

THOTO



No 273

May/June 1972

GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF FORESTRY POLICY

A statement in Parliament on June 28 by Mr James Prior, Minister of Agriculture, has deep significance for the future of forestry.

The Government's intention to carry out a review of forestry policy was announced by the then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr Anthony Stoddart, in the House of Commons on December 8, 1970.

Its purpose was to ensure forestry policy remains attuned, or where necessary is adapted, to the economic, social and political changes which have taken place since forestry was reviewed in depth in 1943.

Minister's Statement

Mr Prior, in reply to a Parliamentary Question, announced the publication of a consultative document following this review. A supporting cost/benefit study was published at the same time. The Minister said:-

"A consultative document is being published today setting out the results of the Government's review of forestry policy. A supporting cost/benefit analysis is also being made available.

"These documents examine in some depth both the economic and social costs and benefits of forestry for the nation and for the rural communities most affected by it. Apart from their immediate relevance to forestry, the Government see these documents as an important contribution to further studies of the economy of rural areas and of some of the problems, notably depopulation, which they can present.

"The Government have concluded that the main justification for Forestry Commission planting is to be found in the part which it can play in sustaining the rural economy, especially in areas which might otherwise be threatened by depopulation. They consider that the Commission should develop a new planting and restocking programme totalling up to 55,000 acres a year, thus broadly maintaining its contribution to the well being of country areas where employment opportunities are limited.

"This would also ensure a continuing increase in the total acreage of forests in the country and a continuing expansion of home-grown wood production for industry. The programme would be reviewed every three years. At the same time, the Government are introducing a target rate of return on capital of three per cent per annum in real terms, although where necessary allowance will be made for planting which is undertaken primarily for social reasons; and the Commission's accounts are being recast to reflect this.

"The Government consider that, in the management of the Commission's commercial forests, there should be a marked increase of emphasis both on visual amenity and on realizing their potential for recreation. Further consideration will be given as to how such aims can best be further promoted especially in the areas maintained primarily for amenity or recreational purposes.

"The consultative document recognizes the role of private forestry in the national economy; and one of the main objects of the forthcoming consultations will be to resolve how private woodland owners can at the same time play an effective part in meeting contemporary social and environmental needs. The Government believe that grant-aid should be directed essentially to encouraging private planting to make its own distinctive contribution to meeting these needs.

"Accordingly there are to be discussions aimed at harnessing the grant system to social and amenity objectives rather than to the post-war problems of woodland re-stocking and rehabilitation upon which the original schemes were founded. While these consultations are in progress, and pending any decisions that may be reached, the Forestry Commission will not be entertaining any further applications under the Dedication and other existing grant schemes, although existing commitments will naturally be honoured and applications already received up to June 28 will be considered in the usual way. There will also be discussions on the environmental aspects of private forestry."

Forestry Commission Statement

Following the Minister's statement the Commissioners issued a press notice saying they welcomed clarification of their own terms of reference and of the future role of private forestry which would result from the review. They hoped the forestry industry would feel encouraged to respond freely to the Government's invitation to comment.

Review Body

The review was carried out by an interdepartmental working group under Treasury chairmanship and including representatives of the Departments of the three Forestry Ministers (Minister of Agriculture and Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales), the Forestry Commission, and Department of the Environment. Membership of the cost/benefit study team was also drawn from these departments.

Consultation

All interested organisations will now have an opportunity to comment and there will need to be detailed consultations on a number of aspects before final decisions are taken.

* * * * *

CONGRATULATIONS

BEM FOR 'CRAFTSMAN OF LOST GENERATION'

Awarded the British Empire Medal in the Birthday Honours was Mr Hedley Mills, blacksmith at Thetford.

He has done work for the Commission since the 1930's. This has resulted in the development of many pieces of equipment such as a screening plough and the earlier types of root-pruners for nurseries.

His major contribution was Thetford tongs, made to be fitted behind the Ferguson tractor: after nearly 20 years they are still the major extraction equipment at Thetford and many other forests.

For the past three years Mr Mills has been involved closely with prototype hydro-tongs, now manufactured and sold all over the world.

His citation reads: "His craftsmanship is superb and of a lost generation; and his ability to solve an engineering problem with a sheet of iron and piece of chalk leaves even qualified and skilled engineers full of admiration."

COMMONWEALTH FORESTRY

Mr J A Dickson, Director-General, was elected chairman of the Commonwealth Forestry Association at their 50th annual meeting in May.

NEW PRESIDENT OF R.F.S.

Mr P F Garthwaite, formerly Conservator, Forest Management, Basingstoke, now a private forestry consultant and wildlife specialist, has been appointed President of the Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. He succeeds Mr Richard Hamersley; the appointment, from May 1, is for two years. Mr Garthwaite is the first ex-Forestry Commission man to hold the office.

DESIGN AWARD

Our new Santon Downham district office E(E) has received a Civic Trust design commendation.

* * * * *

FIRST SCENIC FOREST DRIVE IN WALES

Yet another addition to our recreational facilities — the first forest drive in Wales — was opened in Ebbw Forest by Mr David Gibson Watt, Minister of State, Welsh Office, on May 19. The occasion attracted an agreeable amount of good publicity.

This is a joint experimental venture by the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission with the co-operation of Monmouthshire County Council, the district councils of Abercarn and Risca, and the RAC and AA.

Guests at the opening included several MPs and among Countryside Commission representatives was Mr John Cripps, chairman. Mr G G Stewart, Commissioner for Forest and Estate Management, made a speech of introduction and Chief Forester Owen Rees presented the Minister with a slasher to cut the opening tape.

Then the 100 or so guests and press sampled this new attraction for the family motorist. They drove around the seven miles of forest mountain road at Cwmcarn, eight miles north of Newport, Mon, which rises through 600 feet of varying forest and hill farm scenery; along the route are breathtaking views of the Brecon Beacons and Bristol Channel. Afterwards there was a buffet luncheon in the forest.

The public soon responded: in the first six weeks 3,000 cars went through at 30p a time, 500 of them on one Sunday alone.

Subject of Research

This is our fourth forest drive — similar ones in Yorkshire and Durham are extremely popular.

It was in order to discover more about the problems of setting up and running scenic drives (which the new emphasis on amenity in the forestry review has since brought into sharp focus) that the Forestry and Countryside Commissions decided to cooperate on Cwmcarn, near a large centre of population, for an experimental period.

We spent £15,000 on preparing the road for public use: it allows traffic at speeds up to 20mph on a one-way circuit (apart for one marked section), with entry and exit at the same point — the old Cwmcarn colliery. There are four car parks and picnic sites and viewpoints. Annual running cost is expected to be about £4,000.

Although we are managing the enterprise, the Countryside Commission, with their interest in the research element, are meeting development costs and the running expenses for the first two years.

Use and viability will be studied by researchers of both Commissions. If it is successful the drive will continue. Much will depend on controlling vandalism.

* * * * *

DUTCH ELM DISEASE

The Continuing Saga ...

First edition of an Elm Newsletter prepared by Forest Management and issued by Information Branch to local authorities and the press has been well received.

This periodic round-up of information about the disease is aimed at keeping interested parties informed about latest developments.

Bark-cination ! ?

An exciting development in the fight against the disease is the research work being carried out at Alice Holt Station into preventive injection of the fungicide benomyl. This received much publicity and Mr David Burdekin, principal pathologist, explained the system on BBC TV "Nationwide", with his associate Dr John Gibbs appearing on ITN "News at Ten".

Pilot Scheme ...

Another scheme, suggested by Mr L J Clarke, a member of the British Light Aviation Centre, and welcomed by the Commission, is aimed at encouraging private pilots to work with local authorities in identifying Dutch Elm Disease from the air.

Mr Clarke and John Wright, Information Branch, discussed this in BBC Radio's popular "Late Night Extra" programme.

* * * * *

OBITUARIES

MR H A TURNER

Mr Herbert Arthur Turner, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Security, since 1968, and, from 1950 to 1965, Secretary of the Forestry Commission, died in May. He was 60.

"Warm affection for the Commission"

Mr J J V Summers, Secretary to the Commission, writes:-

Bertie Turner will be remembered with respect and affection by everyone who knew him during his 15 years in the Commission as Secretary and Establishment Officer. When he came to the Commission from the Treasury in 1950, we were remote from the centre of Government. Our contacts with the outer official world were still infrequent, and we had not yet grown used to working with Ministers within the normal machinery of Government. Our education for this new world was Bertie's first and most important task; and to his guidance in those days we owe much of the greater sophistication in administration and outlook we achieved later on.

Bertie brought to administration a kind of gaiety which made it all seem enjoyable. He made his points with precision, dexterity and wit. He quickly took your own point and, if necessary, as quickly demolished it - with grace and conviction. He thought fast, but with all the fundamental commonsense of his native Yorkshire (to which he never lost his allegiance).

To his qualities of mind Bertie added an engaging and sincere interest in people. As Establishment Officer he did not let his heart rule his head but the sense of sympathy which developed easily and naturally between him and the staff never weakened, however unpalatable a particular decision might be from the latter's point of view.

Above all, Bertie had a warm affection for the Commission, which he never lost. He always had the Commission's interests very much at heart and there can be no doubt of the important part he played in helping to create it as we know it today.

"Depth of understanding"

In The Times of June 10, Lord Collison wrote:-

From 1967 until his death on May 26 Herbert Arthur Turner was Under-Secretary in the Supplementary Benefits Commission, where he was held in great affection by all his colleagues.

Bertie Turner (as we all knew him) brought to his work in public service a great warmth and breadth of humanity combined with a realistic approach to practical administrative problems. I met him first when he was Secretary of the Forestry Commission, to which he contributed so much, I was then on the other side of the table negotiating wages and conditions for forestry workers. In that capacity I was deeply conscious of Bertie Turner's depth of understanding and unfailing courtesy.

I was very glad, as chairman of the Supplementary Benefits Commission, to meet and work closely with him again. His practical approach and his awareness that administration is about people made his work in this field of special value and his contribution will be sadly missed.

"Unique sense of humour"

Mr Geoffrey Seal, Information Branch, writes:-

I would like to confine my tribute to an example of HAT's unique sense of humour. In those pre-Basingstoke days we had a lusty, thriving social club of which I was secretary. During that era we tended to whoop it up at the turn of the year with some memorable Christmas parties.

As part of the entertainment short plays were enacted and, in 1959, Norman Stutter excelled himself by writing and staging a mock promotion board saga. This embodied all the traditional tilts at the official side and characters of the day. It was a huge success and HAT and Mr G D Palmer promptly concocted and issued the following Establishment notice as a typical riposte:-

APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, TRANSFERS, Etc.

After an informal meeting of the D.W.C. on 21st December, it has been decided to create forthwith an additional Conservancy, the North West Scotland Conservancy. Responsible members of Establishment Branch have been impressed by the possibilities in the new type of promotion procedure demonstrated by Staff Side on 21st December and have decided to accept the new proposals in spirit and substance, and Boards will be held to fill the vacancies of Conservator, S.F.O., etc., etc. Meanwhile the following appointments etc are announced:

1. Mr A C Stammers. To be Chief Clerk (Acting unpaid).
Mr Stammers will be transferred to the new headquarters at Cape Wrath on 24th December.
2. Mr L G Powell. To be Establishment Officer at the same station. In the interests of economy, Mr Powell will also act as Chairman of the local Staff Side.
3. Mr G G Seal. To be District Officer, Isle of Rockall. Mr Seal will also keep the Conservancy books, and will make any needed for special purposes.
4. Mr E T Springall. To be Chief Draughtsman (with special responsibility for the design of forms).
5. Mr L A Carvosso. To be Head Paper Keeper and Censor to the Suggestive Committee.

All transfers in connection with the above appointments are voluntary in the sense that the officers concerned have asked for it.

Any officer wishing to appeal against his posting should leave his representations in the Secretary's room. The usual discretion should be observed; for example Treasury notes are preferable to cheques.

MR K J DAWSON

Head Forester Ken Dawson of Redesdale NE(E) has died suddenly aged 46.

He joined the Commission as a forest worker trainee in 1949 at Langdale End, Scarborough, and then served in Scotland before attending Gwydyr school.

On leaving Gwydyr in 1952 he was posted to Research and employed on crop assessment. Subsequently he served at Newton Dale and Dalby forests in North Yorkshire and took charge of Selby in 1960. He was transferred to Wark in 1968 and took over Redesdale three years later.

Mr Dawson was a keen cricket enthusiast well-known in cricket circles wherever he served.

We extend our sympathy to his widow and three young children; Mrs Dawson has received many letters from friends in the Commission and thanks all of them.

* * * * *

BOOKS

GOULD IN OUR FORESTS

"Discovering Forests of Central England",* by Jack Gould, commercially published and unconnected with the Commission's own range of guide books, is a useful and lively addition to the forest-lover's library.

An introduction reads: "Increased leisure and greater mobility has led to a demand for more amenities, so that canals, gravel pits and other formerly little regarded places have become a source of pleasure and profit. The Forestry Commission is now alive to the fact that in its extensive woodlands it has something with great amenity potential.

"In the past the forests of England have served as hunting preserves which produced meat in the form of venison and other game; as sources of timber and other once valued raw materials (the national security depended on them in the days of 'hearts of oak'); and as feeding grounds for pigs and cattle, amongst other functions.

"Now the greenwood tree can furnish quietude and escape from today's incessant and frantic activity. The motor-car cannot penetrate the woodland rides. The air is sweeter among trees and anyone who is still and patient will soon hear and see some of the creatures harboured by the foliage. In times of heat there is nowhere more pleasant than in the dappled shade cast by deciduous trees.

"This booklet is an attempt to guide folk to the forest spots set aside for recreation and to present some of their history and interesting features..."

The author, a village schoolmaster in Northamptonshire, writes: "It would have been quite impossible to write this booklet without the assistance of the officials of the Forestry Commission, to whom I tender my thanks for their co-operation and courtesy."

* "Discovering Forests of Central England", Jack Gould, Shire Publications Ltd, 12B, Temple Square, Aylesbury, Bucks (price: 30p).

TROPICAL FORESTS

"Tropical Forest and its Environment", by Dr K A Longman, senior physiologist at Northern Research Station, and Mr J Jenik of Prague, is nearing completion. Longmans are to publish it in their Tropical Ecology Series.

Before joining the Commission Dr Longman was senior lecturer in botany at Ghana University where he worked with Mr Jenik and became an expert on jungles.

* * * * *

SAFETY

ACCIDENTS: CAUSE & EFFECT

In the three years 1969-71, Commission workers had 1,700 reportable accidents, including two fatalities. Over the period the average was between seven and eight mishaps per 100 men, with a slight increase last year.

An analysis just published reveals some interesting facts (based on 1971 figures). For instance, most accidents occur after 2-30 in the afternoon. Strain is commonest injury followed by cuts and bruises. The back and then the hand — these are the parts most injured.

Heading the list of "contributory agents" is "the terrain". Next highest are chain saws, hooks and, not surprisingly, trees! Most accidents are caused by victims being "struck by" something; slips and falls are common.

Harvesting operations led to most accidents — 231 in 1971, 91 of them a result of felling work. And the report underlines the hazards of rubber soles: they caused many a slip, 242 to be precise, in those three years.

* * * * *

THAT TREE-SEAT

One of our Commissioners, Mr Ralph Verney, writes:

"I am interested to see in the April issue of the 'Slasher' a reference to my thatched tree-seat at Botolph Claydon.

"I think it might interest your readers to know that this is, of course, an oak tree, that it was first thatched and provided with a seat in about 1900, and had a new coating of thatch about 15 years ago.

"The tree itself seems to have enjoyed the treatment and has just been adopted by the organisers of our new Community Association as the symbol for their club."

* * * * *

BIG LAND SALE

In Lochgilphead, Argyll, the Commission have auctioned publicly 31 building sites for a total of £41,000 — or £10,000 per hectare.

We are providing roads to be taken over by the county council and are co-ordinating water, drainage, telephone and electricity services on behalf of the authorities concerned.

Allowing for cost of roads and footpaths, net return is £23,000, or £5,750 a hectare. A large numbers of bidders attended the sale; at least half were local people.

* * * * *

THE PLAGUE! — IN DUCKS

An outbreak of duck plague in wild birds in Hertfordshire has been confirmed by the Ministry of Agriculture. Similar cases are under investigation in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. No deaths have been reported.

Although the disease — virus enteritis — has been diagnosed in various parts of the world in recent years, this is first time in this country. It is assumed migratory birds have introduced it.

Duck plague can cause heavy mortality but its course is very unpredictable. Symptoms include listlessness, marked depression, drooping wings and disinclination to move or take to water.

There is no effective treatment for diseased birds although vaccination can prevent infection. Arrangements are being made for supplies of vaccine to be available through the Animal Health Trust. The plague can affect geese and swans, too.

A leaflet about the disease can be obtained from divisional vets; the Min of Ag publications branch, Tolcarne Drive, Pinner, Midd'x HA5 2DT; or Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland (animal health branch), Chesser House, Gorgie Road, Edinburgh EH11 3AW.

* * * * *

NEWS FROM TRADA

Farm Buildings Initiative

A farm building design sponsorship group known as TRADAFARM has been formed under the initiative of TRADA. Membership already includes over 75 firms of manufacturers and suppliers. Aim is to offer farmers a wide range of timber farm structures based on TRADAFARM's catalogue and design manual.

New Chairman

Mr Christopher Latham has been elected chairman of TRADA after being vice-chairman for the last two years. Mr Latham, joint managing director of James Latham Ltd, is treasurer of the Commonwealth Forestry Association.

* * * * *

SCOTS TIMBER ON SHOW

A large number of planners, architects, land agents and others in a position to influence choice of building materials attended an open day at Speymouth Forest E(S) on May 5. Aim was to underline the many uses of Scottish timber.

They were shown how Scots-grown wood has been used exclusively in the new forest administrative centre — Douglas Fir and Scotboard Chipboard in the office, Scots Pine and Douglas and other mixed softwoods in workshop and store.

Afterwards they were treated to a Speymouth shepherd's lunch, which, for the uninitiated, consists of cottage pie, bread and cheese and (of course!) beer. Sounds like a Gaelic ploughman's ...

* * * * *

GOLF

'OPEN' AT OSWESTRY

By now, golfers should have heard from their local representatives about the open competition for all past and present Commission golfers at Oswestry in early September. Anyone who hasn't should contact D O M E S Dickenson at West View, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 2AJ.

The Northumbria Open was played at Dunelm and County Golf Club on June 2 and won by ... with a net score of 101. ... as ...

23 FIGHT THE FORTHERINGHAM

The Fortheringham Trophy was played at Dumfries and County Golf Club on June 2 and won by Mr W McIntosh with a net score of 70. Twenty-three stalwarts attended from as far afield as North-East England and West Scotland conservancies.

* * * * *

DOUGLAS FIR GO TO SEA

Conifer Masts For Tall Ship

Big Douglas Fir from Dean Forest are being used as masts and spars in the conversion of an historic schooner.

It all resulted from an inquiry to SW(E) Conservancy by a Colchester man who had searched in vain for the right-sized timber. At the time clear felling was taking place at Bark Rack in Reddings Inclosure, part of Highmeadow Woods in the Dean. The trees were Douglas Fir, 100-130 feet tall and first conifer crop planted on this fertile old red sandstone soil, which previously carried aged oak and other broadleaves.

On inspecting the handiwork of fellers John Sterrett and Gordon Lewis, the man immediately placed an order for three masts and 13 spars. Largest tree was for the main mast — 61 feet with 12-inch top and 24-inch butt diameters.

Two other big trees will become the fore and aft masts. As a three-masted schooner, the vessel will carry 4,000 square feet of sail. The conversion is expected to take some two years. And the three masts and ten smaller spars made up a load collected from the forest on a special long vehicle in March.

Holidays Ahoy!

The vessel is a Baltic trader called "Roy", built in 1919 on the German Baltic coast. Originally it had two masts and no engine. A 100hp two-stroke diesel was added in the 30's and about 15 years ago the masts were removed and it was used as a motor coaster carrying metal from Denmark to factories in Sweden. Now, after conversion, "Roy" will be used for holiday charters.

Baltic traders evolved during the latter half of the last century to supply the needs of maritime trade both locally and deep-sea. Rigs used were ketch, schooner, three-masted schooner and variations including square sails similar to the brigantine.

Average size is around 100 tons and they are no longer economical for maritime trading. Over the last few years large numbers have been sold out of the Baltic, mainly to America where they have been converted into large yachts. Few remain.

The Old Oaks of Bark Rack

A SW(E) correspondent writes: "It is interesting to look back about 50 years to when the old oaks were felled and their bark stripped for tanning. The bark was racked to aid drying and then the logs extracted from Bark Rack to railway sidings at Hadnock. They would then have been sold probably to a local mill for sawing and ultimate use for a variety of purposes."

* * * * *

AVOCETS, OSPREYS AND SNOWY OWLS...

For our bird enthusiasts --- a report from the RSPB:-

"By end of April, 41 avocets' nests were known on Havergate with more expected. Ospreys have returned to Loch Garten and are sitting on eggs. The Lake District golden eagles are near hatching date. Snowy owls of Fetlar are on territory. Good numbers of ruffs and black-tailed godwits are at Ouse Washes. And at Arne the Dartford warbler situation looks promising."

Hopefully, some of this news will have been overtaken now by happy events...

* * * * *

NO TEARS FOR 'PUFFING BILLY'

Nostalgia for the railways' era of steam is common; but within the Forestry Commission, surely, the hiss of steam has given way to a sigh of relief.

In the long hot summer of 1959 railways caused 2,262 fires in our forests. This represented 90 per cent of total fires that year!

Last year we had 600 fires, and in just one case were the railways suspected. Only one --- and that merely burned a small patch of unplanted land at Ebbw S(W).

Sad it might have been, but the demise of "Puffing Billy" was no loss to the forester.

* * * * *

FAN MAIL, MOROCCAN-STYLE

Our fans are far-flung. As proof we reproduce (faithfully!) a letter received by Wight Forest:-

"From: M EL ASRI MAHJOUB
9 Avenue Chakib Arsalane
Khemisset Morocco

To : Forestry Commission Newport
I.O.W England

I write to your information bureau in order I can receive some informations and some brochures of your nice Carisbrooke, your acres of parkhurst Forst, your nature Walk and its detail I want to hear and to read a lot of things about this beautiful country side. So please send me some of that. Thank you very much for your gracious

Faithfully yours."

NEWS FROM THE CONSERVANCIES

South-East England

'CURLY' KITCHER'S FAREWELL

Mr D W Kitcher of Ladycross Beat has retired after 32 years' service.

A Lyndhurst correspondent writes: "At one time there were no fewer than 18 Kitchers working on the same beat in the New Forest: the 'handle' chosen to distinguish D W was, appropriately enough in view of his glabrous dome, 'Curly'.

"At the outbreak of the war Mr Kitcher was attached to the Timber Production Department and by day trees of all sizes and species fell before his axe and saw. By night he served in the East Boldre Home Guard.

"After the war he rejoined the Commission and in 1968 aged 60 he decided he had done his share of production work, and, for the last four or five years, he has been involved in forest management."

At a ceremony attended by many friends and colleagues, Mr Donn Small, Deputy Surveyor, presented him with a long-service certificate, a cheque and a pocket watch. Mrs Kitcher received a bouquet.

* * * * *

North Scotland

FAREWELL TO FOUR

Head Foresters Alex Maclean, Hugh Macrae and George Small have retired, the last two sharing a farewell dinner at Invershin Hotel. All three gave long and valued service in various parts of the Conservancy, and they were presented with "wallets of notes" by Mr R A Innes, Conservator.

A similar gift went to another retiring member of staff, Miss J S Reid, a clerical officer in Conservancy office since transferring from the Ministry of Food in 1953.

* * * * *

East Scotland

FORESTER REID RETIRES

Forester Ken Reid retired in March. At a presentation ceremony at Queen's View, Tummel, he was presented with a cheque by Mr F J Donald from Conservancy office; on behalf of colleagues, forest worker William McCraw gave him a clock and record tokens.

Chief Forester D A MacCaskill writes: "Ken and I met for the first time in the summer of 1939 when we arrived at Benmore Forest School. He distinguished himself in various ways, firstly in not needing to swot and yet ending up top of his class; secondly by his ability to play practically any musical instrument --- he still can; and thirdly, his ability to break down motor-cycle engines and rebuild them from scratch.

"After service with the HGTPD, he rejoined the Commission in 1945 serving at Faskally, Fonab and Allean. Following the amalgamation of these three forests into Tummel, Ken stayed on and by good fortune he and I were to spend his last three years working together. We will all miss his gentle ways and pawky humour."

MR URQUHART'S BEQUEST

The late Mr James McDonald Urquhart, who worked at the Commission's Newton Nursery, Elgin, until retiring in 1968, has left a bequest to an old people's home — Anderson's — in Elgin.

A local newspaper reported the chairman of the home's governors as saying they were highly delighted at the kind thought, adding: "This windfall will to some extent relieve the situation for us. Donations and legacies are always welcome from those who would like to see the work of the home prosper." Recently, rising costs have been causing concern at Anderson's.

Mr Urquhart's estate was expected to realise between £4,000 and £5,000 for the home.

He died in February aged 68, a bachelor. He first worked for the Commission at Culbin in 1925. In later years he worked at Monaughty Forest and went to Newton in 1958.

* * * * *

South Scotland

A FISHY AFFAIR!

Two angling outings to Black Esk Reservoir were enjoyed by the Conservancy office in May and June. Fine weather on the first occasion was not repeated the second time so bags were smaller. Heaviest catch both times was by Mr B H Struthers; heaviest fish on the May trip was landed by Mr J Paterson and in June by Mr A E Hart.

PRESENTATION TO CHIEF ENGINEER

Outgoing Chief Engineer Mr E H Macmillen toured the Conservancy at the beginning of June with his successor Mr E F Granfield. At a get-together of all engineering and mechanical staff at the King's Arms, Castle Douglas, he was presented with an inscribed silver tankard by Conservancy Engineer Mr J E Coleman.

HOW'S THAT? 50 NOT OUT!

Ganger Mr J H Boyle of Glentress is first person in S(S) to complete 50 years with the Commission. And that's not all: his wife retired just a year ago after 38 years' service.

To mark Mr Boyle's "golden" Conservator Mr John Davies presented him with 50 gladioli bulbs at a special gathering in April.

Mr Boyle joined the Commission in April 1922 aged 14 and has served at Glentress ever since; he knows every inch of the forest intimately. He's been a ganger 30 years and is still going strong, but will retire next year.

Mrs Boyle's 38 years' service came to an end when she retired as clerkess at Glentress forest office.

No doubt many ex-students of Glentress forest school will remember the Boyles. S(S) will certainly remember their unique 88-year record.

FROM TREES TO CANVAS

Three members of the Conservancy staff held an art exhibition at Peebles in April. They were Conservancy land agent Tom Findlay and two men from Peebles — DOL Ian Goodlet and John McClory, the estate clerk of works. And, for good measure, there was one invited work by Conservator Mr John Davies.

About 30 oil paintings, water colours and oil pastel were on display. A variety of subjects included portraits, flowers, land- and sea-scapes. Many guests attended the first morning, and by end of the fortnight's show 13 pictures were sold. Sale of catalogues raised £8 for the FC benevolent fund.

* * * * *

We value greatly any contribution to 'Slasher', which is a publication for everybody in the Forestry Commission. More news of industrial staff would be welcomed.