlings. It is most unfortunate that seedlings have still to be used as it results in heavier beating-up than with transplants.

(b) Weeding. For the second year the weeding of broom areas has been very expensive! At Kilcoy the P.50 plantation between the Littleburn road and the railway line had the broom cut last year and again this year it had to be cut again.

Both in F.Y.53 and 54 the weather seemed to favour the growth of the broom. It has been seen that areas at Kessock Forest which originally were in heather after being ploughed changed to broom have after last years cutting changed to grass.

Cleaning, brashing and pruning have been carried out mainly in the JL strips in Millbuie.

(c) Progress in establishment of plantationsⁿ. This is proceeding quite satisfactorily. If EL becomes available it will be used to beat up in the pure SP areas, and whenever possible other species such as DF, Silver Fir, Sycamore etc will also be planted in order to get variety of species

No fires occurred in Forestry Commission areas during the year. The costs per acre of plantations in each Forest was:-

Millbuie	7 pence
Findon	4 "
Kilcoy	8 "
Kessock	$\frac{5}{10}$

The Fire-tower on Mount Eagle was manned during the hours of daylight during fire-danger periods

In most cases of a fire occurring in the District water will have to be transported by lorry. Although the Wayjax pump would be suitable for filling tanks at the filling point, its use at the fire point would be very wasteful. If Allman type pump and nozzle were used at the fire it could be brought under control and with less wastage of water much quicker than with a Wayjax.

The bulldozing of fire traces and then grading them with a grader has produced very good cheap fair weather roads which are vital if a fire is to be brought under control quickly. These roads should be made whenever the mechanical equipment is available.

20. Other Protection

Animals

Rabbits. The rabbit population has been very much on the increase, this might be due to the fact that both this winter and that of F.Y. 53 were so very mild and resulted in favourable conditions for reproduction. There are numerous rumours of the introduction of Myxomatosis on neighbouring farms during July and August but so far it seems that the poor summer has not helped to spread the disease. Hares. Some damage is being done by hares but as a whole it has not reached serious proportions.

Roe Deer. There are a few in the plantations but they do not do serious damage.

Birds

Small migratory birds and Finches caused ~~en~~ considerable damage to the young seedlings in the nurseries before they shed their seed coat. The big seed species M.P, C.P, S.P. suffered most.

Capercaillie and Blackcock are on the increase and caused heavy damage in the seedbeds in autumn and winter. At Millbuie heathland nursery fishing nets were used which prevented any further damage

Insects

At the end of June Looper Moths (Bupalis Piniarius) were seen in large numbers in Belton wood and in parts of Findon and Kessock Forests, but to date no serious defoliation has occurred.

Fungi

Nothing of special importance has been seen.

Meteorological

Apart from the points in sect. 5 the frost which occurred on the night 26/27 Sept will probably cause quite a lot of damage.

The cost of "Protection Other" by Forests
of the land under the control of the Forestry
Commission (excluding D.O.A.S.) is as follows:-

Millbuie	1/7	per	acre
Findon	2/-	"	"
Kessock	1/11	"	"
Kilcoy	5/2	"	"

By Nov. 1953 Kessock Forest had been completely resurveyed and mapped, showing species, P. Year and stand differences. The new Plan of Operations gave acreages to the nearest tenth of an acre and the total acreage was taken from the 25" O.S. map. Approximate volumes per stand were taken in order to estimate the total volume in the Forest.

Kilcoy and Findon Forests were also completely resurveyed and mapped in the same manner and within a short time the completed Plan of Operation should be finished

Millbuie Forest has been partially surveyed and mapped, and the Plan of Operation should also be completed shortly.

41 (b) Training of Staff
Nil