

RANNOCH FOREST

Visit by Perth Branch of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society on 21st September 1966

In 1947 the Forestry Commission acquired 3,179 acres of ground in Dall Estate from Captain Wentworth and in 1948, 605 acres at Craiganour from Colonel Parker. This modest area was called Rannoch Forest and planting was started in 1949.

It was not until 1956 that we began to add substantial areas to the acquisitions, the main purchases being Rannoch Barracks and Dall Estate in 1958.

A number of properties not required for Forestry purposes have since been sold, the principal disposals have been to Rannoch Schools Ltd. Further disposals are at present being considered.

The total area under Forestry Commission ownership in the Loch Rannoch area is now 47,447 acres. Land use has been assessed as follows:-

Acquired Woods	1,112	acres
F.C. Plantations	7,081	"
Total Woods	8,193	"
Plantable Land in hand	11,727	"
Total available for Forestry	19,920	"
Agricultural	8,787	
Holdings	150	
Unplantable	17,970	
Deer Wintering	620	
	27,527	"
Total	47,447	"

Negotiations are in hand for the release of some of the grazing land for forestry. It is expected that a further 5,000 acres will be added to the potential forest area when these negotiations have been completed.

The acquired woods included 670 acres in the Black Wood of Rannoch while the remainder consists mainly of comparatively small plantations of Scots Pine averaging 50 years of age.

The Black Wood of Rannoch is one of the remnants of native Scots Pine described by Professor Stephen and Dr. Carlisle in "Native Pinewoods of Scotland". It is the laid down policy that in Scots Pine areas only Scots Pine of Rannoch origin will be used in Rannoch Forest and in the Black Wood area, natural regeneration will be encouraged and no species other than Scots pine will be planted.

Although the policy is to use Rannoch Pine whenever possible, much of the land available for planting is too poor or too exposed to suit Scots Pine and in these areas the main species used are Lodgepole Pine and Sitka Spruce.

The progress of planting has been as follows:

P.49	69	acres	P.58	188	acres
P.50	196	"	P.59	409	"
P.51	103	"	P.60	415	"
P.52	272	"	P.61	714	"
P.53	283	"	P.62	706	"
P.54	168	"	P.63	740	"
P.55	221	"	P.64	799	"
P.56	150	"	P.65	814	"
P.57	151	"	P.66	723	"

It is intended that the rate of planting up to 1970 at least will be maintained at about 800 acres per annum.

In P.66 the plants used were:-

S.P.	351,000
L.P.	493,000
S.S.	199,000
N.S.	39,000
Other Species	26,000
	1,113,000

Staff:

Head Forester	1
Foresters	2
Probationary Forester	1
	4
Forest Workers	33
Trappers	2
	35

Ploughing and Roadmaking are carried out by mobile staff. The Ploughing costs are equivalent to 2 extra men and Roadmaking to 2 extra men. Labour is occasionally loaned to Glenferrochy Forest - equivalent to about 1 man for a year.

For management purposes the Forest is divided into two, the Dall end and the Barracks end. Each area has its own staff under a forester and has its separate planting programme. The staff at the Dall end are mostly in Forestry Commission houses but at the Barracks end, about 15 men and youths are in the Forestry Commission's hostel at Bridge of Gaur.

There were a considerable number of good roads in Dall Estate at acquisition but other areas were not well served with roads. Pre-planting roads are being constructed on the basis of 1 mile of road for 500 acres of plantation on lines which will form the basis of the future extraction network.