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MR. J. A. B. MACDONALD AND
MR. ERIC LEWIS BECOME O.B.E.s;
THE BIRTHDAY HONOURS

WE are delighted to be able to record the appointment as Officers of the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) of Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD, Conservator,

South Sootland, and Mr. ERIC LEWIS, until recently Chief Executive Officer and Purchasing Officer at Headquarters. We are sure the news of recognition of their long and valuable services to forestry will give great pleasure to their numerous friends in, and outside, the Commission.

Mr. Macdonald has served through all grades from Foreman to Conservator. He made an important and lasting contribution to the solving of some of the problems that confronted the Commission in early days, not least that of afforesting peat-covered areas of Scotland. In recent years his Conservancy has undertaken the largest planting programmes of any in the country - the programme reached 10,000 acres in 1962. It is not only in the sphere of afforestation that Mr. Macdonald's work has been of outstanding value, for in the past 10 years he has given much attention to the techniques of thinning and here again, as in the case of peat planting, his influence and example has spread beyond the boundaries of his own territory.

Mr. Macdonald, at the end of last year, was elected President of the Society of Foresters of Great Britain.

Of Mr. Lewis we wrote at length on the occasion of his impending retirement and readers will need little reminder of his loyal service, which commenced some 44 years ago when he became a Boy Clerk in the Office of Woods.

We are very pleased also to report similar awards to two who have done much to further the cause of private forestry in particular - Mr. JOHN McEWEN and Mr. H. L. WRIGHT. The former lives at Blairgowrie and is a consultant forester in Scotland. He has been a member for 50 years of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, of which in 1961 he became President. Mr. Wright had a distinguished career in the Indian Forest Service before having to return to England in 1940 through ill-health. During the war and after he held important posts with the Ministry of Supply and Board of Trade; in 1949 he became editor of the Quarterly Journal of Forestry and held this post for some ten years.

**F. A. O. STUDY TOUR

THE fifth F.A.O. silvicultural study tour, which had as its theme "Selection of species for forests in their productive role as a source of raw material for industry", took place last month and covered old woodlands in the Forest of Dean and Tintern, hill afforestation in the Black Mountains of Wales, and the pine forests of Thetford. At the close of the official tour there were excursions to the research station at Alice Holt and the National Pinetum at Bedgebury. A visit was also made to the Commonwealth Forestry Institute at Oxford.

The party was led by a Dane from F.A.O. and comprised representatives from Austria, France, Western Germany, Switzerland, Eire, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Rumania, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, 19 in all, most of them on their first visit to this country. Academic, research and territorial duties were about equally represented.

Graysonian Economics and their consequences on silvicultural decisions linked what was seen and discussed, writes Mr. P. F. GARTHWAITE, causing some shaking of heads among the central Europeans but being readily accepted by the Scandinavians. "Net discounted revenue" reappeared, after mental translation, as "rentability" - a word which one heard in odd snatches of conversation accompanied by gestures of puzzled incredulity that forestry should have to be subject to a test of this kind.

In discussion on his country's problems we were treated to a superb exposition of the Swiss forest philosophy by Mr. FISCHER, Professor at the Forest College in Zurich (incidentally also the inventor of the tree bicycle). He tore up the script he had brought with him and one by one he took the subjects set down for study during the tour and proceeded with the ruthless precision of a skilled surgeon to dissect them. "What species to plant on a given site? Swiss foresters are lazy men; they wait and watch nature working for them with the species best suited to the site. When and how should mature crops be replaced? The Swiss do not fell crops, they fell individual trees. How to adapt silviculture to industrial needs? The question is irrelevant. Industry adapts itself to the needs of the Swiss Silviculture (sic)".

Later, after seeing the vast expanse of Thetford, Mr. Fischer, over a last breakfast, admitted to me that were he in charge he would, in our circumstances, adopt in all the forests seen precisely our present policy and methods.

Other highlights were the attempts of the Adviser to the Department of Technical Co-operation, blood thinned by long tours in the tropics, to find some warmth at a picnic lunch 1,500 feet up a Welsh mountain - partially solved by sitting in a drain; and the struggles for mutual comprehension of a Dutch - Eire team set to write, in English, a joint section of the final report.

Forester ALLISON'S interpretership in French to the two Rumanians of both British forestry and the British way of life was indefatigable and continuous. These visitors found Woolworth's and Marks and Spencers of greater interest than the colleges at Cambridge. The suavity of Mr. JOHN SUMMERS and the cheerful efficiency of Miss EDEN, the H.Q. representatives, won as much admiration as the forests. Deservedly so. The ace representative of the best firm of travel agents on a V.I.P. cruise would have appeared a boorish incompetent by comparison. Without their unfailing help, the problems of international touring would have loomed so large as to overshadow the problems of "the silviculture" we were gathered to see and discuss.

**RETIREMENT OF MR. M. E. W. MACKENZIE

MR. M. E. W. MACKENZIE, Senior Executive Officer in the office of Director, Scotland, has retired after 43 years with the Commission. He started his career in 1916 as a Boy Clerk with the Office of Woods and came to the Commission in June, 1920, serving as a Clerical Officer at Exeter, London and Shrewsbury. In 1939 he was promoted Higher Clerical Officer and in 1941 was seconded to the Timber Supply Department, where he was Acting Staff Officer. He returned to the Commission in 1946 and was promoted S.E.O. with duties as Chief Clerk in the Welsh Directorate; he went to Edinburgh in 1951.

Mr. MacKenzie was appointed an M.B.E. in 1961 in recognition of his long and meritorious service.

A presentation to Mr. MacKenzie was made by Mr. J. A. DICKSON, Director, Scotland, on behalf of colleagues, the gift taking the form of a cheque which, it is understood, will go towards the purchase of a refrigerator. This is destined for use in Australia, in which country Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie hope to live near their son.

**MUNTJAC: HIGH MORTALITY RATE

LOOKING back there is no doubt that the big freeze certainly affected muntjac and that cold and starvation were responsible for many deaths. Another major cause of high mortality was the reduced mobility of these animals on the snow, for in scrabbling ineffectively for a foothold on the hard-packed or frozen surface or breaking through a light crust they were easy prey for dogs.

We understand that estimates of the proportion of local populations killed by one cause or another varied from 10 per cent to as high as 70 per cent. Almost all forests which this species inhabits, however, reported footprints or sights as evidence of some muntjac surviving, and in a few areas they were seen where their presence had previously only been suspected.

Roe and fallow were less markedly affected, though their general condition was often found to be poorer than usual for the time of the year. In the north in particular some roe were found dead from starvation. In some forests a browse line appeared on ivy-covered trees and roe in particular came readily to piles of ivy.

A recent issue of the bulletin published by the Council for Nature says there is no doubt the wren suffered among the commoner garden birds and song thrushes were also down. Blackbirds and hedge sparrows, however, seemed relatively unaffected. Stonechats and bearded tits did badly and Dartford warblers extremely so. Goldcrests and treecreepers were reduced everywhere and so were kingfishers. Merseyside reported fewer breeding herons, lapwings, coots and moorhens; among ducks, according to the Wildfowl Trust, shelduck appeared to have suffered most from the hard weather.

****IS THE NEW FOREST A ROYAL FOREST?**

STRESSING that the following observations express but a personal opinion, a

correspondent says the question of whether the New Forest is a Royal Forest is one sometimes raised by members of the public. There does not, however, seem to be any simple answer.

Many people think that a Royal Forest was the absolute property of the reigning Sovereign, in which he was free to do whatsoever he wished, goes on our correspondent. It is doubtful if this was true even in Norman times. Later on, a series of statutes limited the Monarch's powers, but the forest still remained "Royal".

Features common to all the Royal Forests were these: (1) The land and the timber, and the rights of hunting, belonged to the King and not to any subject, or group of subjects. (2) The Forest was administered by officials appointed by the King. (3) The special forest laws were administered by the justices, of various degrees, also appointed by the King.

All this is still true, in some degree, of the New Forest. For example, ownership does not rest with any subject, or group of subjects. The title to the land rests with the Minister of Agriculture, in his capacity of one of Her Majesty's Officers of State. The ownership of the timber rests with Forestry Commission, in its capacity as a body corporate, consisting of members appointed individually by the Queen. The only people allowed to hunt or shoot are the Commission's servants, or people authorised to do so by the Commission, either by licence or otherwise, in accordance with the Commission's bye-laws.

In certain circumstances a Sovereign could still claim the value of the New Forest from the Commission, though it would be paid to the Commissioners of Crown Lands. If we were to sell it, the Sovereign would have first claim to the proceeds.

Administration is in the hands of the Forestry Commissioners and its servants.

The forest laws survive in very limited degree and are administered by the Verderers Court. The Official Verderer is appointed by the Queen, and those verderers who exercise judicial powers are nominated by the Lord Chancellor, her principal legal officer.

Historically, the new Forest was certainly a Royal Forest until 1760. It was then put in the care, first of a Surveyor - General of Woods, and then of a Commissioner for Woods. These people - officials of the Crown Estate - used the prefix "His Majesty's" before their titles, and this kept alive the idea (true or false) that the forest was a Royal one. The Commission has never enjoyed, legally, the prefix "His Majesty's", but this is not an essential prerequisite to the description of a property as "Royal". The Ministry of Public Works and Buildings holds

"Royal" Parks, and "Royal" Botanic Gardens. It is true that the Minister is one of Her Majesty's Officers. But so are the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland, who bear responsibility for the Forestry Commission's policy.

In these instances it appears that the prefix "Royal" has simply been carried on from an earlier administration. Royal Parks such as St. James's Park were once the king's absolute property and only privileged subjects were allowed in; according to Boswell, keys were granted as a mark of royal favour, or could be obtained in less scrupulous ways. Kew Gardens was, in origin, a private botanic garden of the Royal family; the present administration simply carries on the work of growing various plants, begun by the Sovereigns.

In the same way, the present administration of the New Forest carries on the work of timber raising begun by Sovereigns who exercised their powers not merely before the days of the Forestry Commission but also before the days of the Office of Woods. There has been a tendency to overlook the part played by the Kings themselves in promoting silviculture there. Both James I and Charles II took active steps to safeguard and plant timber in the New Forest.

Many former Royal Forests have ceased to be regarded as "Royal". But this has always been as the result of a definite step affecting their status. Either an "Act of Disafforestation" was passed, or they were sold, or otherwise granted, to a subject.

This has never happened to the New Forest. I do not think there is anything in any Acts or Orders which lays down that henceforth this Forest is not to be regarded as Royal. It includes the Royal Manor of Lyndhurst, the Queen's House, a Queen Bower Wood, and enclosures called King's Copse and King's Garn. All of these are still in the custody and care of the Queen's Officials. The Foresters wear the Royal Crown as their sole badge of office. But what I think clinches the matter was the transfer to the Forestry Commission, in 1924, of the "estate, interest, rights, powers and liabilities of the Crown and of the Commissioners of Woods." The words "of the Crown" are significant here. Further, Section 4 of the Transfer of Woods Order authorises the Forestry Commissioners to exercise any powers in relation to the specified lands which are exercisable by "His Majesty or the Commissioners of Woods". The words "royal forest" occur in Section 4 of the Order, which limits the Commission's powers, as regards its dealings with land, on "any land forming part of a royal forest, park, or chase". Evidently it was then considered that the lands concerned would still form part of a "royal property", after transfer; otherwise the draughtsman surely would have said "land which had formed".

In the absence of any statement to the contrary, and in view of the fact that it still satisfies all the proper conditions, I conclude that the New Forest must still be regarded as a Royal Forest.

**ROUND AND ABOUT

ABOUT 1,500 gallons of creosote were lost when fire destroyed a shed at the sawmill at Culloden. Cause of the outbreak, at the time of reporting by our correspondent, was not known ONE of our tenants in Yorkshire has written to the Conservator, N.E. England, asking for permission to alter his sitting room fireplace from an old turf hearth to one which will burn coal (such is progress) EXTRACT from a fire report, North Scotland: "A neighbour set fire to a broom brush to test if conditions were suitable for muir burning". They were! Some 250 acres of unplanted land was burnt over and the fire cost the Commission close on £100 to extinguish THE S.W. England Conservancy Office staff educational outing was to Exeter Forest and included a visit to Haldon Depot. The visitors saw a demonstration of the manufacture of planting tubes for *Pinus radiata*, something of the radio communication system and, during a walk through the woods inspected various machinery and equipment. They also saw trees "in check" which had put on considerably less quarter girth than some members of the party of the same mature age! An enjoyable and instructive day ACCORDING to a local newspaper, a Commission worker at Thetford found a dandelion plant 18 inches high on which there were 106 blooms - is this a record?

**PERSONAL

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss BETTY LANDIMORE, Headquarters, on her promotion to Executive Officer with effect from a date next month; she will then become Private Secretary to the Chairman of the Commission..... To Mr. ROGER BELL, E.O. at Edinburgh, on his marriage to Miss M. GALLOWAY, M.A. and to the following, also at Edinburgh: Mr. J. G. ARMSTRONG, E.O. and Mrs. ARMSTRONG, on the birth of a son; and Mr. A. CAMPBELL, C.O. and Mrs. CAMPBELL (a daughter). In the Dean, to Assistant Forester EVERARD and Mrs. EVERARD (a son).