

The Forestry Commission's Objectives



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The Forestry Commission's Changing Objectives

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The Forestry Act 1951 re-affirmed the Forestry Commissioners' duty of promoting the establishment and maintenance in Great Britain of adequate reserves of growing trees and gave the Commission certain powers to control felling.

Changed Government forestry policies in 1958 and 1963 gave the Commission altered objectives which were:

- (a) to increase the production of wood as a raw material for industry by extending the area of forests at a steady rate in accordance with sound land-use, and by making its forests as productive as possible ;
- (b) within the limits set out by the other objectives, to manage the forest estate as profitably as possible;
- (c) to provide employment in rural areas, especially those most affected by de-population, and in so doing to maintain a skilled labour force;
- (d) to help in maintaining an efficient home timber trade;
- (e) to give due attention to the aesthetic and productive roles of the forest and to encourage open-air recreation;
- (f) to foster industrial and social development ancillary to forestry; and
- (g) to encourage the orderly development of private forestry, and specifically to assist in creating conditions in which produce from private as well as Commission forests could be marketed to best advantage.

The Commission's New Objectives

Following the Minister's statement of Government Policy on 5 July 1974 work on the new grant-aid arrangements for private forestry, which arise from the Commission's function as Forestry Authority, was paralleled by the reshaping of the Commission's Corporate Plan, mainly concerned with its other function as the national Forestry Enterprise.

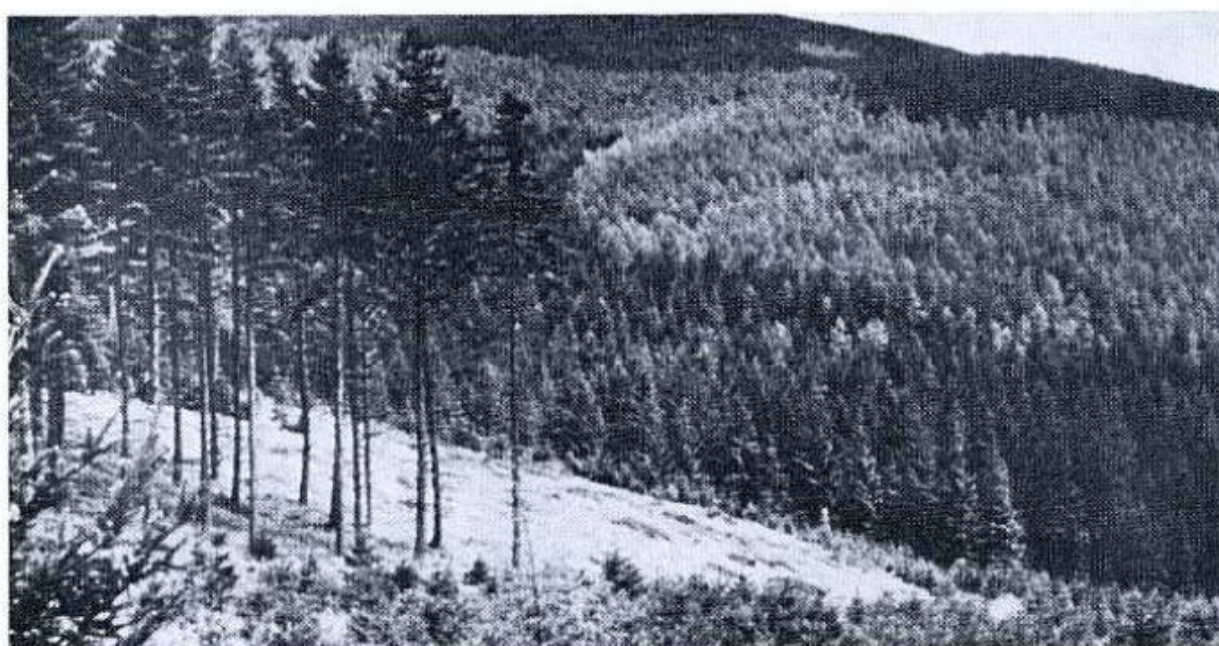
As a result the Commission have re-defined their objectives as set out in the following paper.



The Forestry Commission acting as the Forestry Authority

The activities undertaken by the Forestry Authority follow from the Commission's general duty of promoting the interests of forestry which includes the dissemination of forestry knowledge, the promotion of the supply of timber, the conduct of research, the administration of schemes of grant or other aid for private forestry, and the protection of woodlands through planting, felling and plant health controls: in all these functions attention is paid to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside. In discharging these functions, the specific objectives of the Forestry Authority are:—

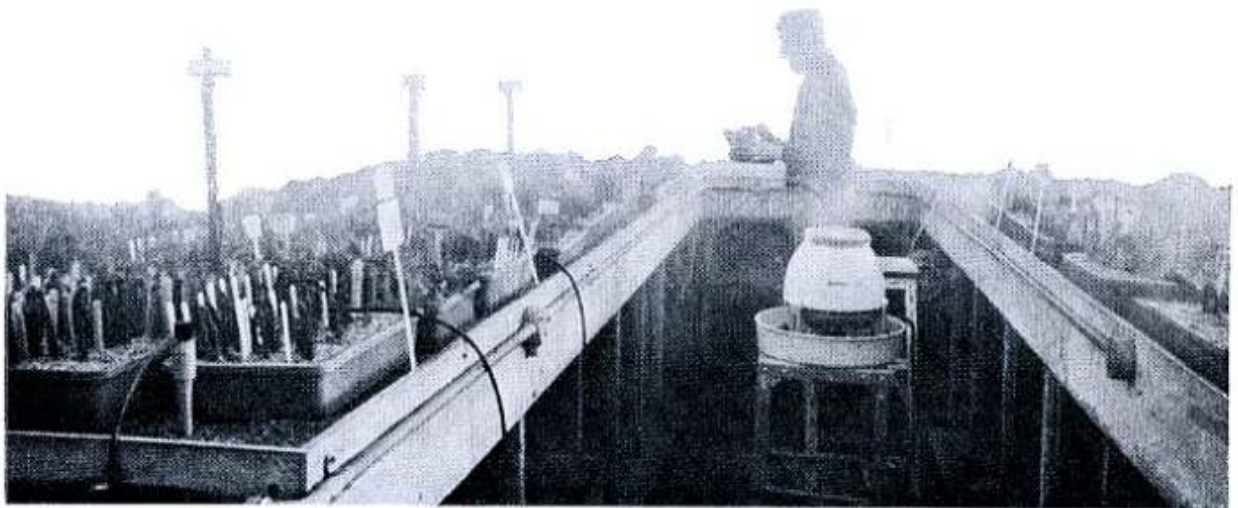
I to advance knowledge and understanding of forestry and trees in the countryside;



2 to develop and ensure the best use of the country's timber resources and promote efficiency and development in the home timber industry;



3 to undertake research relevant to the needs of forestry;



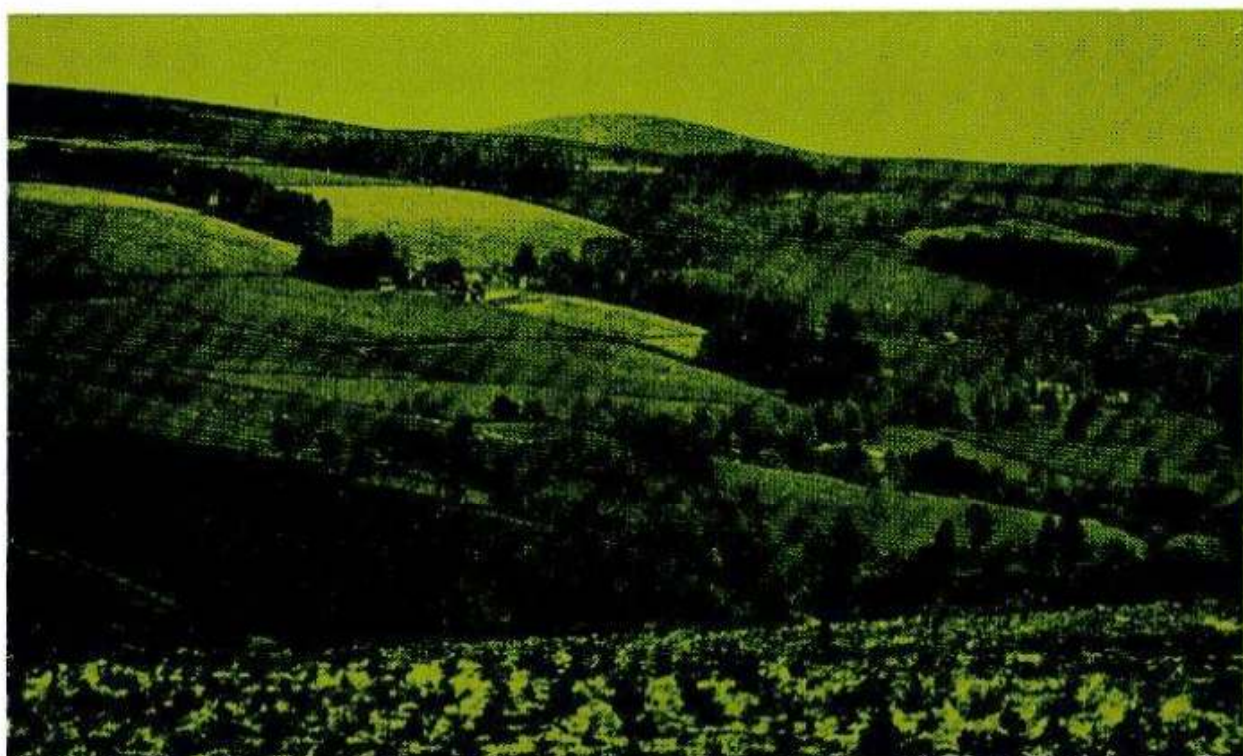
4 to combat forest and tree pests and diseases and to initiate Plant Health Orders when appropriate;



5 to advise and to assist with safety and training in forestry;

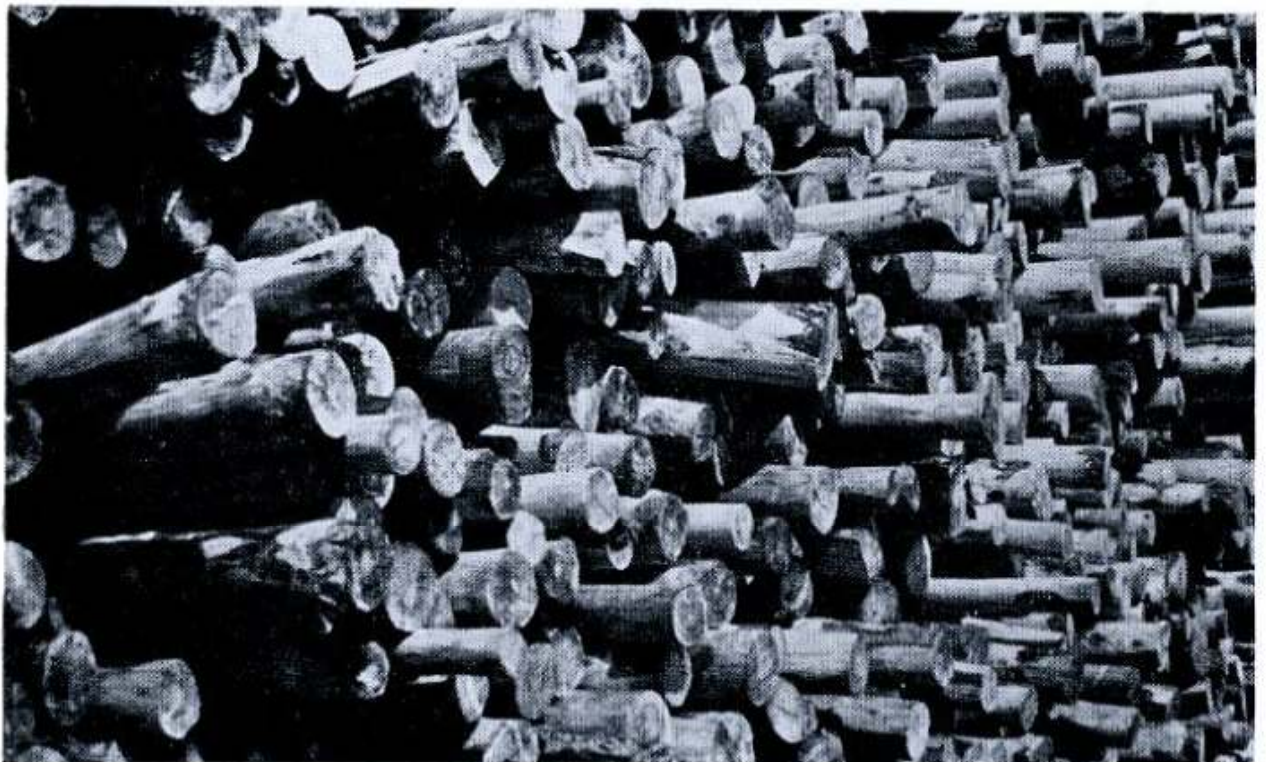


6 to administer controls and schemes for assisting private woodland owners and, by so doing, encourage the practice of sound forestry, secure good land use and – where relevant – effective integration with agriculture, and ensure the use of forest management systems and practices which safeguard the environment.

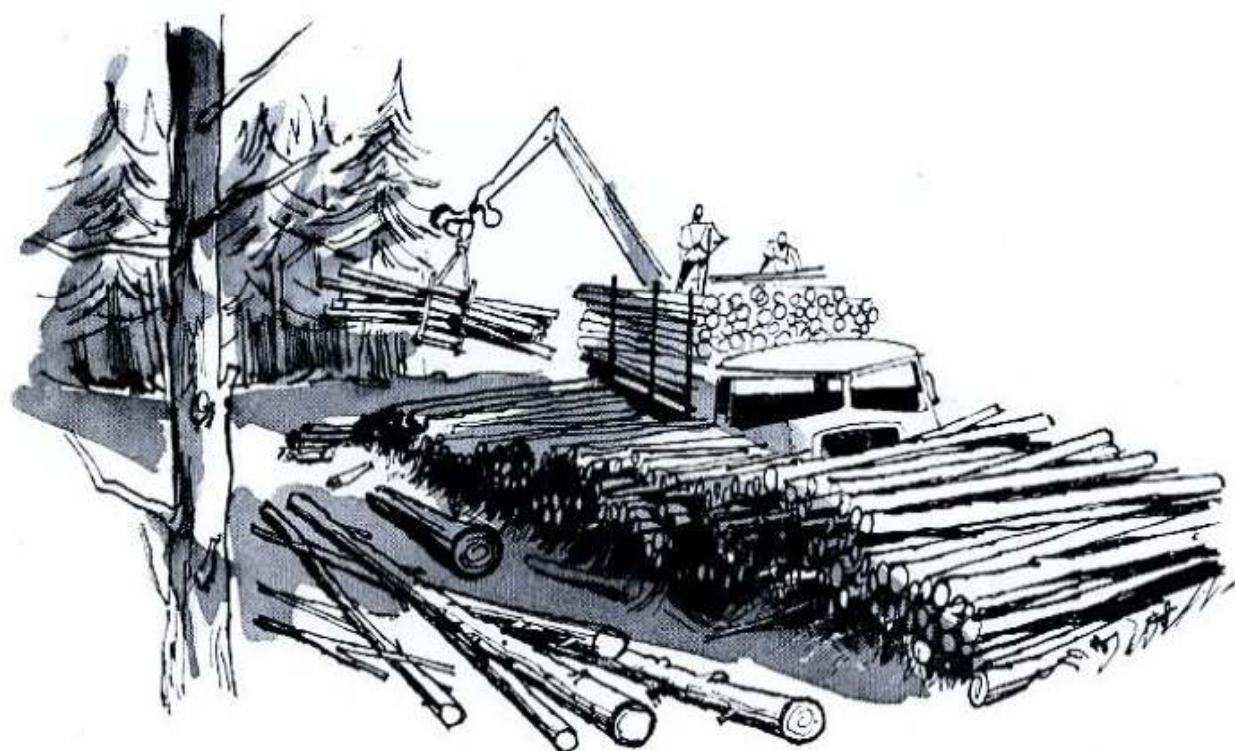


The Forestry Commission acting as the National Forestry Enterprise

The main general objective of the Forestry Enterprise remains that of producing wood as economically as possible. However, in pursuit of this aim, as in the case of the Forestry Authority, attention is paid to amenity, and the Commission is required to preserve and enhance the landscape and to develop the potential of its properties for nature conservation and recreation. The objectives of the Forestry Enterprise are:—



I to develop forestry and increase the production of wood for existing industries, or industries yet to be established, by the extension and improvement of the forest estate;



The production of timber remains the Commission's prime objective and main source of revenue. The productive capacity of the forests is increasing at some seven per cent. per annum and the Commission's aim is to earn as much as possible from its timber sales as a whole. To achieve this, a modern and efficient wood-processing industry is necessary. This requires a steady and planned increase in the supply of timber to a specification matching the needs of industry, close liaison with industry and a continuing review of supply and demand forecasts.

2 to protect and enhance the environment;

As the trustee for all sectors of the community and for future generations, the forester's duty is to respect our woodland inheritance and shape its lifecycle by the best of traditional and currently evolving standards, leaving options for further evolution. The Commission applies and continually develops this policy with distinguished professional advice, and accepting some reduction in financial returns. It seeks to perpetuate the predominantly broadleaved character of the typical southern lowland landscape, while giving conifers an appropriate place there, which is widely accepted. In the uplands, where often only conifers can be grown, it seeks effective landscaping at every opportunity.

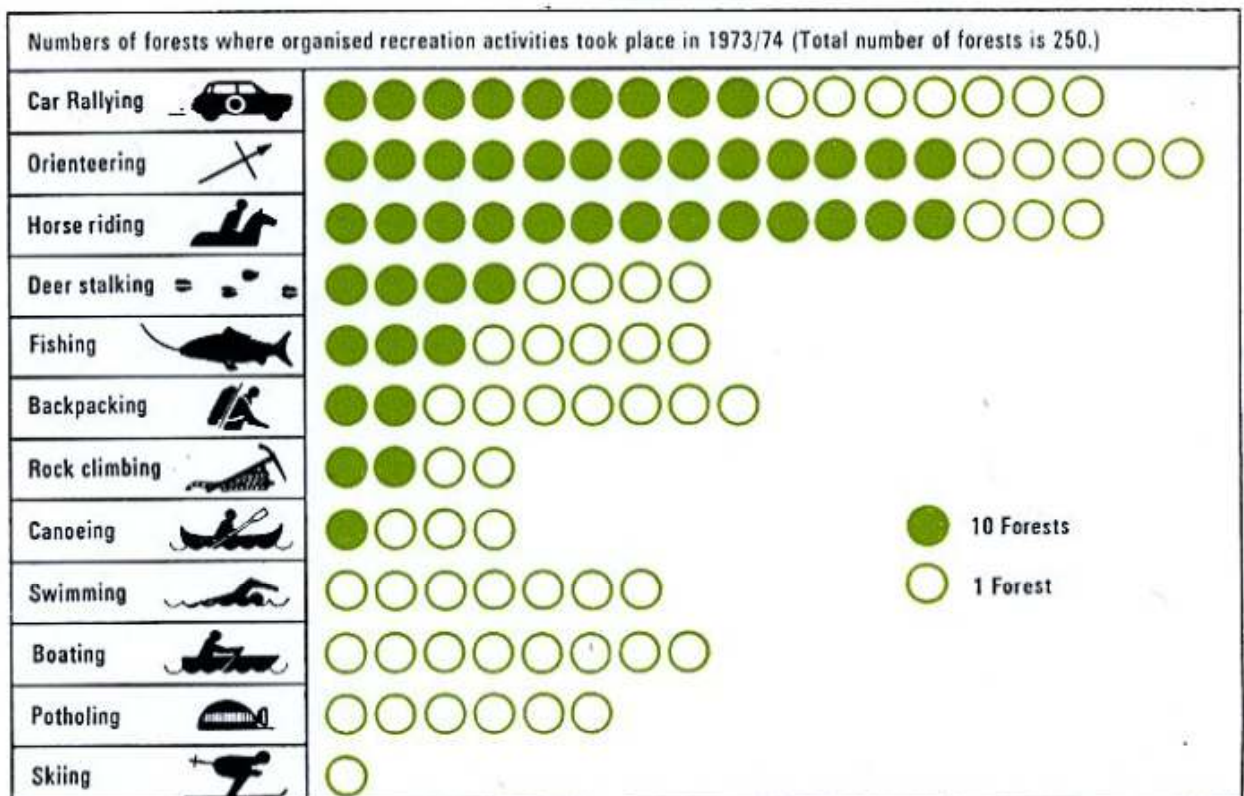




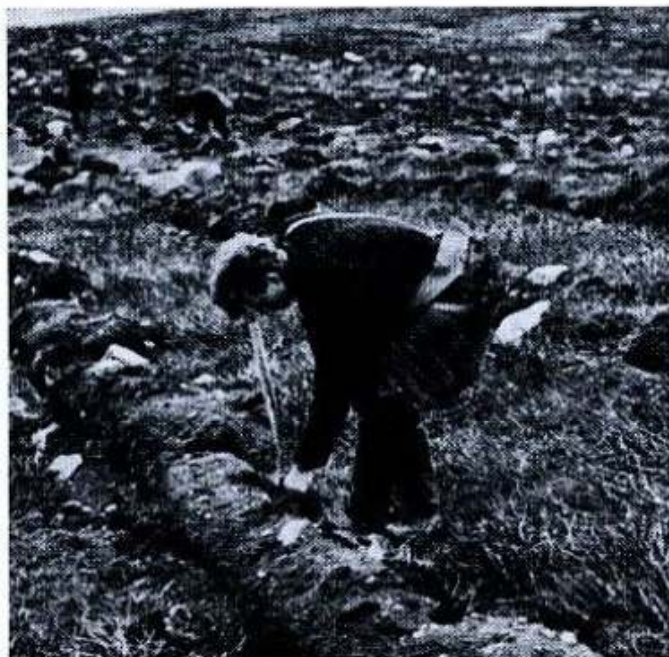
The importance of forests as natural wildlife reservoirs places upon the Commission a special responsibility for following enlightened conservation management policies, one it gladly accepts. The type and intensity of such management varies from forest to forest though there are virtually none of the Commission's forests which are unfit to serve as refuges for wildlife. It is the Commission's aim to improve the forests as wildlife habitats and to integrate balanced conservation and wood production in a pattern of good land use and sound management.

3 to provide recreational facilities;

To provide public recreation need cost little loss of timber production in general, though on a large scale it may have a major local effect as in the New Forest. The Forestry Commission is uniquely able to offer a natural woodland environment which can most appropriately be enjoyed by the simplest forms of recreation. These are provided mainly for the day visitor at a minimal charge. Major facilities for longer stays such as campsites or cabins must fit in with the Commission's other objectives and the plans of local authorities; they are provided as resources permit, and are required to yield an economic return.



4 to stimulate and support the local economy in areas of depopulation by the development of forests, including new plantations, and of wood-using industry;



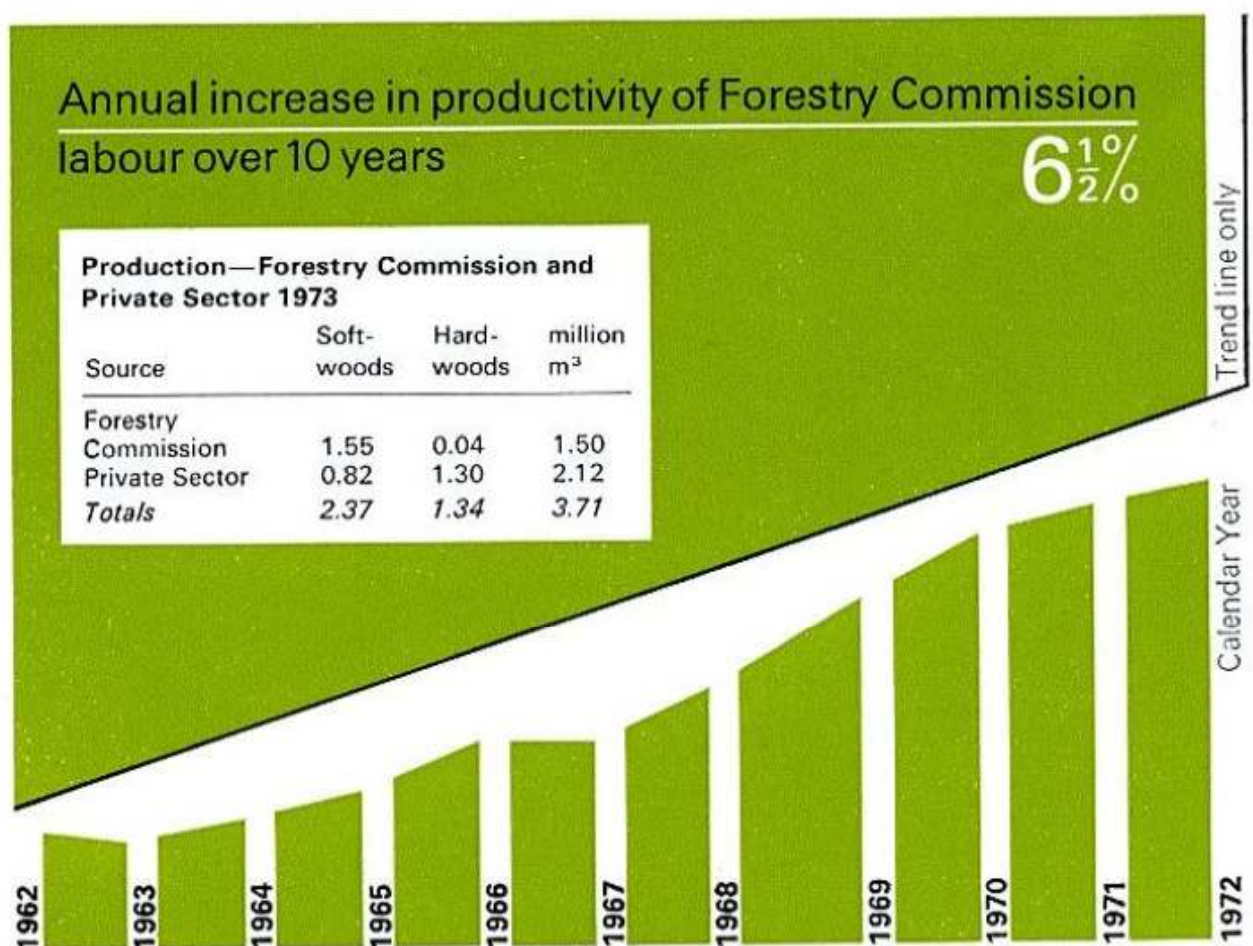
Forests and wood-using industries help to provide employment, but cannot do so regardless of cost. Labour productivity has been materially increased recently, largely by improvements in working methods, tools and mechanisation, and it is hoped that the increase will continue and keep down the real cost per job. Providing the cost is kept down, there may be marginal modifications to mechanisation programmes if required to meet a special need to provide employment. More jobs may also be created by intensified land use through integration of forestry and agriculture. When the vast post-war plantations begin to produce a rapidly increasing volume of timber, expanded and new industries will be needed to process it, and more men will be needed to haul the timber and man the industries.

5 in pursuit of these objectives and in the extension of the forest estate, to further the integration of forestry and agriculture and to manage the estate as profitably as possible.

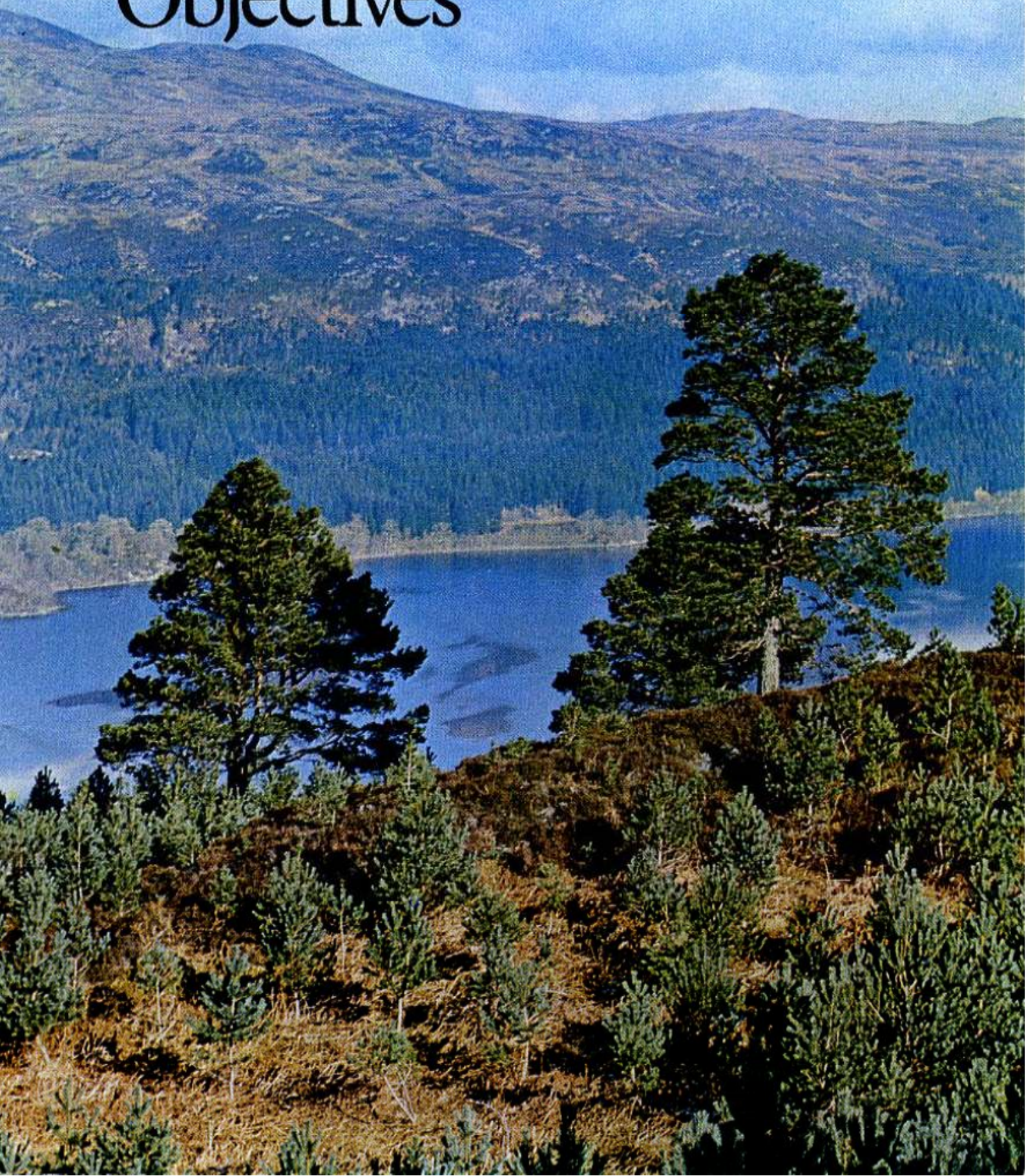
In the British lowlands a major contribution to amenity and productivity is made by the mixed estates of complementary and mutually supporting farms and woods. This is now extending to the uplands where schemes are encouraged in which forest roads and fences contribute to the improvement of the areas more suitable for agriculture, and the trees as they grow will provide shelter and in due course timber income. There is close consultation with farming organisations and the Agricultural Departments.



The Commission's financial objectives will be directed to the target rate of return of 3% on the funds entrusted to it. Costs in the field have been held by new management methods and technical improvements, and efforts to this end will continue, as will those towards the containment of overheads that are within the Commission's control. In the short term the rise in timber prices may make it easier to attain the financial target set, but this results from the world situation, and cannot be relied on indefinitely. The objective of managing the forest estate as profitably as possible may be subject to certain calls on resources: in the longer term a need for the Commission to encourage by appropriate means the development of wood-using industry may constitute such a call; the other social objectives set out by Ministers, and referred to above, so far as they may not justify subsidies, may form another.



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I to advance knowledge and understanding of forestry and trees in the countryside;



2 to develop and ensure the best use of the country's timber resources and promote efficiency and development in the home timber industry;

THE DEMAND FOR TIMBER—average 1974–76 data
(All figures relate to million cubic metres of wood raw material)

SUPPLY

Home Products 3.5 Imports 36.5 Total 40

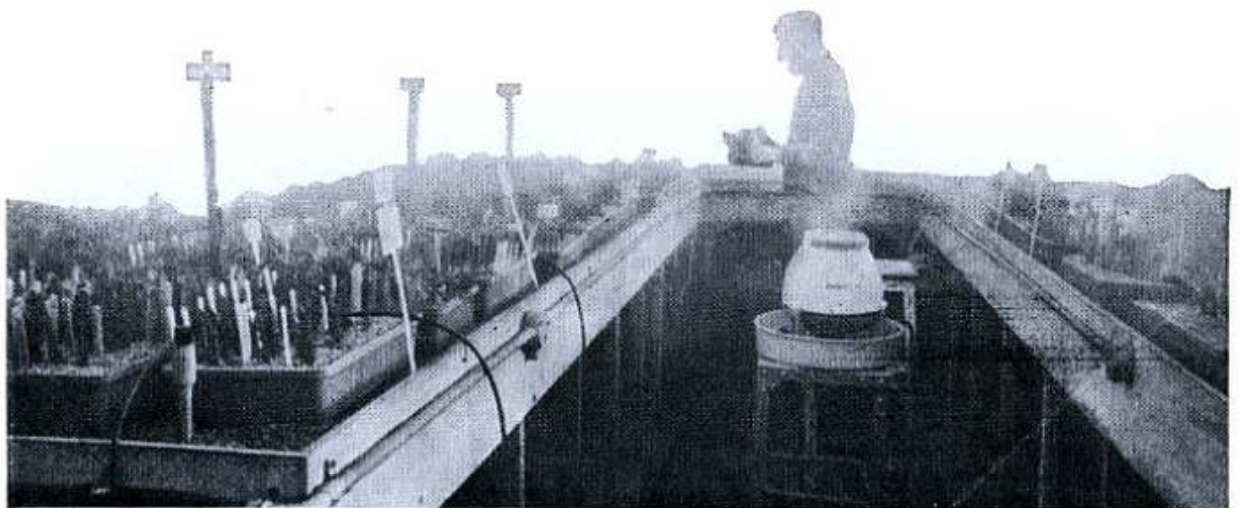
DEMAND

Home Consumption 39 Exports 1 Total 40

USE OF WOOD IN U.K.

Paper 20 Sawn 14 Plywood and Chipboard 4 Other 1 Total 39

3 to undertake research relevant to the needs of forestry;

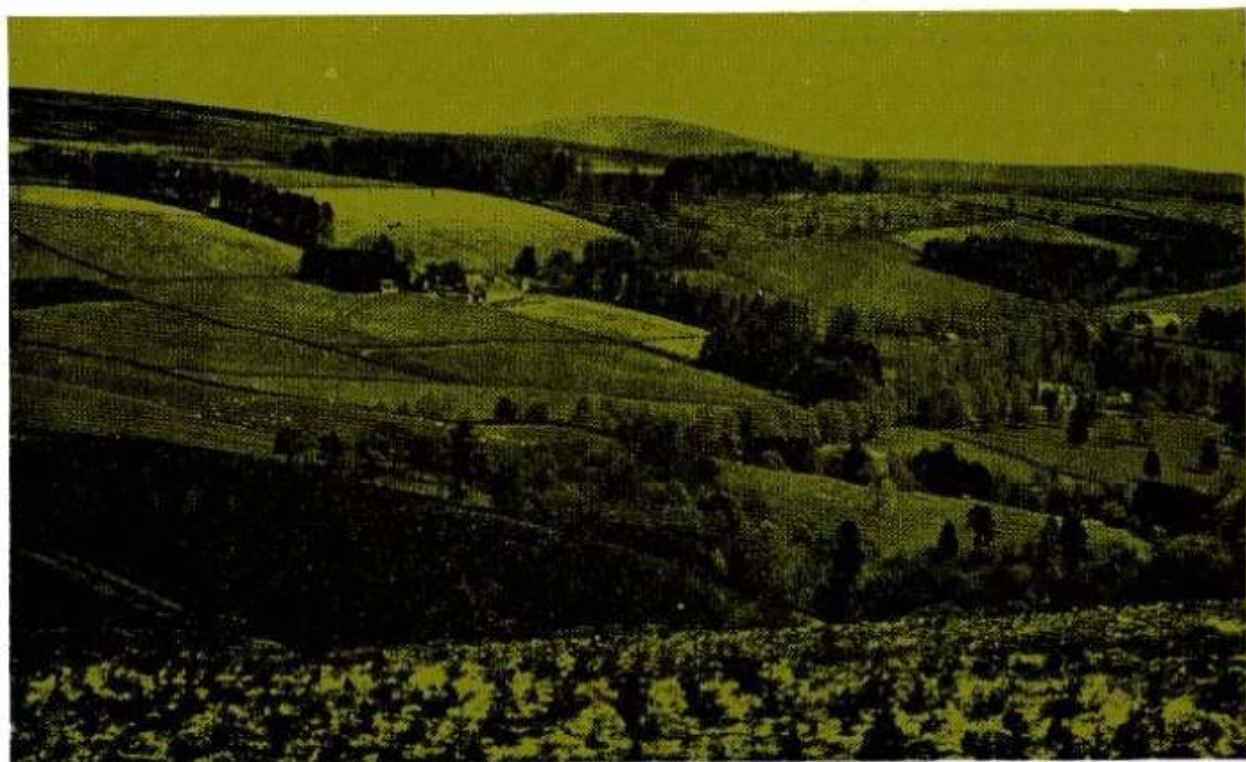


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SALES OF TIMBER IN THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 1977

Thousand cubic metres

Description	Great Britain	England	Scotland	Wales
Trees sold standing (1)	831	337	302	192
Converted (2)	998·8	476·8	366·0	156·0
Round timber and saw logs (3)	409·4	204·3	141·2	63·9
Telegraph and other selected poles	7·0	1·9	4·1	1·0
Mining timber	56·4	36·8	0·1	19·5
Posts and stakes	21·5	12·9	2·0	6·6
Pulpwood and boardmill material	465·5	186·7	215·5	63·3
Firewood	10·6	8·4	1·4	0·8
Miscellaneous	21·6	20·7	0·4	0·5
Poles sold in length (other than selected)	6·8	5·1	1·3	0·4

- (1) The utilisation of trees sold to timber merchants is not known; but it is reasonable to assume that it is converted in the proportions shown in the table.
- (2) In addition 5·2 thousand cubic metres were converted and used internally for forest and estate purposes (England 2·3, Scotland 1·6, Wales 1·3).
- (3) As the Commission's forests steadily approach maturity so will the volume increase of these types of timber.

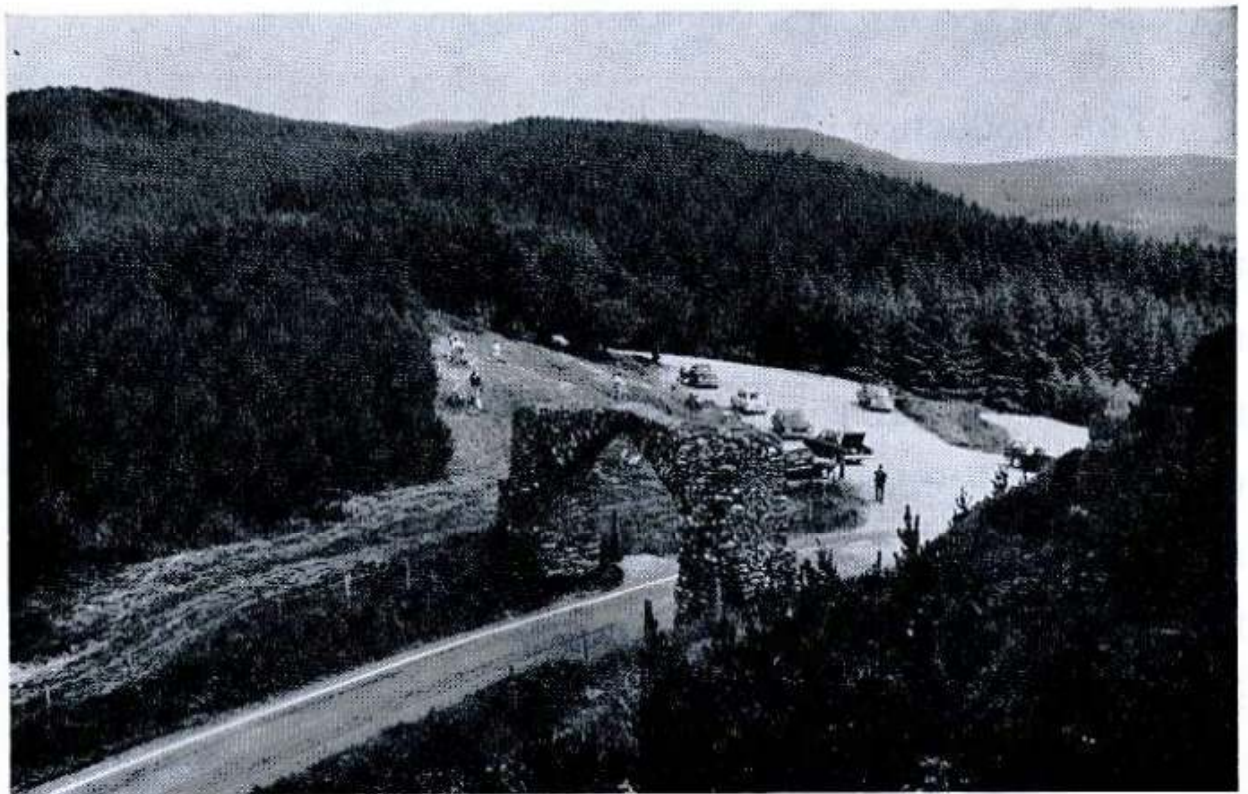
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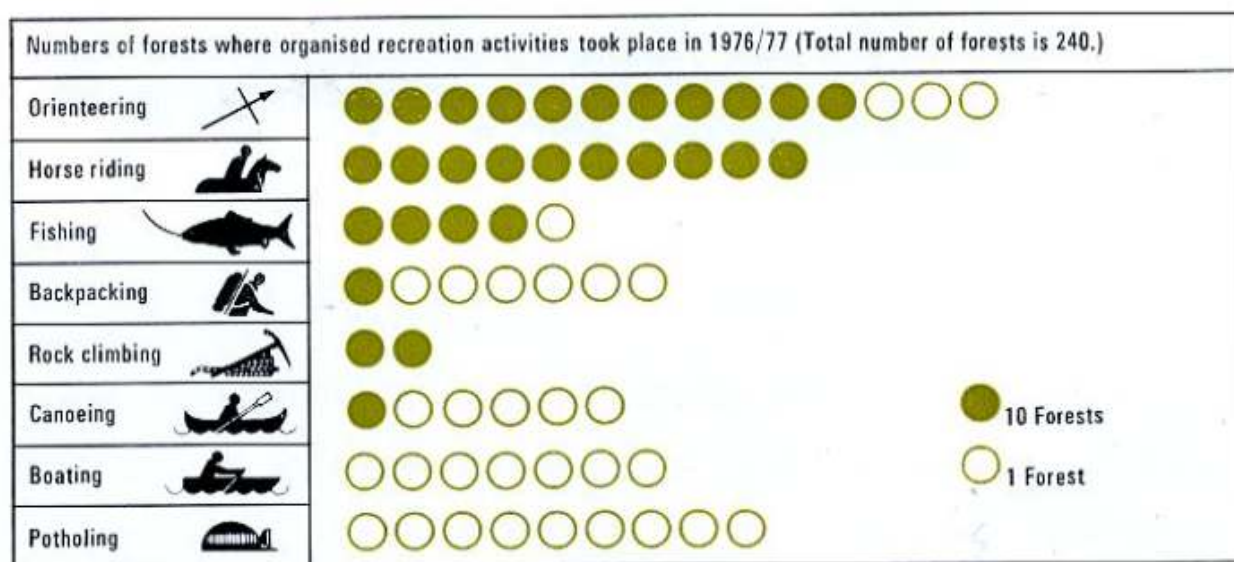




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Number of recreational facilities provided 1976/77	
Picnic sites	426
Forest walks and trails	472
Wildlife observation points	18
Visitor/Interpretive centres (Including seasonal centres)	25

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Forests and wood-using industries help to provide employment, but cannot do so regardless of cost. Labour productivity has been materially increased recently, largely by improvements in working methods, tools and mechanisation, and it is hoped that the increase will continue and keep down the real cost per job. Providing the cost is kept down, there may be marginal modifications to mechanisation programmes if required to meet a special need to provide employment. More jobs may also be created by intensified land use through integration of forestry and agriculture. When the vast post-war plantations begin to produce a rapidly increasing volume of timber, expanded and new industries will be needed to process it, and more men will be needed to haul the timber and man the industries.

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In the British lowlands a major contribution to amenity and productivity is made by the mixed estates of complementary and mutually supporting farms and woods. This is now extending to the uplands where schemes are encouraged in which forest roads and fences contribute to the improvement of the areas more suitable for agriculture, and the trees as they grow will provide shelter and in due course timber income. There is close consultation with farming organisations and the Agricultural Departments.



The Commission's financial objectives will be directed to the target rate of 3% on the funds entrusted to it. Operational costs have been held constant or reduced in real terms through new management methods, technical improvements and increased labour productivity. The aim is to maintain this control of costs and to contain rises in overheads so far as these are within the Commission's control. Timber prices fluctuate with the world market situation and thus influence financial results for the Forestry Enterprise in the short-term, but in the longer term it is expected that the price of wood in real terms will rise rather than fall. The objective of managing the forest estate as profitably as possible may be subject to certain overriding demands: a need for the Commission to encourage the development of wood-using industry may be one such and social objectives set out by Ministers, so far as they are not dealt with by planting or other subsidies, provide other examples. Labour productivity has continued to rise with an increase of 20% over the first six years of the 1970's.

