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THE appointment of new Forestry Commissioners, and re-appointment of others, has already been given considerable publicity. Nevertheless, for the record so far as The Slasher is concerned we would set out here the complete "line-up".

MR. LESLIE JENKINS, of course, became our new Chairman in July. Our Director General, SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PIERSE, is now Deputy Chairman and a Commissioner. Other recently and newly appointed Commissioners are Mr. M. COMPTON, head of administration and finance; Mr. J. A. DICKSON, in charge of harvesting and marketing; and Mr. A. WATT, who is responsible for forest and estate management.

The following part-time Commissioners have been re-appointed: Alderman E. GWYNFRYN DAVIES (trade unions); Mr. F. SELLERS (timber trade); Major SIR WILLIAM STRANG STEEL (private forestry); and Mr. TOM TAYLOR (commerce). The EARL of CARLISLE has been newly appointed a part-time Commissioner with special interest in private forestry and the countryside.

Other recent appointments have included that of Mr. J. R. THOM, hitherto Director, England, as Director of Research. Mr. G. FORREST has been appointed Senior Officer for Scotland and Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON Senior Officer for Wales.

**FAREWELL TO MR. GEORGE RYLE

TRIBUTES were paid to the former Deputy Director General, Mr. GEORGE B. RYLE, on the occasion of a presentation to mark his retirement after 41 years' service with the Commission. The gift, a cheque subscribed to by many wellwishers, was handed to Mr. Ryle by SIR HENRY BERESFORD-PIERSE, who traced the former's career and said: "He has been my friend and companion through somewhat difficult and exciting days, and I shall miss him very much."

Sir Henry added that Mr. Ryle had been asked to write a history of the Commission, a task which should keep him occupied for some considerable time.

Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON, Senior Officer for Wales, writes of Mr. Ryle: "The Commission will not be the same without his familiar bearded figure stalking through the forests of Britain or the corridors of Savile Row. Although he gave his talents to the latter he reserved his genius for the former and as one of the earliest of our pioneer forest officers he belongs to that band of dedicated men who, with foresight and drive, were the architects and builders of the Commission as we know it today. George Ryle's impish sense of humour is a source of many good tales when foresters gather together. Red Tape is an anathema to him and nothing delighted him more than the dislodging of some high-faluting shibboleth. He was never really happy unless embroiled in some good fight to defend or further the Commission's reputation and if occasionally it looked as though he was getting the worst of it, he could be depended upon to live up to the famous dispatch 'My right is gone, my left is broken, my centre is pierced - I am attacking!' This straightforward candour of his was sometimes a source of embarrassment in official circles but his drive, enthusiasm and practical wisdom was recognised, even there.

"Wales in particular will miss him greatly because a good deal of his career was spent there - it was always a pleasure to go out in the woods with him, for his astonishing memory was a constant source of information. Mind you, many a Forester quaked a little when he spotted G.B.'s caravan parked in his woods because it

usually meant a spate of queries about the state of the fences or the plantations in that neighbourhood. (And as for that dreadful pocket tape recorder!). But his bark, especially in the form of memoranda, was always worse than his bite. When he did have to administer a rebuke, this was done in no uncertain manner; but the recipient knew exactly where he stood and that the judgement was absolutely fair and unprejudiced.

"I found some use of the past tense unavoidable in writing this note but I am sure the Commission's staff will hope that this will not be necessary again for many years to come and that G.B. will have a happy retirement in the New Forest. Retirement is really the wrong word to use for such a vital man, and he will always be welcomed by all levels when inevitably he gets the urge to revisit the scene of his former triumphs.

"We all know that, in the art of leadership, if you do not gain the heart you gain nothing; with George Ryle's retirement a part of the hearts of all go with him."

****TWO CONSERVATORS RETIRE**

RETIREMENTS, always sad affairs, are much in the news these days. Two Conservators left us at the end of September. Just a month or so earlier an Assistant Conservator known throughout Scotland had reached the end of the chapter though, we are sure, not the book. And a wellknown Forester has also retired.

MR. J. A. B. MACDONALD

THE retirement of Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD, Conservator, South Scotland for some 14 years, marked the end of an epoch in forestry practice in Scotland and, indeed, the whole country. Mr. Macdonald entered the Commission's service in January, 1922. After early experience as a Research Forester he was promoted in 1928 to District Officer at the Institute of Forestry, Oxford, and subsequently served as Research Officer on sample plots. He was appointed Divisional Officer in 1940, and was responsible for both research work and forest management and maintenance in the West Scotland Division throughout the war years. He held the post of Silviculturist in the North from 1946 to 1951, when he completed 26 years in the Commission's Research Branch, a unique record.

Mr. Macdonald's long and distinguished service to forestry was further recognised by his appointment as an O.B.E. in 1963; he has been President of the Society of Foresters of Great Britain for the past three years.

MR W. N. GIBSON, Assistant Conservator, South Scotland, writes: "During J.A.B's early service in the Research Branch he was closely associated with the pioneering work on peatland planting, and it was largely due to his enthusiasm and determination to make trees grow in what were then considered to be impossible conditions that modern afforestation techniques were subsequently developed.

"Since he became Conservator for South Scotland he has made full use of this experience and, as a result, most of the land then classed as unplatable, and much more besides, now carries thriving young plantations. No Acquisition Officer in South Scotland ever turned down an offer of land without consulting J.A.B., and it was generally acquired and successfully planted, no matter how difficult.

"He always retained the Research Officer's approach to problems and to him nothing was incapable of solution. His staff were often left in a daze after a discussion on possible alternatives - some of these could be staggering - but the result was always the same; better techniques were developed and much knowledge acquired in the process.

"No practice, however well established, was considered sacred by J.A.B. He investigated everything with a critical eye, from fire protection and brashing costs to ploughing and planting methods. As one of his staff said recently: 'He was like a fox once he got on the scent of something.' If he wanted anything done he just passed a critical remark or wrote a critical note and blood temperatures rose and off we went to put things right.

"No one knew where J.A.B. was going to turn up next, or what innocent subject might become the object of a major investigation. Things happened fast in the South Conservancy under J.A.B. and this kept everyone on their toes. There was a lot of fun, too, and this, together with a fine team spirit and good relations at all levels, has made the Conservancy a happy one.

"J.A.B. is proud to call himself a forester and his main concern has always been for his woods. His reputation and ability as a silviculturist is one which few have equalled, and with his intimate knowledge of sample plot work it was not surprising that he should have turned his attention to thinning, soon after his arrival in the Conservancy. This simple and essential cultural treatment of plantations had been the subject of more argument and confused discussion than any other forest operation.

"Having stated his silvicultural objectives he gave clear instructions for the laying down of demonstration plots. Many good foresters were severely shaken when they first saw the results, but J.A.B. was undaunted and proceeded to develop his ideas. It soon became clear that he had made another break-through by establishing a method of thinning which is both silviculturally and economically sound. The method was duly christened "eclectic thinning" and good foresters were quick to appreciate its advantages. It became the standard method in every forest in the South Conservancy and is now widely practised in many others, and also in Northern Ireland.

"J.A.B. has the courage of his convictions and he has won the confidence of every true forester. The South Conservancy has indeed been fortunate to have as Conservator this Peter Pan, with his puckish humour and lively sense of adventure as Conservator. Such qualities are all too rare in these days of hard materialism and will be sorely missed."

Mr. Macdonald is succeeded by Mr. J. E. JAMES, hitherto Conservator, South Wales and, from 1947 to 1964, Conservator, West Scotland.

MR G. J. L. BATTERS.

MR. GEORGE BATTERS had the unusual, if not unique, experience of occupying the post of Conservator, North East England, on two separate occasions - the last spell covered some eleven years, ending with his retirement.

Mr. Batters joined the Commission in 1927 as a forest worker at Allerston and soon afterwards, following graduation at Cambridge, he became Foreman at what was then known as Rosedale Forest. He spent a year at the then Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford before being posted, in 1929, to Chopwell - then the site of the old Division 1 office. In due course he moved to Kielder Forest and then, on the outbreak of war, he was seconded to the Timber Supply Department, being promoted to Divisional Officer in 1941. In 1946 he went to the North German Timber Control and a year or so later, on his return to the Commission, became Conservator for North East England. In 1950 he went to London on the staff of the then Director of Forestry for England, and in 1956 returned to his former Conservancy. Mr. Batters was made an O.B.E. in 1964.

"George Batters", writes Mr. J. R. THOM, Director Research, "is essentially a countryman and his interests are those of the open air, whether it is forestry, shooting, fishing or sailing. I always associate him with the wide open moorlands of Kielder and the Border country, which he helped to transform into forest in the early days of the Commission's history. This is the country he knows and loves so well.

"George has always had the great gift of getting the utmost loyalty from all who have had the good fortune to work with him. His friendly and courteous manner has endeared him not only to his many Commission friends but also to numerous private woodland owners, and the high standard of forestry generally in the North East, I am sure, is in no small measure due to his friendly encouragement and willingness to meet private owners and talk over their problems as man to man.

"I took over the Lake District forests from him in the early thirties, and was immediately impressed with the personal interest that George Batters had shown in all the Commission tenants. A valuable thing, and something too often overlooked in the hustle and bustle of competing interests.

"With George must be mentioned Margaret, his charming wife, who dispensed hospitality with skill and often at the shortest of notice. A happy family life contributed greatly to George's peace of mind, and those of his friends who were privileged to know this family have very happy memories of those days, when George and Margaret epitomised all the best of forest friendship in the North East. May they have many years left to them to enrich the lives of their friends, whom they will assuredly meet again in the years ahead."

Mr. Batters is succeeded by Mr. G. GODWIN, formerly Conservator of Forests stationed at Edinburgh

MR. R. R. DONALD

Mr. R. R. Donald, Assistant Conservator, South Scotland, who has also retired, entered the Beaufort Forest School in 1921. With outstanding ability and personal qualities he gained an unusually wide experience in various posts throughout Scotland, and a distinguished record of advancement through all grades from Apprentice, Foreman, Forester, Head Forester and District Officer to Divisional Officer and Assistant Conservator.

Between the world wars Mr. Donald was employed in the North, East, South-West and South Scotland Divisions, and he had tours of duty on sample plot work with the Research Branch and as an Instructor at the Benmore Forester Training School in Argyll. He was seconded to the Timber Supply Department in the last war and afterwards held the post of District Officer at Newton Stewart for several years, a particularly onerous charge in the early post-war period of afforestation. More recently he has been stationed at Dumfries with responsibility for the western half of the Conservancy and staff duties at the Conservancy headquarters.

Mr. Donald's contribution to forestry was further recognised when he was appointed an M.B.E. in 1961.

A dinner was held in the Assembly Rooms, Dumfries, in his honour; this was attended by more than 130 friends and colleagues, including SIR ARTHUR H. GOSLING (former Director-General of the Commission) and LADY GOSLING, and Mr. J. A. DICKSON, now Commissioner, Harvesting and Marketing. After tributes had been paid to Mr. Donald, Mr. J. A. B. MACDONALD, Conservator, presented him with a cheque. MISS AVRIL CAMPBELL presented Mrs. Donald with a bouquet. In reply, Mr. Donald recalled the highlights of his (in all) "forty-eight glorious years" in forestry. He said he hoped to use the cheque to purchase a fireside table and photographic equipment.

MR. T. E. LITTLE

Forester at Llambod for the past 14 years, and with 41 years service in the Dean and North Wales, Mr. T. E. LITTLE has departed. In Lampeter, Mr. J. R. HAMPSON, now Assistant Conservator, South Wales, presented Mr. Little with a cheque, with which the latter and Mrs. Little have purchased a clock for their new home in the district.

Among those present was Mr. L. T. EDWARDS, now Head Forester at Brechfa, who recalled meeting Tom Little in the Dean on the day he started work. Other reminiscences included that concerning a senior Forest Officer who, en route to meet the local District Officer and Forester, saw a group of men sheltering from the rain under a tree in the forest. In those days "wet time" was frowned upon and the men received a sharp "dressing down". Protestations were rejected out of hand and the incident terminated with the men being sacked on the spot. Early next morning a worried Council road foreman called at the Forester's office - none of his gang had turned up for work

****PERSONAL**

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss D. MILLS, typist at H.Q., on her marriage to Mr. TONY REYNOLDS; to Miss P. SANDERS, C.O. at H.Q., on her marriage to Mr. ALLAN LANGRIDGE; and to Mr. BRIAN HOLLAND, E.O. at H.Q., on his marriage to Miss MARGARET CHRISTINE HACKETT.

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, TELL YOUR SLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE.