

The SLASHER

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M.B.E. FOR CHIEF FORESTER

THE BIRTHDAY HONOURS

this month was made an M.B.E.

OUR congratulations to Chief Forester

JAMES WATSON, of Dalbeattie Forest, South
Scotland, who in the Birthday Honours List

Mr. Watson joined the Commission as a forest worker in 1921 and attended the Beaufort school from 1924 to 1926. Two years later he was appointed a Foreman at Aberfoyle and was promoted to Forester, Grade 2 in 1931. In 1940 he became a Grade 1 Forester; Head Forester in 1948; and Chief Forester last year. He has served successively at Loch Ard, the Rennan and Dalbeattie, which he has built up since its inception to some 6,000 acres.

Congratulations, also, to Mr. GEORGE ROBERT MACKAY, Ganger, Thurso, who was awarded the B.E.M. He joined the Commission as a forest worker at Borgie, one of our most northern mainland forests, in 1920. He has worked in Research in various forests in the North Scotland Conservancy and in 1946 he gained top place on a forester training course. He was promoted to Ganger in 1957; during his long and loyal service he has contributed a great deal to the work of laying down the important experimental plots on peat land on the Lon Mor.

In the same List we were pleased to note the well deserved award to Miss SYLVIA CROWE, our Landscape Consultant, who was appointed a C.B.E.

**P.M. OPENS BOARD MILL

Workington - was officially opened this month by the Prime Minister,
Mr. HAROLD WILSON.

BRITAIN'S first integrated pulp and board
mill - Thames Board Mills' undertaking at

The Commission's representatives at the ceremony were our Chairman, Mr. LESLIE JENKINS and the Commissioner for Harvesting and Marketing, Mr. JOHN DICKSON.

The building of this mill not only marks a major event in the industrial history of west Cumberland but a radical change in the structure of the packaging board industry, since the mill is producing a high quality duplex board used for packaging a wide range of foodstuffs and other domestic products. Moreover, this is the first duplex to be produced in an integrated process in this country - that is, making the pulp and board in one continuous process without the intermediate drying of the pulp. The project represents an investment of more than £6 million.

Our stake in the venture is substantial, for the Commission and private woodland owners will, in the first few years, annually be supplying the mill with some 70,000 tons of wood. The future looks promising, because by 1970 the mill's production of board will have doubled to 40,000 tons a year and the whole project has been designed to allow for the addition of a second machine as the market expands.

**NEWS OF FORMER COMMISSIONERS

realised. For my part it is infallible (except, of course, when I have attempted to apply it to such things as modest investments at our local point-to-point meeting).

THE "rule of three" (writes the Editor) probably applies more often than is generally

It operated again the other day. First one former Forestry Commissioner 'phoned me, then another, and then within about three days I encountered the third, in Piccadilly. In sequence, the first call was from

Mr. STANLEY LONGHURST, C.B.E., J.P., who tells me he has just been made an Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Epsom, and to whom, therefore, we offer our warmest congratulations. Next was from Mr. BRYAN LATHAM, C.B.E., M.M., who also held office as a Commissioner for a long while. His many interests, he tells me, now include chairmanship of the Timber Training Committee of the new Training Board for the Furniture and Timber industry.

Finally, in person, I ran into Mr. LLOYD OWEN, C.B.E., J.P., down to London from Machynlleth on business and obviously still maintaining a deep interest in the progress of forestry in general and in Wales in particular.

****BECOMES G.M. OF S.W.O.A.**

IT was pleasing to read something of the success story of a former colleague, Mr.

D. B. CRAWFORD, who has been appointed general manager of Scottish Woodland Owners' Association. Dennis Crawford started as a forest worker in Allerton Forest, Yorkshire, in 1943, entered the Benmore school in 1944 and went to the East Scotland Conservancy in about 1949 after a spell as a Research Branch Forester. His last charge was at Pitmedden Forest, in Fife, and he left there to join the Conservancy office staff in 1953, on private woodland duties following the great wind-blow in January of that year. He left the Commission in December of the same year to join S.W.O.A. in South West Scotland. Former associates send their best wishes to him.

****FORESTS AND FUNGI**

THESE are days when, rightly, the forest must be made or encouraged to reach

maximum production - primarily, of course, of timber but also of beauty and facilities for public recreation and of a diversity of fauna and flora.

We were interested, therefore, to learn that even the artificial cultivation in our forests of edible fungi, other than the common mushroom, had at least been considered, to the extent that scientists in Austria, France and Poland had been asked for their views. It was Dr. S. BATKO, Mycologist at Alice Holt Lodge, who made the enquiries. As a result, he writes: "The fungi used as esculents, that is fit for food, often produce so-called mycorrhiza. They are living in association with trees. Boletus edulis and its varieties called Cepe in France is the best for the table and grows under Scots pine, oak and birch; Cantharellus cibarius (imagine asking for a helping of this in a cafe!) under Scots pine and Norway spruce; Boletus scaber under birch. B. luteus grows under Scots pine, B. rufus under aspen and birch, Lactarius deliciosus under Scots pine and Norway spruce. All these fungi are edible and used on the Continent for soups, sauces, pickling, stewing, and so on. They also grow in British forests, though in smaller quantities. But if edible fungi are found in our forests and meadows they are of natural origin, not sown by human hand.

"Our knowledge of the biology of these fungi," goes on Dr. Batko, "is very unsatisfactory. We cannot at present sow them by dispersing the spores and we cannot produce their fully grown fructifications in the cultures. We have a lot to do to understand their ecology. We can, however, say that to increase the number of edible fungi in this country it would be useful to have a bigger forest area and more British native tree species as, I think, they more easily produce esculents than the exotics. The forest humus would have to be kept in good condition and drought avoided, if this is feasible with the British climate!

"It is true that Continental people know much more than the British about the edible and poisonous fungi. The popularity of common mushroom (Psalliota) in this country is probably due to the fact that we can produce it artificially. It is not a mycorrhiza fungus or a typical forest species. We think it delicious but its taste is inferior to Boleti, Lactarii and Truffles. Once a Forester travelling with me to Scotland was alarmed when he saw me collecting Lactarius deliciosus for supper - he was convinced such a meal would cause death or discomfort. When living in Poland I ate, every autumn, pork chops and hash and Honey fungus cut in slices and stewed in cream. The best soup is made of Boletus edulis (Cepe comestible). Dry cups of this fungus are obtainable in all the better grocers' shops on the Continent. They are never cheap."

(Editor's note: Don't collect and eat any fungi unless you are really certain you know the non-poisonous fungi from the poisonous).

****A NEW FILM ON FORESTRY**

WATCH out for the advent to your local Rank cinema of a new film, "The Changing Forest".

This is a superb addition to the National Benzole "National Heritage" series for, as the title suggests, it shows the forest in all its changing moods and does this dramatically and in some of the best colour photography you will have seen for many for many a long day. What is also very important from our point of view is that the film not only shows a diversity of forest operations, not least modern methods of growing and timber harvesting, but does justice to our other interests - the achievement of multi-purpose land use, with the forest providing a diversity of attractions for the general public and the naturalist.

"The Changing Forest" was made with the full co-operation of the Commission and will certainly do much towards furthering our cause by informing various sections of the community of our aims and responsibilities. Unfortunately, at the time of writing we are unable to say when this film will be generally released - it has already been shown in one West End theatre and may return to another before it goes further afield. Furthermore, until the "run" in public cinemas has been completed, which may not be for another nine months, there are restrictions on its showing elsewhere. But we shall watch the situation, with a view to making the film available, wherever possible, to those of our officers who give lectures and talks.

Another film of which we shall soon have copies is "Greenwood Revived", which was made in Grizedale Forest, in the Lake District, by the Council for Nature. This is a pleasant little effort which shows how the once naturally wooded fells have been re-afforested and describes some of the wild life which inhabits the woods, and how the Commission carry out humane control of deer.

Yet another film, it is hoped, will soon be available. This has been produced by the G.P.O. and although designed as an instructional film, it has a great deal of general public interest. It shows, in effect, the growth of a tree from seedling to telegraph pole and, not surprisingly, introduces for the benefit of growers the subject of specification, with the moral "If you grow the right tree, we'll buy it". It is quite a revelation to see the processes through which the pole goes before it finally graces the public highway, complete with cross members, insulators and wires.

***DRAMA GROUP ON TOUR**

THE Inforesta (H.Q.) Drama Group recently undertook their annual tour of forest villages and other centres. On this occasion performances of the comedy "Haul for the Shore" were given at Kielder, Betws-y-Coed, Llandulas, Llaneglwys and Parkend. Attendances were good throughout; for example, the smallest forest village, Llaneglwys, with only 13 houses, provided an audience of nearly 100.

The Group stalwarts who undertook this marathon of some 1,200 miles were: JANET MEYER, VALERIE NEWELL, EDITH NOLAN, ALAN CHAPMAN, GEOFF SEAL, KEN WINTER, KEN BALDWIN, ALAN MEYER, ALAN EASTTY, OWEN NEWCOMBE and DAVE PERKINS.

We are asked to state that any village hall committee which feels that their village has been overlooked where these annual tours are concerned should get in touch with the Inforesta Secretary, ALAN CHAPMAN, at Savile Row, who will be pleased to discuss.

****THE SO-RARE PINE**

SOMEONE or other at Alice Holt may, we hope, tell us more in a future issue about a rare pine which has been featured in the Press of late. This, apparently, is a lone "sentinel" which stands in the grounds of a house at Leominster. Some 75 ft. tall, is reported as having been seen by "a Forestry Commission expert" who has described it as being "of the utmost value to preserve". According to one local paper, he said: "It is one of the only two known probable original Coulter's pines in Europe, introduced in 1832. It is one of the biggest two specimens known".

If a photograph of one of the cones of this pine is any criterion then the tree must indeed be rare, since the cone seems in size and appearance to resemble a beehive.

All of which leaves us wondering as to the origin not only of the tree but of Mr. Coulter. And if there are two such pines in Britain, where is the second? And which countries have the remainder of the world population?

****WOULD IT BE WOOD?**

GOING into my local the other day, writes a reader, I admired the wonderful oak beams that had appeared during its latest restoration.

"Good to see Sussex oak in a Sussex inn", I remarked to the landlord. "Yes", he replied, "All genuine fibre-glass. Half the cost, half the weight, and lasts twice as long as real timber. If it fooled a forester it should satisfy all my other customers!"

Next evening I tried the Knotty Pine Milk Bar, recently re-done in Wild West ranch style. Yes, the walls were knotty enough to please any critic of home-grown timber!

"Have you been buying Forestry Commission thinnings?" I asked the proprietor. "Nothing so cheap!" he answered. "This is genuine knotty pine veneer - cut from the roughest trees in western Canada". I looked again, and saw that the knots were strangely regular. Yes, it was veneer, stuck down to a base of ordinary deal with only the average quota of knots.

Back home, after an interval on Commission business, I was surprised to find my kitchen transformed into a wooden shack. "Knew you'd like it", said my wife. "The man in the wallpaper shop said this pattern is an exact copy of a real wood veneer."

So everybody is imitating wood - if you think it's veneer, it's wallpaper. If you think it's solid timber, it's either veneer or fibre-glass. But can you beat this one?

A well known firm of plastics makers have a display of their produce in their West End show-room labelled: "Materials like this don't grow on trees!"

But don't they? The surface of their boards is plastic, admittedly, but it would be quite useless without the backing of plasticised laminated paper-board - all made from wood pulp!

****ROCK 'N ROLL FOR PLANTS**

HERE is something that might commend itself to the forester who is constantly striving to make his trees grow more quickly. Maybe this will involve the widespread issue of transistor radio sets, to be placed in strategic parts of all our forests.

"La Yaaran", the journal of the Israel Forestry Association, reports the following, crediting its first appearance to another journal with forestry interests. "Growth of pea, geranium and tomato under the influence of musical sounds was tested in greenhouse experiments. The plants were irradiated (?) with classical, rock 'n roll, and religious music for 30 minutes per day for six months. The music-treated plants were taller than the controls. The growth of the plants was directly correlated with the speed of the music. English peas and geraniums were stimulated more by the rock 'n roll music, by classical and religious music, whereas tomato plants responded better to the classical music followed by rock 'n roll and religious music."

****AN APPEAL**

IT is holiday time and probably because of this contributions to The Slasher have fallen of late. We therefore appeal to all our readers to make an effort to provide more news, which must and does abound in Commission ranks and in the forest. Someone, somewhere, may have done something outstanding in, say, sport or public life; or your forest may have some exceptional feature or claim to fame. Do please help if you possibly can. Looking, the other day, at the first issue of The Slasher, we noted that our intention was always to let the left hand know what the right is doing. We do our best to this end but fully to achieve it we must have the help of all our readers. Don't forget, there is a Slasher correspondent in almost every main office.