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MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE NEW FOREST

On Monday, 23rd November, the Rt.Hon. James Prior, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, paid his first visit to one of our forests since his appointment.

The Minister visited several places in the New Forest, some of these being areas in which our management had provoked local criticism, where he met local people who were waiting to see him. Despite the pouring rain, Mr. Prior made several unscheduled stops and although time was limited saw a reasonable amount of the Forest and our activities therein.

After lunch the Minister attended a meeting of representatives of organisations with an interest in the New Forest, which was arranged by Mr McNair-Wilson, the MP for the New Forest. Finally, Mr. Prior held a Press Conference and gave television interviews.

To both the local representatives and the Press Mr. Prior said that he had been extremely impressed by the care and knowledge which Mr Dallas Mithen, the Deputy Surveyor, had put into the job, "it may well be that we are asking for an impossible job to be carried out and I shall take a fresh look at the instructions given to the Commission for the management of this Forest". Mr. Mithen, the Minister went on to say, has been vilified in public by certain sections and he hoped that this would stop, and that any criticism should be addressed to he himself as it was Government who instructed the Deputy Surveyor.

Mr. Prior said that he would make this decision in the Spring when he would return to the New Forest to announce it in public. In the meantime, he urged all the organisations which had been invited to be represented on the New Forest Consultative Panel to settle their differences and work together to make this a success. He suggested that a small executive sub-committee should be formed to do most of the work.

Finally, the Minister said that the two months' old ban on the felling of all hardwoods by the Commission in the New Forest was to continue until he had come to his decision.

It was most gratifying to find the Minister so appreciative of the Commission's work and so definite in his support both of the Commission and of the Deputy Surveyor.

NEW FOREST STUDY

The New Forest Study was published on 25th November, under the title of "Conservation in the New Forest". This Report was produced under the auspices of a steering committee drawn from representatives of Hampshire County Council, the Commission, the New Forest Verderers, and the New Forest, Ringwood, and Fordingbridge Rural and District Councils.

The Commission's representative on the working party, who wrote the Report, was Mr. R.P. Illingworth, now our Lands Officer in North Wales Conservancy. Mr. George Ryle represented the Verderers.

The Report became necessary due to the ever-increasing pressure on the New Forest from the car-owning public for the purposes of recreation and/or camping. The build-up of numbers visiting the Forest has increased enormously in the past decade and a well thought out plan is now essential. The steering committee hope that the public will study the plan and make comments on it to them during the winter months, so that the present document may be re-written and presented to Ministers early next year and, it is hoped, put into effect shortly thereafter. It must be emphasized that at the moment the plan has not been formally presented to any central or local Government body or organisation.

The main recommendations of the Report include:-

The creation of 28 car-free zones from which recreational vehicle access will be totally excluded;

The extension and rationalisation of the existing camping facilities, including the establishment of fully equipped sites, "Caravan Club" type sites and informal camping areas - on which visitors can be as near to or as far from the facilities (or each other) as they choose;

The progressive channeling of the present indiscriminate vehicle access by day visitors into 140 well-screened areas designed to withstand wear and tear;

The development of scenic drives where appropriate, and the establishment of forest trails for walkers and riders;

Positive moves to curb the dropping of litter and the lighting of fires
and

The provision of up-to-date toilet facilities for campers and visitors.

Although a long-term proposition, the recommendation bound to attract most comment and controversy is that whenever practicable recreation in the New Forest should be charged for.

If implemented, the recommendations will of course result in considerable interference with vehicle access, but little or none with enjoyment of the Forest on foot.

B.B.C. "24 HOURS" PROGRAMME
THURSDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 1970

The manner of the preparation of this programme, which was most unfairly and destructively critical of our planting policy, may be of interest.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, 10th November, the Principal Information Officer was visited by Mr. Max Hastings, a journalist (son of the well-known journalist and naturalist, Mr. Macdonald Hastings), who announced that the B.B.C. wished to do a programme about our activities. He was given an hour's briefing, very similar to that given to the Press at the time of the publication of our last Annual Report, and which had led to good and appreciative newspaper comment. At this time, Mr. Hastings said that they happened to have a film team in Wales and so would do their filming there. In actual fact, a film crew was specially sent to North Wales as the idea of the programme was born from the complaints of Mrs. Gwatkin, who is the prime mover of the Forestry Action Group for Wales, whose activities are, in fact, anti-forestry.

The P.I.O. went to Aberystwyth on the morning of Wednesday, 11th November, and on arrival there found that Mr. J.H. James - Conservator, North Wales - had spent the entire day with the film director, looking for film locations and briefing him. Filming and interviews with the Conservator took place in Wales during the following three days, during which time considerable briefing was given to both the commentator and the director by both the Conservator and the P.I.O. A project to do some filming at Cannock Chase had to be abandoned due to the weather.

An interview with the Director General was filmed at Savile Row on Monday afternoon, the 16th November. The interviews with both Mr. James and Mr. Dickson each occupied about 10 minutes of film time. In the event, very small sections - lasting not more than half a minute in each case - were used.

Those of our readers who saw the final programme on Thursday, 19th November, will know that this consisted of 10 minutes of anything but constructive criticism of our activities and planting policy. It should not be thought, however, that the efforts of the Conservator and his Staff in North Wales, and the Information Branch, were wasted, for there is no doubt that the programme would have been considerably more destructive without the guidance and constant emphasis of facts which were given to the B.B.C. team with some effect, even though it did not manage to alter the intention which was certainly in the team's mind from the outset.

Our Chairman has written to Lord Hill, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the B.B.C., protesting about the content of this programme and asking for time on some current affairs programme to explain objectively our work both in timber production and the fields of recreation, etc. The P.I.O. has written in similar vein to the Head of Current Affairs Group, Television.

COUNTRYSIDE 1970 AWARDS

We are proud to announce two further awards by the Commission in the Duke of Edinburgh "The Countryside In 1970" Scheme, which were not included in the last edition of "Slasher". This brings the Commission's total to 6 out of the 72 awarded for the whole of Britain.

The two other awards went to North-east England and to North-west England Conservancies.

North-east England's success came from the excellent Forest trail established at Newton Dale Forest in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and our colleagues of the North-west gained their award for the establishment of a Wildlife Centre in Grizedale Forest, Lancashire.

Incidentally, the Grizedale Wildlife Centre has been a pioneer scheme in this field, and has already received a great deal of well-deserved publicity in both Press and broadcasting. Last year it was visited by 40,000 people.

Our hearty congratulations again to the "winners" - E(E) two awards, SW(E) two awards, NW(E) and NE(E).

FOREST NURSERY IN CANADA

Conservator E(S), Mr. E.G. Richards, has kindly forwarded a report by one of Britain's best-known nursery foresters - Mr. Alexander Rose - on his recent visit to the G. Howard Ferguson Forest Station in Eastern Ontario, while on a Canadian holiday.

Mr. Rose, who lives near Perth, will be a friend of many of the Commission, and all foresters will be interested to read about how they do things on the other side of the Atlantic. Here is the report:

The G. Howard Ferguson Station is one of seven large forest tree nurseries operated by The Ontario Department of Lands and Forests. It was established in 1945 as part of the province's accelerated reforestation programme. The nursery is managed by Mr. H.H. De-Vries (Superintendent) who kindly escorted me round and assisted me in every possible way with my notes.

The nursery is situated on the northern edge of the town of Kemptville in Grenville County, conveniently adjacent to Kemptville Creek (south branch of the Rideau River). This assures an adequate water supply for irrigation and fire protection.

The nursery extends to 250 acres approximately, and the forest unit also includes 660 acres of pure and mixed hardwoods, plus 490 acres of conifer stands - a total of 1,400 acres in all.

SOIL TYPE

Soil is stone-free, outwash medium sand underlain with limestone with scattered deposits of dump till, and flat to slightly rolling. Natural drainage is poor to fair, hence the extensive use of tile drainage throughout the nursery.

The annual out-turn target is fifteen million usable plants. Fourteen million are grown as seedlings and only one million as transplant stock. To meet the annual requirements of usable plants, 45 million seedlings and transplants are in various stages of production. The principal species raised are: Red pine: White spruce: White pine: Jack pine: Scots pine: White cedar. The main hardwood species are Carolina poplar and Silver maple.

Section Areas consist of three acres surrounded by protective windbreaks of White spruce, Scots pine and White cedar. Nine sections, approximately 26 acres, are sown annually to meet present targets. Approximately one million seedlings are lined-out annually, requiring 9 acres.

SOIL TREATMENTS

Prior to sowing and lining-out operations, soil treatments are:-

- (1) Rotation green crop, oats, rye and fallow for one growing season
- (2) Application of acid peat if required
- (3) Cultivation
- (4) Application of chemical fertilizers (Phosphorus and Potassium)

USABLE AGE CLASSES are, transplants - White cedar 2 + 2, White spruce and Norway Spruce 1 + 2. Mostly all other species are raised in situ from 1 + 0 to 3 + 0 (5% transplants, 95% seedlings).

SOWING OPERATIONS

Most species are sown in the back-end (Autumn), except for White cedar, Silver maple, Carolina poplar, Red maple and Willow, which are sown in May. Seeds are sown broadcast with the Orono mechanical seeder. White cedar and hardwood seeds are sown by hand. Seeds are covered by coarse sand and the whole seedbed covered with a protective layer of mulch (Rye straw) throughout the winter and early spring. After seedlings begin to germinate and frost hazard is past, the straw mulch is removed about mid-May.

For 6 months in winter, the nursery remains static, with hard frost and temperatures registering well below zero and a covering of 6 feet of snow.

SEEDBED PROTECTION

As the young seedlings push their way up through the sand covering, lath shade frames 10' x 4' are placed in sections over the seedbeds to shield them from the strong rays of the sun (80° - 90°). Throughout the growing season, adequate soil moisture content must be maintained. A portable irrigation system keeps moisture at the desired level. Hand weeding and volatile oil chemical weed killer are needed in the first year; Simazine 50W is used after one year, also Amino-Triazole on 1+0 spruce up to 6 weeks at 1½ lbs per acre (one application).

SOWING DENSITY

SPECIES	TO MAKE	VIABLE SEEDS PER SQ FT
White pine	3 + 0s Seedlings	70
Red pine	" "	50
White spruce	" "	80
Red spruce	" "	100
Black spruce	" "	100
Scots pine	2 + 0 "	70
Jack pine	" "	60
White ash	" "	150
Tamarack	" "	200
Black locust	1 + 0 "	80
White spruce	" Transplant Material	200

Root pruning and/or wrenching is carried out at least once a year in early May. The tool used is similar to our plant lifter.

LINING OUT

Red and White pine and White cedar are lined out in spring; in summer, White spruce.

The machine used is similar to the "Alfa Accord". It seats 6 seedling fillers plus one other, and a tractor driver. Two such machines are used and are capable of lining-out on average 80,000 each per day. Seedlings are set 2½" apart along 6 lines 9" apart per bed.

For protection, a portable aluminium irrigation system with rotary sprinkler is used, especially during July lining-out. Weeding is carried out by Weed Spray (Volatile oil), and hand hoeing. Simazine 50W.

In lifting operations, the Seedling Harvester (potato type) is used for loosening the root system of the seedlings. The plants are lifted by hand and transported in bulk to the grading shed, where the conveyor belt system of grading is used. The roots are moistened if necessary and packed in sphagnum moss depending on order and distance of travel. The trees are packed in cardboard boxes, wooden crates or burlap bales.

COLD STORAGE

The G. Howard Ferguson Forest Nursery is in the process of building a large new "Chill" capable of storing over 2 million plants. Like our own experiments they have had problems with this new technique of bulk storage. The new trend is to lift the plant, pack in polythene, seal the bag, set the regulator at 26°F. This temperature is maintained throughout. Before the plants are required for despatch the temperature is raised to 34° - 36°F.

Visitors to the nursery and woodlands are made very welcome. On leaving, each visitor is handed a small book of matches! On the front "The Department of Lands and Forests"; on the back there are different slogans, such as "Let's Work Together to Prevent Forest Fires".

During my stay in Canada my HQ was in Smiths Falls in the county of Lanark which included the river Clyde. Nine miles away, Perth (on Tay). In close proximity I noted Scottish place-names such as Elgin, Turriff, Renfrew, Kilmarnock, Berwick, and many others of that ilk.

Odd names - "Foresters Falls, Morewood".

FOREST RECIPE BOOK

Sales of this unique publication, compiled by Mrs Jean Stewart, with the help of Commission wives throughout Britain, have now reached 3,000 copies, and we regret to announce that it will be out of stock for a few months, pending reprinting.

It will then reappear under the fresh title (approved by its original editor), of FOREST FARE, and at the new price of 15s (75 NP), plus 2s 6d (12½ NP) postage: still marvellous value, since it includes 750 original recipes, all tried, tested and guaranteed by just as many hungry foresters.

Copies will be stocked by Publications Branch at Savile Row, and we will let you know as soon as they are again available.

In this connection, Mrs Stewart would like any reader who still holds stocks of the first printing, or any cash received from local sales, to write to her direct at: Laverockbrae, Balmore, Torrance, Glasgow.

By the way, has everyone who bought the first edition tried out the recipe on page 197, for "HUSBANDS (to make them tender)"? We need not comment further until we get your reports.

"REAL" SIMULATED WOOD

According to the Southern Lumberman, the General Electric Company in the United States have announced a "revolutionary new process for creating simulated wood cabinetry with the look, sound and feel of furniture hardwood", which is now being made available for licensing to outside firms. It is claimed that the "cabinetry"-injection moulded polystyrene backed by pressure-foamed polyurethane resins - can capture the surface texture and appearance of virtually any material.

The American journal comments that this announcement should influence some of those (in the United States) who make their living by producing or selling hardwood to spend money on supporting efforts to preserve this and other traditional markets for lumber. It points out that this is only one more manifestation of the determination of the plastics industries to make a drive for a stronger foothold in the promotion of plastics as a substitute for wood.

In this country there appear to be two schools of thought about plastics - one which regards them as competitors to be opposed at all points, and another which regards them as potential co-operators. In fact, they are both, and the timber trade must surely be prepared to deal with plastics in both roles. Where plastics materials can be utilised to enhance the performance of a wood product, they should be welcomed. Where they appear as a competitor, the challenge must be accepted.

Perhaps, in the end, the most significant point about the G.E.C. announcement is that they have chosen, with their new "wonder" material, to simulate real wood. Even in this age of synthetics, it should be possible to promote "real" unsimulated wood as being preferable to imitations, even with its natural defects, and even at a higher price!

(T.T.J. 11/70)

CHANGE OF CONTROL

Changes announced recently by the Government mean that as from 1st January 1971 the functions of the Forest Products Research Laboratory and the administration of TRADA'S grant, will be transferred to the Ministry of Environment, of which Mr. Peter Walker is the Minister. Previously, TRADA and FPRL came under Mintech which now - under the Conservative Government - has become the Department of Trade and Industry, under Mr. John Davies.

WARFARIN-RESISTANT RATS

It has been known for several years that some rats on farms in the Border counties of Montgomeryshire and Shropshire had developed resistance to warfarin, the most commonly used rat poison. There have been similar occurrences of warfarin resistance in rats in other parts of the United Kingdom as well as in some other countries, and it is also widespread among mice.

There have been some reports in the Press referring to "Super-rats". It cannot be too strongly emphasized that there are no such animals. They are simply rats which have developed a resistance to warfarin. They are no bigger than other rats and they look the same. In fact, in some ways they are inferior because they less readily withstand the wear and tear of life and they breed less well.

Their resistance to warfarin does not mean that there is no way of controlling these rats and mice. It has to be remembered that we have had warfarin for less than 20 years and although it has some advantages compared with older, single-dose (or acute) poisons like zinc phosphide, the latter are fully effective. The only problem is that farmers and other occupiers on whose premises warfarin-resistant rats or mice have appeared will have to relearn the techniques used successfully by their fathers.

The Ministry of Agriculture does not expect the numbers of rats to increase as a result of warfarin resistance. Other poisons are effective, although a little more troublesome to use. Indeed, rats are less abundant in the "resistant" area than they are in other parts of the country, where they can still be killed by warfarin.

ANOTHER NEW BAT FOR BRITAIN

The loft of the Nature Conservancy's Furzebrook Research Station in Dorset has again proved to be a good hunting ground for new British bats. Five years ago, R.E. Stebbings discovered the first colony of long-eared bats (*plecotus austriacus*).

In a recent article in the Journal of Zoology he describes how, towards the end

of a search in the roof of the Research Station, he shone his torch "into a small cavity in the decorated end ridge tile and saw the dorsal fur of a small bat. It was immediately obvious that this was a new bat to Britain". It proved to be a Pipistrelle species, Pipistrellus nathusii. This resembles the common British bat but is markedly larger and has conspicuously longer and thinner teeth. It is a South East European species which is uncommon or rare in Western Europe.

ADVICE WORTH A FORTUNE -
MAYBE!

Question: Where can I buy a metal detector to find buried treasure?

Answer: A metal-detecting tool such as many are now buying is on the market, called "The Prospector", and it costs about twelve guineas. One of the makers is M.L. Beach, 41 Church Street, Twickenham, Middlesex, and if you live in the region he may even be willing to demonstrate the tool to prospective buyers.

These gadgets are of course similar to Army mine-detectors, and sophisticated models, which do more than simply locate metals, cost proportionally more to buy.

Some measure of the success of these tools may be indicated by the fact that archaeologists are now worried that people who may 'strike lucky' will not hand in finds of possible national value (as everyone is obliged to), or else unprofessionally disturb sites of historical interest.

AND THE LAST WORD ... ON EXERCISE

It will come as no surprise to sensible layabouts that specialist doubt is being cast upon the efficacy of the latest calisthenic fad, that little wheel which shapely advertising ladies roll to and fro in the crouch position. Osteopathic opinion has been publicly registered that not only might the action prove damaging to the operator by throwing unnatural strain upon the shoulders, but also that housewives who insist on kneeling down to go through this particular motion, would be as well-off physically and more domestically productive if they had a scrubbing brush in hand instead of the fruitless roller.

Isometrics, but recently hailed as the key to the good life, have also now been condemned for dangerously rocketing the blood pressure. Golf has been medically judged as both useless for burning off calories and psychosomatically hazardous in raising tension and frustration. Addiction to jogging, once regarded as the savour of middle-aged executives, is now frowned upon as liable to produce arthritic knees and painful shin splints. That famous Royal Canadian Air Force exercise book, bidding to outsell the Bible and once as trusted by the physically insecure, has been fixed by American orthopaedic eyes and accused of being over-generous in provision of slipped discs, lumbago and hell on the sacro-iliac. At the recent Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh it was estimated that over half the physical culture kings and queens had to have medical treatment for multifarious ailments, in addition to dependence on their normal health-crutches of up to 30 vitamin tablets a day.

Premeditated exercise, perhaps a self-virtuous hangover from muscular Christianity, has been defined as merely a poor substitute for a right diet. And athletics, it is observed, don't make anybody either long-lived or particularly useful. Which proposition could be borne out by the postcard recently noted in a Brighton shop window which announced "For sale, rowing machine, Indian clubs, trampoline and high-speed body vibrator. Owner no further use". So, before similar deterioration sets in among other zealots of the bar-bell and running-track, they might gainfully spare a moment from their masochism to dwell on the thought that there is really no call for twentieth century scientific man to develop greater muscular strength than is required

to push a button or raise a glass, nor to move on his own two feet at any greater speed than is needed to overtake vegetables. Simply walking at the pace for which DNA intended him is the one gymnastic he naturally requires. Unless, of course, he's a disciple of Oscar Wilde who considered even this too brutish, and held that the only possible exercise for civilised primates is to talk and not to walk.

HERE'S AN IDEA

A new unobtrusive hard surface for roads, caravan pitches and car parks sounds very interesting. It consists of grids made of concrete laid on a bed of sand, with the slots filled with earth and seeded so that the surface is almost completely grass-covered.

Made by Mono Concrete (Northern) Ltd., of Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts, it should do a lot to preserve the rural appearance of caravan and camping sites in future - and to avoid trailers and cars bogging down in wet weather.

USING WORKSHOPS FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Recreation projects are often held back for lack of manpower to implement them yet there exists an under-employed labour force, hungry for meaningful work. Up and down the country are sheltered workshops, run by local authorities and voluntary organisations, for spastics, for the mentally and physically handicapped, the blind, and others who cannot find a place in the labour market. For these people, work is therapy. And there are HM prisons. The Home Office is receptive to requests for work to be done, and can offer a considerable range of skills and talents.

The services available are not limited to manual work. When British Waterways Board were faced with the task of collating and packing several thousand questionnaires for their annual counts of anglers and pleasure craft, they went to Westminster Council's Psychiatric Day Centre for help. The rather complicated job was done quickly, efficiently, and cheaply.

It is seldom easy to get a one-off or short-run woodworking job done but a sheltered workshop may be glad to handle it. For example, Bromley and District Consumers' Group obtain the waymarks for the public footpaths they look after from the Borough Council's Centre for the Mentally Handicapped. The staff of these centres are adept at breaking a job down, so that even the severely handicapped can contribute to the production process.

If there is a job to be done, it is worth asking if the handicapped can do it. Such facilities are seldom advertised but the Town Hall should be able to provide information about their own and voluntary facilities. Work by the handicapped must not be expected to be done quickly; an urgent job is probably best done commercially. But if there is no hurry, the work is likely to be both reasonably priced and well done, and the morale of people for whom meaningful jobs are scarce will have been boosted. And even better is to talk with the operators themselves; visitors from the 'outside world' may be infrequent.

(Reproduced from "RECREATION NEWS" produced by the Countryside Commission)

SOFTWOOD SUPPLIES

A one-day symposium on the future of softwood supplies in the United Kingdom, covering imports from all sources and home-grown supplies, will be held by the Commonwealth Forestry Association on Tuesday, 9th February, 1971.

(T.T.J. 14/11/70)

GOOD COUNTRY HOME REQUIRED

The Managing Director of an internationally-known electrical organisation is taking up an overseas post in a few months' time. He wishes to give his two dogs a suitable country home (no charge for the animals). The breeds are:- Labrador (dog); Beagle (bitch). Both are $4\frac{1}{2}$ years old. They have been brought up together and while, ideally, it would no doubt be preferable for them to remain together, there is no stipulation to this effect.

If anyone is interested in acquiring the animals, please contact Mr G G Seal, Information Branch at the Savile Row office.

THE COMMISSION'S HIGHEST BILLING?

Foresters, particularly those who have assessed exposure by means of cotton "tatter flags", may be intrigued to hear that the joint British and Nepalese military team which climbed Annapurna this year carried these Forestry Commission flags to new heights.

Twenty flags plus wire mounts and wooden stakes formed the load of more than one Sherpa and were erected on the ascent up to the snowline with the intention of collecting them one month later on the way down. The information obtained was to provide some justification for a financial contribution to the expedition by the National Geographical Society.

From a scientific viewpoint it was unfortunate that the local inhabitants also appreciated the flags, wires and posts, and pilfered them all. But on a less scientific level all concerned, except the National Geographical Society, obtained what they wanted, viz., the expedition received financial help, the locals obtained useful materials, and the Forestry Commission received a superb colour print of a tatter flag flanked by a Ghurka climber in an exotic environment.

Mrs. Mary Marshall of Kielder village, who makes up the flags, was featured in a local Northumberland newspaper and is doubtless encouraged by the world-wide appreciation of her product.

FORTHCOMING BROADCASTS

The B.B.C. have made a short 20-minute film under the title "WOOD", which is to be shown to schools in the "Science All Around" series. Some of the filming took place in our SE(E) Conservancy, which also supplied cross-sections of timber and samples of hard and soft woods.

Transmission times on BBC 1 are as follows:-

December 30th at 1430: February 10th at 0938: February 15th at 1405 and
February 22nd at 1405

There will be an item on "Christmas Trees" in the B.B.C.'s Network 4 (Radio) series "YOU & YOURS" on December 21st at 1200.

NEWS FROM CONSERVANCIES

North-East England

RETIREMENT OF MR.N.F.CLARKE

MR. N.F. CLARKE joined the Commission at Dalby in November 1950 as a mobile Mechanic, having spent all of his previous working life with the Dunlop Rubber Co., and during the war, with the British Oxygen Co. In January 1957 he was promoted to Foreman Mechanic and took charge of the Dalby Workshops until his retirement on November 13th.

On the evening of November 11th, a dinner was held in his honour at which more than 30 of his colleagues were present, including foresters, conservancy office staff and mechanical engineering staff. A presentation of cash was made to him by Mr. I.White following an after-dinner speech, when reference was made to his 20 years of eventful service to the Commission and some amusing stories told of the early days and the difficulties that faced mechanics.

Mr. Clarke - who has many hobbies including fishing, football, short-wave radio and hi-fi - said he would use the money to buy radio equipment, and went on to say that as he intended to continue to live at Thornton Dale he would always welcome old colleagues who were passing for a cup of tea and a natter.

South-West England

RIFLE SHOOTING COMPETITION

THE RANGERS of the South - West England Conservancy, recently took part in a rifle shooting competition organised by Head Ranger Richard Prior and consisting of three targets, at distances of approximately 30, 80 and 125 yards. These were placed at different angles from a high seat on the opposite hillside, and the competition involved estimating the range of each target and firing one shot at each.

Great interest was shown in the results when Jock Coburn of Poorstock, and Aubrey Neale of the Dean, drew for first place. However, a shoot-off was held and Jock Coburn came out smiling. Jim King generously provided a cup for the occasion, which will be held by Jock for one year.

It was interesting to note that the long-range target was placed beyond some birch trees, and higher up the slope. This caused a great deal of discussion amongst the competitors as to the correct range, which in general was overestimated.

THE YOUNG GENERATION - A MEMORY OF SUMMER

THE DAY dawned, as only a good summer morning in Devon can. Eggesford Forest glistened in the dew as the sun found its way through the trees. The Forest seemed to be at its very best, as if knowing that something was about to happen.

There had been so much excitement of late - the special Jubilee planting of an avenue of trees by Lord Clinton and the Chairman of the Commission, helped by two very small children from a local school - the planting of more trees by the whole of the Forest staff with some retired staff and their families - so what could be the excitement today?

We thought that having nearly fifty primary schoolchildren with some of their mothers was nothing to be excited about - how mistaken could we be! They arrived as only small children can - with bounding joy and with that 'great to be alive' feeling which we grown-ups tend to leave behind with childhood; a horde of little ones, all raring to go, to be shown everything - at once, and in all directions.

The head forester, his wife, the trainee forester, together with teachers and mothers soon formed this little band into something they could handle, and it wasn't long before 'oohs', 'aahs' and 'look there', 'what's this?', 'what's that?', could be heard all around. They were fascinated by the size of the trees, which must have appeared like giants to some so small, and they were delighted by the 'baby trees' for which they seemed to have a kindred feeling. The little bridge and the wooded seats carved from trees added charm to the little girls' thoughts, and to the boys an increased sense of the explorer at large. The imagination of these children was a lesson to all. How many Robin Hoods and Little Johns were enacted that day we shall never know, but there were some - and a couple of sweet Maid Marions too.

The day passed all too quickly for both children and grown-ups alike, and it was a very happy but tired little band of warriors that manfully climbed back into the buses which had brought them to this wonderland. Tired maybe, but with eyes still shining with the excitement of the day: some of the children still not able to take their eyes off the trees, wishing that the day would never end.

Two days after the visit there arrived at the forester's home a bundle of 47 letters - one from each child. They were not just letters either - each was a work of art. The English grammar was not up to secondary school standards, but every child had put something of himself into painting and writing to express his thanks - but all had this special message for the forester and his wife - "thank you - may we come again?".

And in the forester's own words "It is days like this that make our jobs feel so worthwhile and also give us something very special to remember in later years".

(This report is from District Office, Dumfries.)

MR. GEOFFREY FORREST
RETIRES FROM F.C.

THE COMMISSION'S first Senior Officer for Scotland - Mr. Geoffrey Forrest - is to retire at the end of the year. In fact, this will be his second official retirement as when he stepped down from the post of S.O(S) at the end of October, 1969, he was re-engaged as Conservancy Land Agent for SW(E).

Although his career with the Commission (he joined in 1939) is now ending, he will continue to be as active as ever, and is taking up a new post in the 'outside world' which is taking him back to his beloved Scotland, and all his many friends there.

He joined the Commission in 1939 as Acquisitions Officer in Timber Supply Dept (NE Scotland), and the Lovat Scouts in May 1960, with whom he served at home and overseas stations until early in 1946, when he rejoined the Commission as District (Estates) Officer II at Inverness - his home town. After two busy years there he was posted to the Scottish Directorate, where he spent a further ten years buying about a quarter of a million acres of plantable land for the Commission.

In 1958 he was promoted to the rank of Conservator and posted to Wales as Chief Land Agent. He returned to Scotland in 1964 as Chief Land Agent, and a year later, on the reorganisation of the Commission he found himself "with some trepidation", as he says, filling the new role of Senior Officer Scotland.

Most of Geoffrey's last two years as S.O(S) was spent in organising the Commission's highly successful Golden Jubilee Exhibition; a task which fully stretched his organising ability, and for which he will be long-remembered by his colleagues everywhere.

It is nice to know that although Geoffrey Forrest is leaving our ranks, many of us will still meet him from time to time and he would like, through the "Slasher", to send his good wishes to all his friends of the Commission, and to say "thanks" for the many happy years he has spent working with you.

North Scotland

NEW POST FOR

MR. HAMISH MAXWELL

MR. HAMISH MAXWELL - until his recent retirement as Conservator, North Scotland -

has been invited by the Director of Education for Inverness-shire to become Chairman of the advisory committee for the Inverness Centre for Training & Education in the Forest Industry.

In consultation with the Director of the Centre, Mr. Maxwell is issuing invitations to a number of bodies, such as the Timber Merchants' Association of Scotland, to nominate members for the Committee.

It is anticipated that the Committee will include representatives of both the Furniture & Timber Industry Training Board, and the Agricultural, Horticultural and Forest Industries Training Board.

East Scotland

MR. PETER MCINTYRE

WE REGRET to report the death of District Forest Officer (I) Peter McIntyre on September 24th.

To many of us, Peter McIntyre was synonymous with forestry on Deeside, for that is where he spent nearly all his Commission career. He knew intimately both his own forests and also those on private estates which he visited. But to him a forest was not just a source of pulp or saw logs - it was a living entity full of life of all kinds. The remnants of the old Caledonian Forest found on Deeside were a special love and woe betide those who looked upon them as an anacronism in a materialistic age.

Coupled with this knowledge of forests went a deep affinity for the countryside as a whole - its formation, history, folk-lore and the people who lived and worked in it. He not only knew about them, but was able to talk and write about them in a fascinating way, for he had the ability to express himself with an intriguing turn of phrase, a relic perhaps of a period in journalism before the war.

After war service as a navigator in the RAF (1939-1946), Peter graduated from Aberdeen University and joined the FC early in 1950. There followed spells in N(S) and on Acquisition work before he settled in Deeside to what was to become his life's work.

A skilled skier and climber who loved best the less frequented parts of the Highlands, he left at least one unfulfilled ambition, to ski across Scotland from Ballater to Fort William.

We all extend our deepest sympathy to his widow and four children. Those of us who knew him well feel very keenly his early death at the age of 50, but are grateful for the years of his company.

We salute the passing of a staunch friend.

West Scotland

RETIREMENT OF DISTRICT OFFICER (I)

W. D. HALDANE

TO MARK his retirement from the Commission after 36 years service, Mr. W.D. Haldane -

who has been District Forest Officer of the North Lorne district for the past ten years - was honoured recently at a presentation ceremony in the Lynn of Lorne Hotel, Benderloch.

A large and happy gathering of colleagues and friends witnessed Mr. Haldane and his wife being presented with gifts of a cheque and a standard lamp by Mrs. J. Wilson, who has been clerkess to Mr. Haldane. Conservator Mr. E.J.M. Davies (W(S)), spoke of Mr. Haldane's valuable services to the Commission, and tribute on behalf of the local forestry employees was expressed by Mr. I. MacNicol, Fearnoch.

Yorkshireman Mr. Haldane also received warm praise from representatives of the local community, the National Farmers' Union, and the timber merchants. Mr. Haldane is to be succeeded by Mr. R. Bradley, from Surrey.

South Wales

PRINCE OF WALES' COUNTRYSIDE AWARD SCHEME

THE WELSH CONSERVANCIES made a number of entries for the Prince of Wales' Award (Cefn Gwlad 1970) for Achievement in the Countryside in 1970. Of the 28 awards out of a total of 120 entries, the Commission gained three, as follows:-

One award "For a model picnic site" at Pont-melin-fach, Coed-y-Rhaiadr Forest S(W). A joint award with Glamorgan Education Authority for an educational scheme "Man In The Environment", whereby 2000 have this year spent a day at Margan or Cymmer Forest undertaking projects.

A third award jointly to Monmouthshire Naturalists' Trust, the Nature Conservancy and the Forestry Commission for a nature trail and car park at the Wyndcliffe Forest Nature Reserve at Tintern S(W).

The awards - which take the form of a plaque suitable for erection on the site of the project - were presented to the local staff by Prince Charles at the Countryside in 1970 Committee for Wales Conference at Llandudno on November 4th.

Mr. J. W. L. Zehetmayr served on the panel of judges for South-east Wales, and the Award Scheme is to continue in future years in order to encourage the great effort being made to improve the Welsh environment - so long subjected to industrial pressure and now to that of tourists and the motor car.

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WE WISH OUR READERS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS

AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

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