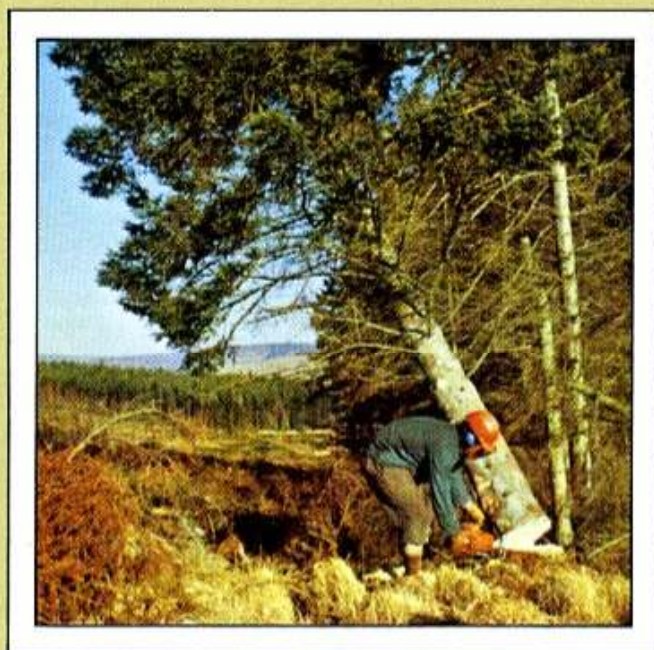


The Forestry Commission's Objectives



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Foreword

Public interest in the Forestry Commission's Objectives, first published in the Annual Report for 1973/74 and then in the form of a booklet, has been so great as to exhaust several reprints of the booklet. In this new edition, the opportunity has been taken to clarify some of the objectives and present them in a form more appropriate for general reading. None of the changes and additions implies any change in the substance of the Objectives.

Introduction

The Forestry Commission was established in 1919. Under legislation now consolidated in the Forestry Act 1967, it is charged with the general duty of promoting the interests of forestry, the development of afforestation, and the production and supply of timber and other forest products in Great Britain. This general duty includes that of promoting the establishment and maintenance of adequate reserves of growing trees, and until 1958 the Commission's principal objective was to build up a strategic reserve of timber. Since then, the emphasis has moved towards economic and social objectives, mainly the production of raw material for industry and providing employment in rural areas where jobs are scarce. The Commission also has the duty under the Countryside Acts to



“have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside”.

The Commission's powers under the Forestry Act include the collection and dissemination of forestry information; the development of education and training in forestry; the conduct of forestry research; the collection of information in order to perform its general duty of securing the supply of forest products; the provision of advice and financial aid to private forestry under appropriate conditions; the regulation of felling; and under the Plant Health Act 1967, the control of tree pests and diseases. The Commission exercises these powers in the interests of the forestry industry as a whole.

The Commission is also responsible for establishing and managing forests on land placed at its disposal by the Forestry Ministers. It uses its powers under the Countryside Acts to provide recreational opportunities and facilities for the general public consistent with its commercial objectives and considerations of sound forest management.

The Forestry Commission acts in the dual role of “Forestry Authority” and “Forestry Enterprise” with the following objectives.

The Forestry Commission as the Forestry Authority

To advance knowledge and understanding of forestry and trees in the countryside.

All the Commission's activities contribute in some way towards the development of knowledge of forestry and trees in the countryside. It promotes greater understanding of forestry and trees by providing advice and information to Ministers, Parliament, local authorities and public agencies, to the forestry industry and the public in general.

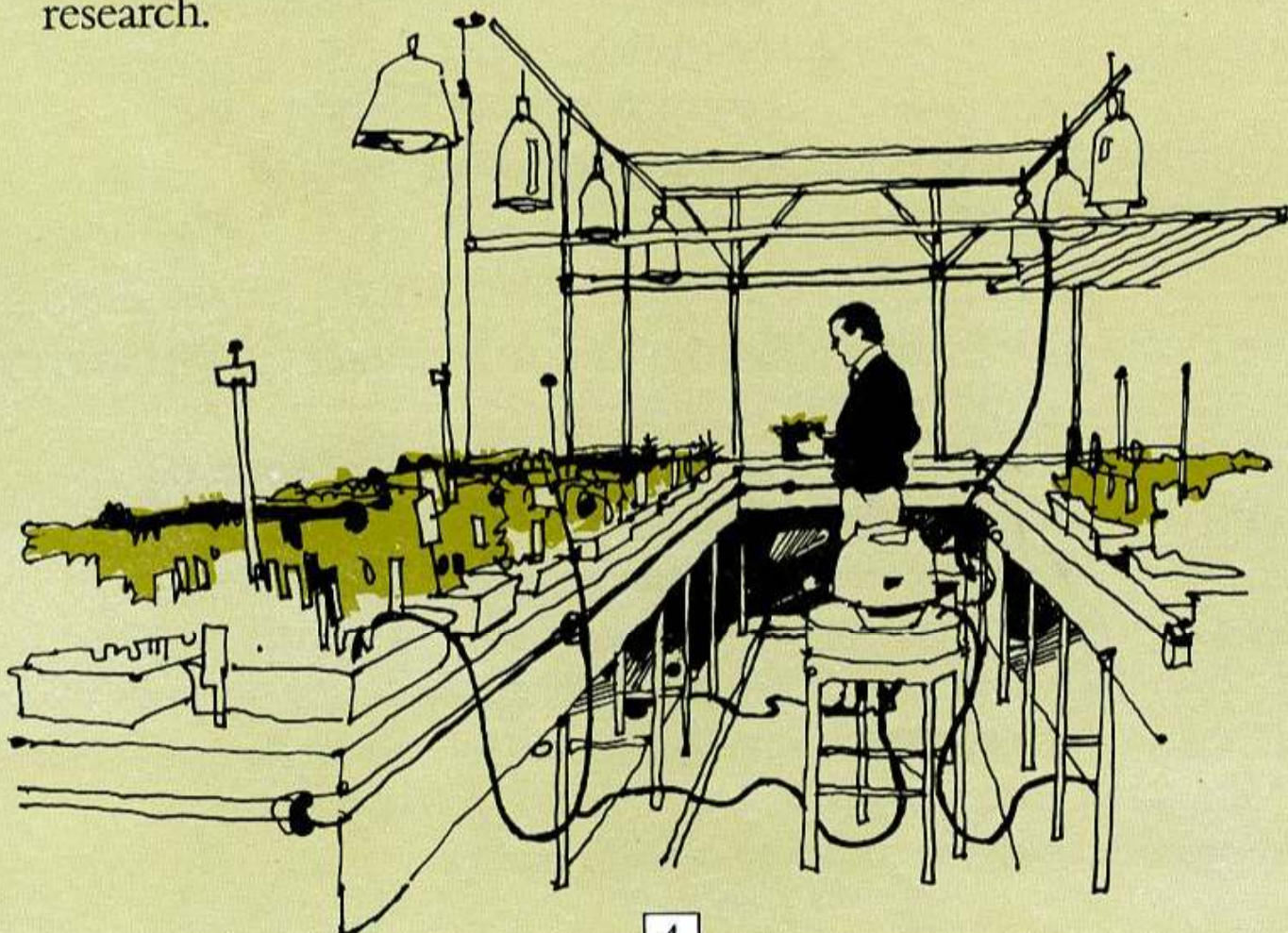
To develop and ensure the best use of the country's forest resources; and to promote the development of the wood-using industry and its efficiency.

The Commission is responsible for estimating current and future patterns of supply and demand. To do so it draws on its own experience as a major supplier and on the advice of the Home Grown Timber Advisory Committee, to provide the information required as the basis of sound commercial decisions for the management and future development of the wood-using industry.

To undertake research relevant to the needs of forestry.

The Commission's main aims will be:

To undertake mainly applied research into the establishment, improvement, management, protection, and harvesting of forest crops, and as required, to undertake or support basic research related to the programme of applied research.



To develop efficient, economic and safe methods of working in the forest.

To undertake research on ecology, arboriculture, and other aspects of tree growing with the appropriate co-operation of other Government departments and agencies.

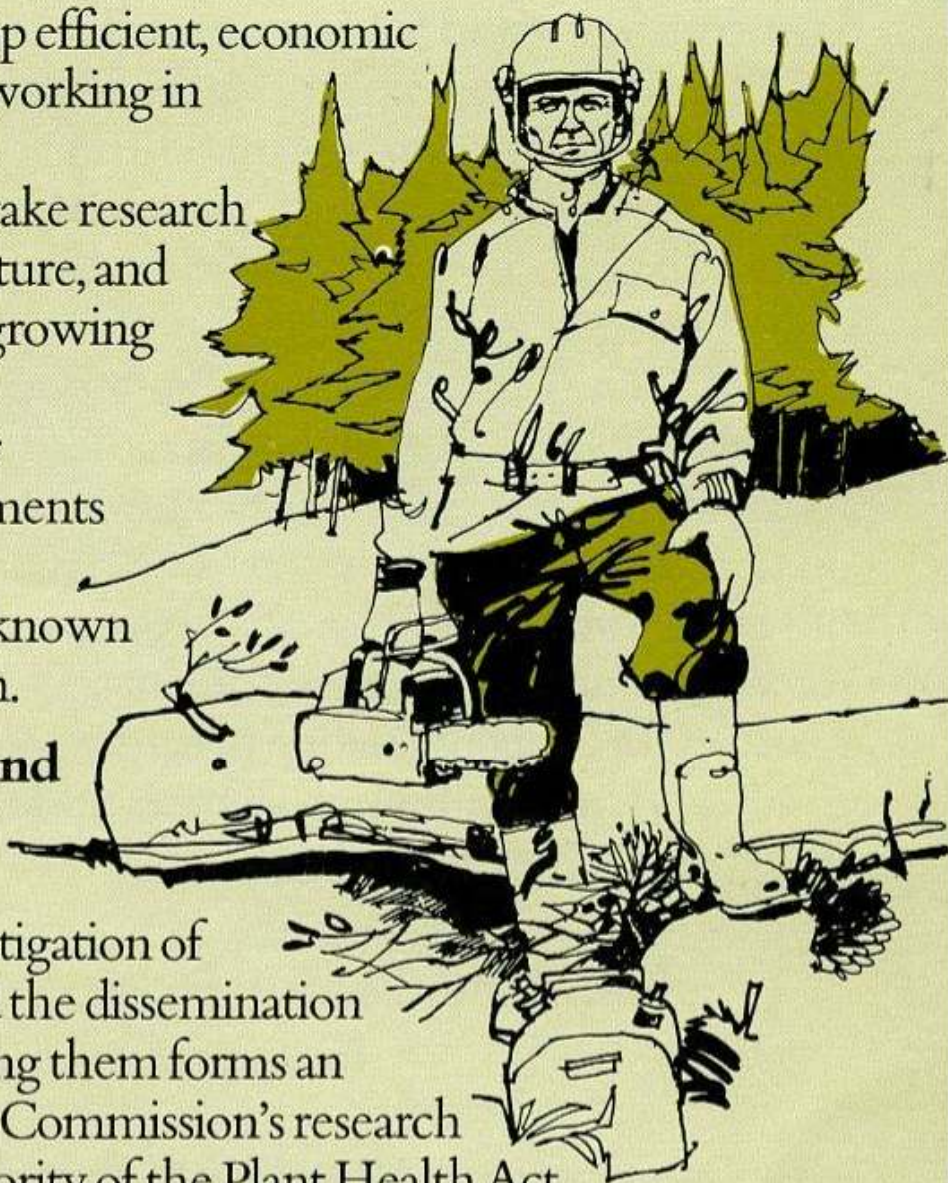
To make known the results of research.

To combat forest and tree pests and diseases.

The investigation of pests and diseases and the dissemination of advice on combating them forms an important part of the Commission's research work. With the authority of the Plant Health Act, the Commission makes the Plant Health Orders necessary to enable it and other authorities concerned, to prevent the entry and spread of pests and diseases, and to deal with any outbreaks which may occur.

To advise and assist with safety and training in forestry.

The Commission is fully responsible under the relevant legislation for the training and safety of its own employees. For the private sector it also stimulates education in forestry and training in forestry practice, and encourages attention to safety measures through the Forestry Training Council and the Forestry Safety Council on which all sectors of industry are represented.



To encourage good forestry practice in private woodlands through advice and schemes of financial assistance and by controls on felling.

The Commission is prepared to give general advice to private woodland owners and to explain how grant-aid and detailed advice may be obtained.

The Commission administers schemes of grant-aid for private woodlands with the principal objective of wood production. In achieving that objective it will take account of good land use, the establishment of a harmonious relationship with agriculture, and the use of management systems which protect and enhance the environment and safeguard sites important for the conservation of nature and for archaeology.

The Commission controls the felling of trees through a system of licensing.

The Forestry Commission as the Forestry Enterprise

To develop its forests for the production of wood for industry by extending and improving the forest estate.

The principal objective of the Commission is the efficient production of wood for industry, either existing or projected.

In financial terms the aim is to obtain the maximum return from the total volume of wood sold from its forests. The specifications of the wood supplied must, of course, match the needs of industry as closely as possible, and there must also be close liaison with industry and a continuing review of supply and demand forecasts to ensure that increases in wood supply are matched by suitably phased expansion of industrial capacity.



The Commission will extend its forest estate by establishing new forests, mainly in the uplands. The area of land which can be planted each year will depend on Government forestry policy, and the Commission's ability to acquire sufficient suitable land to fulfil any programme given to it. New planting must meet financial criteria which take account of estimated future income and expenditure.

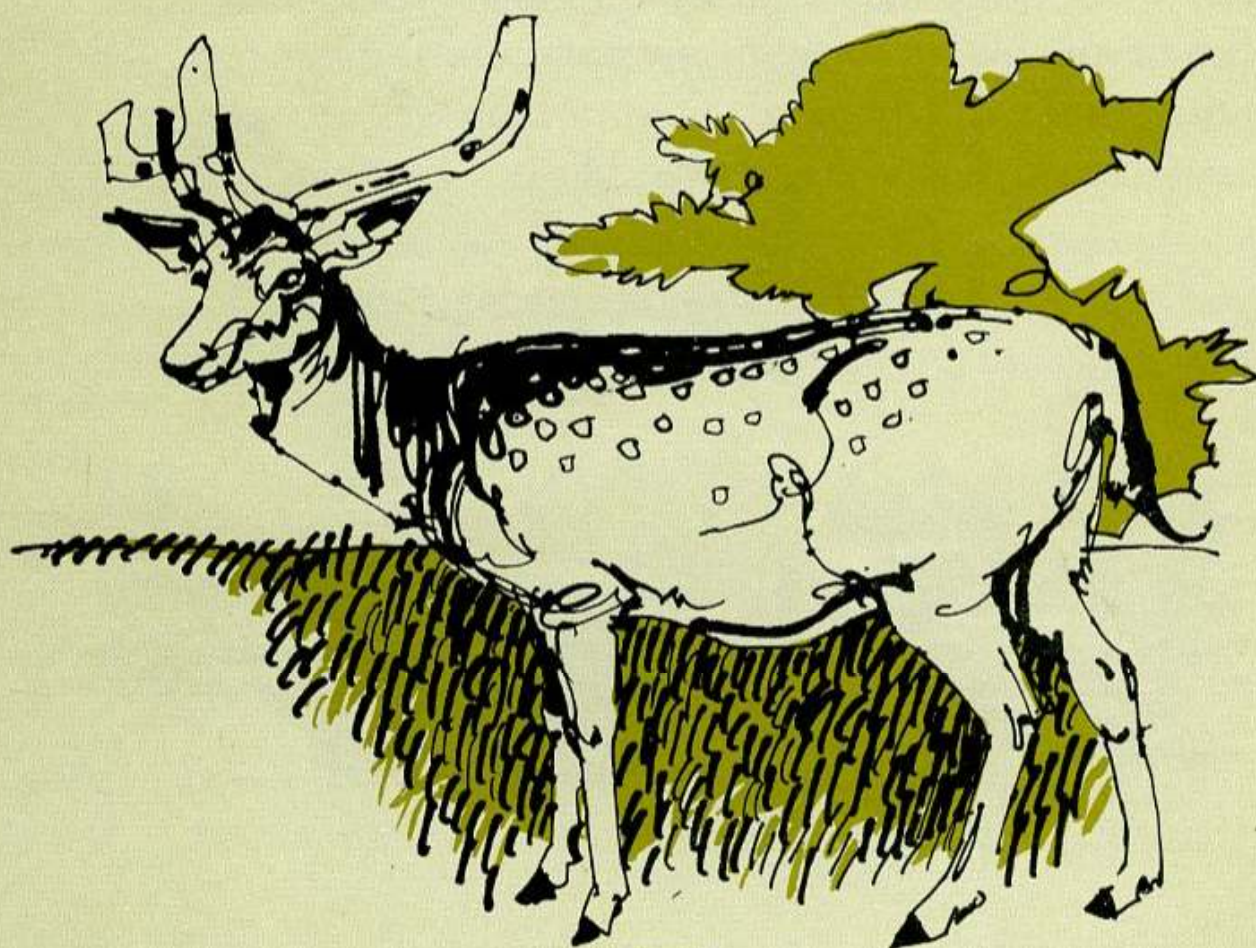


Although average yields of wood are high in Britain compared with other temperate countries, an increase in yields is possible. The Commission is continually seeking to increase yields by means of appropriate new techniques such as the use of more productive species and fertilising when the benefits justify the costs.

To protect and enhance the environment

The planting of new forests and the felling of areas of mature forest can bring about great changes in the landscape. While pursuing its main objective of wood production, the Commission designs its forests so that as far as possible they blend with the landscape.

The Commission manages a substantial broadleaved estate which is located mainly in the lowlands in the south of England, where the objective is to perpetuate the predominantly broadleaved character of the landscapes.

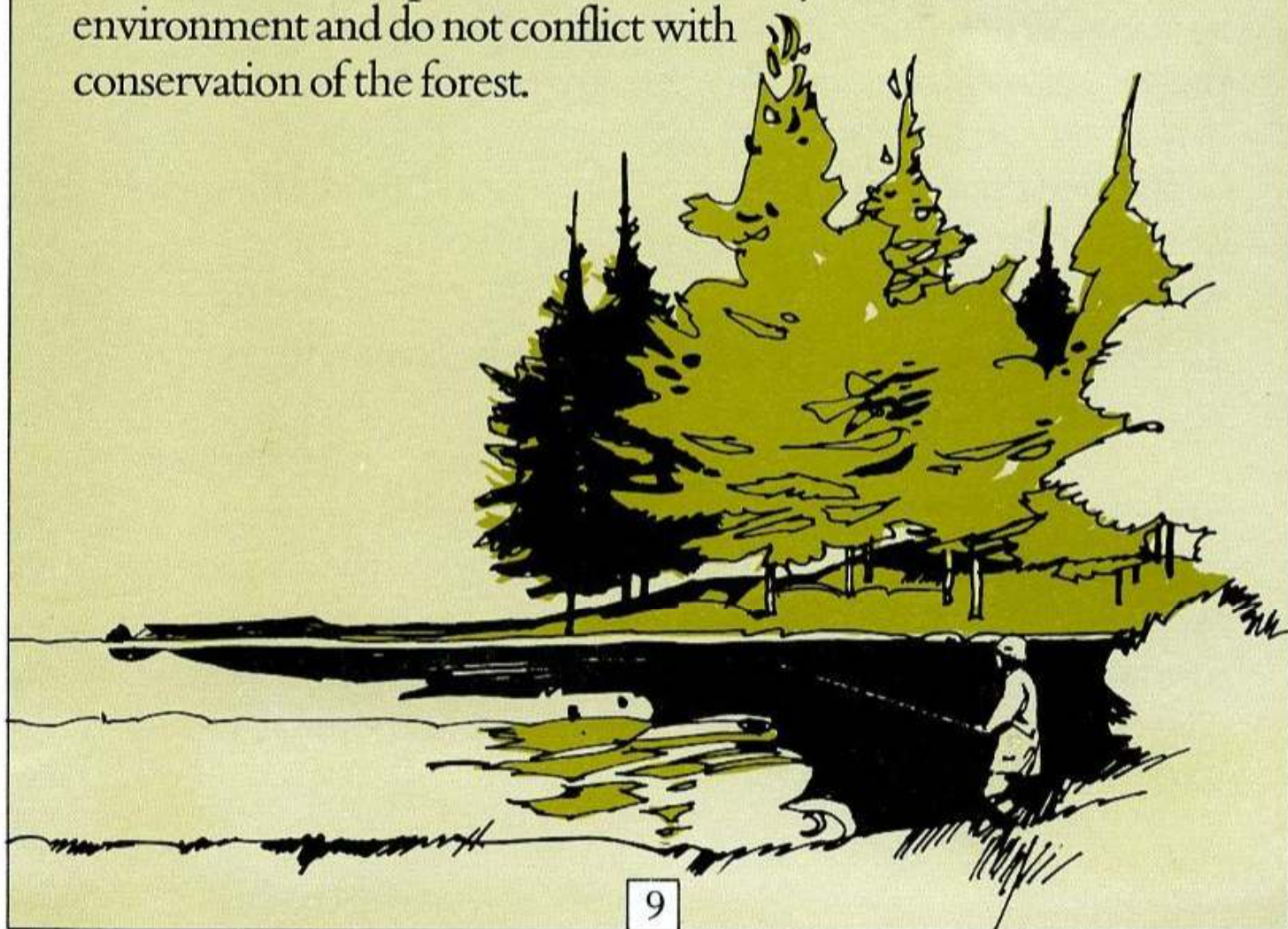


Forests are important habitats for wildlife, and the Commission follows management practices which take account of the needs of nature conservation. Where woodland sites have been identified by the Nature Conservancy Council as particularly important for nature conservation, the Commission gives special attention to maintaining the conservation objectives of the sites.

The Commission carries out all its work with a proper regard for its effect on the environment, and consults as necessary the appropriate authorities representing particular interests.

To provide recreational facilities

The Commission is conscious of the leisure potential of its forests and provides facilities for informal recreation and the enjoyment of quiet pursuits. It must ensure, however, that recreational developments are in harmony with the forest environment and do not conflict with conservation of the forest.



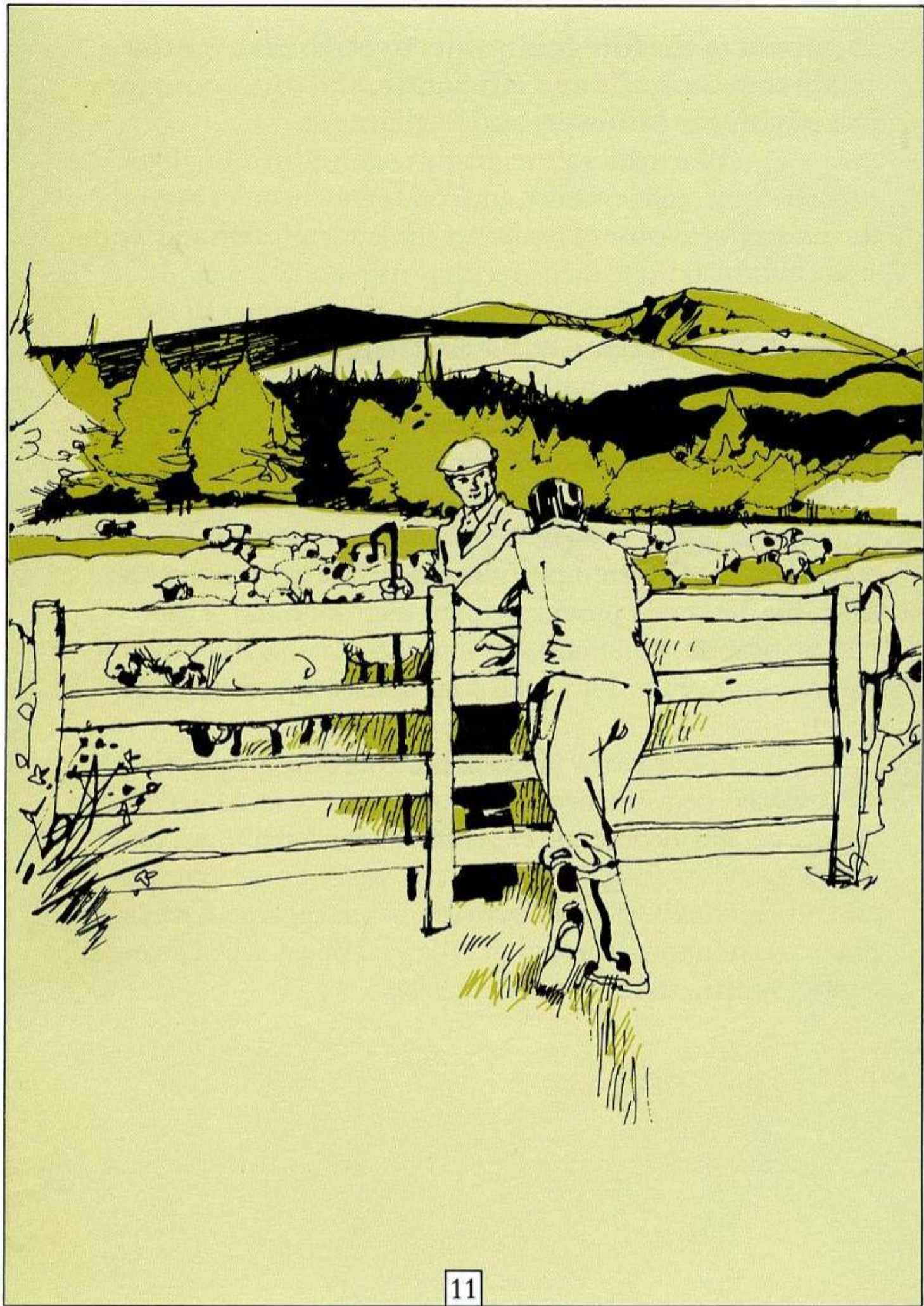
The main emphasis is on providing facilities for day visitors such as car parks, picnic places, viewpoints and forest walks, particularly where they are readily accessible to visitors from towns and holiday centres. Overnight accommodation – camping and caravan sites and forest cabins – is also provided where appropriate and financially viable.

To stimulate and support the local economy in areas of depopulation by the development of forests, including the establishment of new plantations, and of wood-using industry.

Forestry can help to provide opportunities for employment in rural areas where they are often scarce. Manpower productivity has increased greatly over the years mainly through improvements in working methods and tools and by mechanisation, and the Commission's aim is to maintain this progress and contain the real cost of providing wood for industry. Where there is a special need to provide employment, the pace of mechanisation may be slowed provided the increase in real cost can be kept down. As the very large areas of forest established since 1950 begin to produce wood, more labour will be required to harvest and transport it, and to man the wood-using industries.

To foster a harmonious relationship between forestry and agriculture.

New forests can be established only on land which has been devoted to another land use, usually hill farming. It is important that the two land uses occupy the sites best suited to each and the Commission aims to ensure a mutually acceptable relationship between the two. To this end the Commission consults the agricultural departments about its proposals to acquire land for planting.



In pursuit of the foregoing objectives, to manage the estate economically and efficiently, and to account for its activities to Ministers and Parliament.

All activities are regularly reviewed in the light of expected costs and revenues, and constraints. In order to ensure the most effective use of resources, the latest research and work study information are used in setting operational standards.

The Commission has been given a target rate of return of 3% in real terms on the assets employed except for investment in commercial recreation where higher rates apply. The target rate of 3% is based on the return to be expected from good sites within a reasonable distance of markets. The accounts of the Commission show when a return below 3% is expected as a result of undertaking new planting and restocking for social reasons on poor sites remote from markets. The accounts also show the net cost of providing forest recreation and of the special measures required in the interests of visual amenity and nature conservation, for which commercial objectives cannot be set.

At five yearly intervals the assets, mainly plantations, are revalued, performance for the period is measured against the target rate, and income and expenditure standards are set for each activity covering the ensuing five years. These standards are compared annually with actual costs and income. Costs and prices are monitored throughout the year by a detailed financial control system, and reviewed annually.

