F.Y.56 Annual Report

Black Isle District

Section 4

Para5

The Year's Work

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

Oct	3.61
Nov	.64
Dec	5.11
Jan	1.76
Feb	1.63
Mar	.96
Apr	2.20
May	1.34
Jun	2.11
July	6.02
Aug	5.24
Sept	4.25

The total for the Forest Year was 34.87 inches as compared with 21.70 in FY 55 and 23.12 in FY54

The weather during the first 9 months of the year was fairly normal, but from July onwards there was no real warmth and nearly half the year's total of rain fell during this period.

Autumnwas mild and open and in Kilcoy and Findon seedbeds were prepared quite easily as the ground was dry. Winter was short and not very severe. Spring from mid March to mid June was ideal. There were warm or hot days without a drought period, the soil for lining-out was perfect, it never dried out or became water-logged. The growing season in the nurseries was later than usual with the result that lining-out was completed before growth had started. Summer can be described as an open winter. The ground never really kept the heat for a long period and there was rain every few days.

In the plantations growth has been normal, in the nurseries the transplant lines have grown well but the Pine and Spruce 1 year seedbeds growth did not start until the end of August, and by the end of September, although germination was good, height growth was well

below normal.

The nursery season started off reasonably weedfree but as the wet weather continued, weeding in the nurseries had to be constant. The use of Shell W and T.V.O. has been a terrific help in keeping the weeds under control. By the end of September the nurseries were practically weed free, and during the whole of the summer they never got the better of the squads.

In the plantations thinning and de-wolfing have been carried out and the plantations are pretty well up to date as regards these operations. The thinnings were sold at rideside to messrs Wylie the average price being 2/- per cube. Selling in this manner is far more satisfactory than a standing sale as greater care is taken of the remaining crop.

The dry Spring in April and May made the vegetation extremely inflammable. 4 fires occured in the Black Isle destroying 18.8 acres of plantation. It must be recorded that, with the exception of one fire, our neighbours gave invaluable assistance in putting out the fires as soon as they were spotted.

General Forest Notes

Millbuie. Dewolfing to the East and West of the North end of the K.W.Way has been carried out and has greatly improved the look of the crop. Roading and Bulldozing of firetraces is being carried out and these should greatly decrease the fire hazzard and also help in the extraction.

Findon. The whole of Bogbuie wood has been thinned were the crop was tall and thick enough.

Kilcoy. Thinning of acquired plantations is going quite smoothly.

Kessock. The thinnings are producing bigger volumes than was estimated three years ago, but the forest as a whole is fairly well up to date. The weeding in the young plantations is just as costly as in the past, but some of the post-war plantations are now tall enough to look after themselves.

Sect. 4
Para. 12
Plantations formed during the Year of Report

Only 17.7 acres were planted in F.Y.56 17.5 acs. at Kilcoy and .2 acs. at Findon. At Kilcoy, as the areas were scattered, rabbit netting was not used because of the cost and the scarcity of rabbits.

Plants were adequate but slightly on the small side.

The preparation of the ground was not a big job and the weeding was light.

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Para. 13
Previous Years Plantations

(a) Beating Up

Beating Up in plantations formed before P 53 is now nearly complete, some areas which suffered in the FY 55 drought have been left until FY 57 in order to see the full effects of the drought. The size of plant for B.U. is still very much on the small side. On ploughed ground where gorse and broom invades within 3 years of ploughing it is quite useless to B.U. with 1+1 plants under 9 inches tall. In these areas only 2+1 or 1+2 plant over 9 inches has got a chance of growing and not being suppressed by the weed growth

(b) Weeding

Apart from the bracken areas on Kilcoy the main weeding to be done annually on the Black Isle are the Gorse and Broom areæ. It is absolutely essential to keep the plants free in the early stages until they are 4-5 feet tall, and thereafter they must have at least 2 years growth above the weeds. With the wet season the Gorse and Broom has grown very vigourously and weeding will have to be extensive in the begining of FY 57.

Brashing and Cleaning is now becoming a fairly big item in the P 38-42 areas of Millbuie, it is still to early to make a forecast of the quality that will result at Millbuie, but areas that have been dewolfed have the indications that they might well fall into Quality Class 2 if treated at an early stage. Cleaning out of the small stems is being done after the first or second thinning has been extracted in Findon, and in some cases this is being sold as firewood or as stackprops.

(c) Progress in the establishment of Plantations

On the whole this is fairly satisfactory. On the poorer soils of Findon and Millbuie the growth of S.P. is very slow and although they may form canopy sometime we will just have to be patient.

Section 4
Para 19
Fire Protection

It is quite certain that the Black Isle is really an annex for Craig Dunain. During the spring the fire-happy farmers and crofters were showering lighted matches about like confetti at a wedding. The vegetation was tinder dry after the drought of the summer and the gorse and broom was in perfect condition for burning; coupled with this was a rumour that tenants and owners were to be fined if they harboured rabbits. The result was that in the last few days that burning was allowed gorse fires were happening from one end of the Black Isle to the other.

There were three fires at Kilcoy
on 2nd April burning 12.0 acres of plantation
on 4th May " 4.3 " " " " and
on 8th May " .2 " " " "
and one at Kessock on the 2nd April burning 2.3 acres of plantation. With the exception of the first fire at Kilcoy our neighbours were first rate in the help that they gave us to put out the fires.

As a result of the Assich fire in FY 55 it is realised how essential it is to have trained fire-fighting squads. The training of a demonstration squad, drawn from each of the Forests, will ensure that in the event of a major outbreak there will be men in each squad who can take charge.

Bulldozing of roads and traces has ~~has~~ greatly increased and Kilcoy is now well roaded for access for fire. It is hoped that Millbuie will also be adequately roaded by the spring of 1957. The bulldozing of water sumps at the sides of the roads has been very successful and during this wet summer they have remaind full of water.

The Allman fire pump is very useful for controlling controlled burning, and when carried in the Millbuie Landrover pulling the 50 gallon trailler it is ideal for this kind of work.

The cost per acre of plantation for Fire Protection was:-

Millbuie	-/11
Findon	4/5
Kilcoy	2/9
Kessock	2/1

Sect. 4
Para. 20
Protection, Other

Rabbits.

This is still a very dangerous animal. Myxiamatosis had by Christmas almost exterminated the rabbit, but in the first 3 months of 1956 over 100 were trapped or shot and more had been killed by gassing by our trappers. Of these 100, 5 were killed within the plantations the rest being on the outside of the fence. The farmers and crofters are very complacent about the number of rabbits, and it is this that is the danger. If nothing is done by these persons, I estimate that within 3 years the rabbit population will be almost as great as 3 years ago before myxomatosis was introduced. There are 2 rabbit trapers who are employed by the farmers but I feel this is totally inadequate to exterminate the pest.

Hares. seem to be getting more numerous.

Roe Deer. are now a force to contend with. They are steadily increasing and will do so until the young plantations are brashed and proper drives can take place.

Birds. small migratory Finches have done enormous amout of damage in the nurseries on the C.P and S.P. beds in Findon and Kilcoy, and to a lesser extent in Millbuie. Capercaillzie are also increasing in numbers and are still causing damage in the S.S. beds in Kilcoy nurseries.

Insects. weevils have been noticed to be doing damage in the natural regeneration in Bellton Wood, but it is hoped that they will not become a pest. Looper moths are very rare.

Fungi. Honey Fungus in the Tsuga P. 28 at Kessock has affected a large proportion of the stems that were thinned, but other fungi have not been unusually extensive.

Meterological. Frost occured on the nights of 14-15 and 15-16 Sept.1956 but all D.F. S.S. and Larch seed-beds had been covered and it is hoped that there will be no damage to the plants.

The cost of protection, other per acre of plantation for F.Y. 56 was:-

Millbuie	2/7
Findon	3/1
Kilcoy	4/6
Kessock	1/9

Sect. 4

Para. 21

Preparation and revision of Working Plans

The resurvey of Millbuie is not yet complete although most of the rides have been mapped.

Stock maps in the other 3 Forests do not require more than the current planting and felling alterations.

Record Form 4

SUMMARY CONTROL SHEET

Name of Forest ..... F.C. Conservancy ..... Plan of Operations dated .....

Areas in acres to nearest tenth File No. .....

Forest Year	Operation	C. Fwd. Completed Cumulative Totals		Total for Year: Prescribed (Plan of Operations Form 4)		Total for Year: Completed (Record Forms 1-3)		Total for Year: Excess (+) or Deficit (-)		Cumulative Total to End of Year: Prescribed		Cumulative Total to End of Year: Completed		Cumulative Total to End of Year: Excess (+) or Deficit (-)		Completed Cumulative Totals to Date		Explanation of Difference and of Departure from Routine or Prescribed Procedure
(1)	(2) MILLBUIE	(3)		(4)		(5)		(6)		(7)		(8)		(9)		(10)		(11)
1st 19..	(1) Planting, Sowing or Natural Regeneration	211·2		–		–		–		211·2		211·2		–		211·2		
	(2) Thinning	8·0	3540	–	–		2730		+2730	8·0	3540	8·0	6270	–	+2730	8·0	6270	FY56 is Dewolfing.
	(3) Felling	45·0	4300	–	–	–	–	–	–	45·0	4300	45·0	4300	–	–	45·0	4300	
2nd 19..	(1) Planting, Sowing or FINDON Natural Regeneration	3·7		4·2		·2		-4·0		4·2		3·9		-·3		3·9		
	(2) Thinning	67·0	16680	119	22500	94·8	26043	-34·7	+3543	181·9	39500	151·8	42723	-30·1	+5223	151·8	42723	
	(3) Felling			1·2	1400	1·0	1178	-·2	-222	1·2	1400	1·0	1178	-·2	-222	1·0	1178	
3rd 19..	(1) Planting, Sowing or KILCOY Natural Regeneration	130·3		14·0		17·5		+ 3·5		144·3		147·8		+ 3·5		147·8		
	(2) Thinning	131·6	35787	159·7	34384	114·4	38545	-45·3	+4161	297·3	70171	246·0	74332	-45·3	+4161	246·0	44332	
	(3) Felling	14·3	18651	20·0	11000	8·0	2252	12·0	-8748	34·3	29651	22·3	20903	-12·0	-8748	22·3	20903	
4th 19..	(1) Planting, Sowing or KESSOCK Natural Regeneration	4·3								4·5		4·3		-·2		4·3		
	(2) Thinning	161·8	32752	119·4	16100	118·8	29537	-7·6	+13437	335·5	47700	273·6	62289	-61·9	+14589	273·6	62289	Road line felling & Underplanting
	(3) Felling	·5	628			15·0	3904	+15·0	+3904			15·5	4532	+15·5	+4532	15·5	4532	
5th 19..	(1) Planting, Sowing or Natural Regeneration																	
	(2) Thinning																	
	(3) Felling																	

Record Form 5

Annual Summary of Productive Woodlands

Name of Forest ..... F.C. Conservancy .....

Plan of Operations date ..... File No. .....

Forest Year Ended	Area at commencement of year	Plantations acquired during year	Afforested or reafforested	Felled or otherwise ceasing to be productive	Net Increase	Net Decrease	Total at end of year
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
30.9. MILLBUIE							
30.9. FINDON	2254.6		.2	1.0		.8	2253.8
30.9. KILCOY	2924.0		14.5	8.0	9.5		2936.5
30.9. KESSOCK		*24.0		15.0	9.0	~~.90~~	
30.9. ...							

* 12.0 from Dounderfit Acquisition.
12.0 Scrubland which has been cleared for F.Y.54. planting which was originally land which was let for grazing.