

**The First
100,000 Acres**

PLANTED BY

**THE FORESTRY
COMMISSION**

IN THE
COUNTY OF

ARGYLL

BENMORE FOREST

24th May, 1961

Forestry in the County of Argyll

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FORESTRY in Argyll is nothing new; in fact, throughout the County remnants of former woodlands are still traceable. As in many other parts of Scotland, the history of the woodlands of Argyll has been largely one of exploitation and clearance culminating in the heavy fellings occasioned by the two World Wars.

Argyll is well suited for timber growing as is evident from its many thriving plantations, some of which will be seen today, and forestry has now become an important industry in the County.

Private planting has played an important part, and some of the landowners in Argyll are amongst the most progressive and farsighted in Scotland, but the object of today's informal ceremony is to mark the planting by the Forestry Commission of 100,000 acres in Argyll.

To give some idea of the importance of Argyll to the Forestry Commission and of the Forestry Commission to Argyll and to the national wellbeing of Scotland, the following information is of interest:

- (1) In 1930 Argyll had 8,730 acres of State-owned plantation in eight forests. Today it has 100,000 acres or 156 square miles in 36 forests, and planting is continuing.
- (2) Employment has increased from 95 industrial workers in 1930 to over 900 today. To this figure must be added those workers who are employed by timber merchants and in other ancillary capacities so that now at least 1,200 persons are engaged in the industry.

- (3) The annual direct wage bill has risen from about £7,000 per annum in 1930 to about £480,000 today. It is reasonable to suppose that most of the money will be spent within Argyll and the resulting benefits to the County, both social and economic, are considerable.
- (4) Forest road construction has formed an important part of the Forestry Commission's work and over 330 miles of new forest roads have been built.
- (5) With the creation of the new forests has come the need for more houses and since 1945 the Commission has erected over 500 houses for forestry workers.
- (6) Although the oldest forests are still far from mature some 1½ million hoppus feet or about 50,000 tons of timber will be produced and sold this year. It is estimated that by 1980 the present State-owned plantations in Argyll will be producing something of the order of 205,000 tons per annum.
- (7) One modern sawmill, which you will see today, has been set up to deal with some of the production from the new forests. Other sawmills and new industries must follow.
- (8) Educational facilities for young foresters are also available in the County where, at Benmore, near Dunoon, a residential school for forester training is maintained. This school (one of two in Scotland) has accommodation for 30 pupils and the necessary teaching and hostel staffs.
- (9) Social services have not been forgotten. The Forestry Commission has taken an interest in the provision of village halls and community life has been fostered.

In marking the occasion, it is not only the achievement of the Forestry Commission that is being commemorated. It is the work done, year by year, by the foresters and men who have worked, and are still working, in the ever-growing forests of Argyll. Forests are not made by blueprint, but by skilled, patient and devoted work of the men who spend their lives there. It is this work, the work of the pioneers and of all who have helped restore the woodland area of Argyll, that we are commemorating today.