

SPREADING THE GOSPEL

A kiss may have awakened the Sleeping Beauty, but rather more than such a gentle salutation is necessary to revive the forest sense which slumbers still in the public breast. Yet the sleep is uneasy; there is definitely a stirring and people tend to ask more questions about forestry, although so far these are largely superficial. So just in case you can help spread the gospel, here are a few very round figures

which you may care mentally to tuck away as potential talking points; for we don't all see the relevant papers or the Annual Reports.

INTRODUCING THE SLASHER

This is the first issue of The Slasher. In appearance it is unpretentious, for the paper shortage makes this inevitable. But what it lacks in looks we hope it will make up in personality.

In producing this monthly news-letter our aims are simple. We want it to become a personal link between individuals who serve the Commission; no matter where they are stationed. We also want to forge a closer link between those individuals and Headquarters - still regarded by some as an intangible administrative machine; yet like the piano player we're doing our best, so you can't very well shoot us. And if you knew us better you'd know that we are, after all, human.

We want always to give as much news as possible from the field. How, for instance, goes life with you, Forester MACKAY, of Borgie, way up in the north of Scotland; and with you, Forester PRITCHARD, of Bodmin, who are nearest Land's End? Please let us hear from you!

Help us to let our left hand know what our right hand is doing.

THE EDITOR.

The Commission now holds about one and a half million acres of land (England 500,000; Scotland 800,000; Wales 200,000); 870,000 acres are forest land planted or yet to be planted; about 500,000 acres have been planted to date; 365,000 acres have to be planted in the first five years of the 50-Year Plan with, it is hoped, 75,000 acres planted privately; some 24,000 acres were planted last season (in the first year of the five-year programme) the current year's planting programme is 36,000 acres (England 14,500; Scotland 16,000; Wales 5,500). Offers to consider Dedication (to November last) totalled 844, involving 439,550 acres (England 590 offers, 262,547 acres; Scotland 197, 162,200; Wales 57, 14,803). In the year-ending 30th September last there were 701 outbreaks of fire, 855 acres were burnt and the financial loss was £26,000.

Incidentally, the Wareham (Dorset) fire in August last was the worst for several years. It spread from adjoining land, destroyed 24.6 acres of Maritime Pine and cost us £11,500. If you are interested in any further facts and figures we shall be glad to supply them, where possible.

HATS OFF TO THE GIRLS

When girls were recruited for work as Census Surveyors it was not expected that the names of some of them would go down to posterity. Yet some 50 newspapers have made reference to the Census, and nearly half have mentioned -- THE GIRLS. To feature young ladies in an unusual avocation, in case you haven't suspected, is a way news editors have and certainly J.S.R. CHARD, Chief Census Officer, and J.L.F. FERGUSSON, his assistant, together with the Misses THOMPSON and BURNABY (Supervisors) are not likely

to forget it, for they have largely borne the brunt of producing the girls (or details about them) for the benefit of reporters and photographers. Among those girls who have been mentioned in the Press are JOCELYN ROSE, of Virginia Water, formerly of the Women's Timber Corps; MOLLY COLEMAN, of Exeter, a pre-war Civil Servant; PAT ELIGHT, of Bristol, who is married to a Merchant Navy Officer; KITTY WILSON, of Nottingham, also a Civil Servant before the war, who later joined the W.T.C. and subsequently served with the Control Commission in Germany; and BETTY SAUNDERS, a Yorkshire lass who, too, was with the W.T.C.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

This first number of THE SLASHER comes as a New Year's Greeting to all. I hope that this, our newest publication, will prosper and prove a valuable medium for the fostering of esprit de corps and mutual good fellowship throughout the Forest Service of Great Britain. The success of THE SLASHER lies in the hands of its readers; the Editor wants a steady flow of news of topical and personal interest from within the Department, leaving matters of more technical concern to contributors to the Forestry Commission's Journal, now shortly to re-appear after its war-time lapse.

May the best of good fortune attend this new effort.

F.L. TAYLOR.

We raise our hats to these young ladies who are doing a good job of work in the rigorous climatic conditions that prevail in this country. May we hear from you, Miss THOMPSON and Miss BURNABY? We'd like to know more about the lighter side of the lives of female Census Surveyors. Incidentally, some 600,000 acres in the whole of the country have now been surveyed.

COMMISSION'S "STAFF COLLEGE"

In a sylvan setting near Lyndhurst stands Northerwood House, generously made over to the Forestry Commissioners by MAJOR HERBERT ARIS. This mansion is admirably sited in 27 acres of grounds and from its windows opens up the sweeping panorama of the New Forest, with the Isle of Wight silhouetted on the skyline. It is hoped that to many will come the opportunity to visit Northerwood House, for it is to be used for educational purposes and instruction in a wide range of subjects will in due course be given.

Already one of a proposed series of short courses -- on nursery work -- has taken place, and a number of officers in charge of Commission nurseries heard discourses from District Officer A. PATERSON (Nursery Officer, England), who was assisted by District Officer R.E. PALLETT, South Wales. This month a management course for State Forest Officers is planned, under the supervision of JAMES MacDONALD (Scotland) and C.A. CONNELL (England).

Northerwood House is the special responsibility of J.Q. WILLIAMSON, Chief Education Officer, who is represented on the spot by District Officer L.G.T. Kenyon. As Secretary-Housekeeper Miss F. INGRAM has a facility for making guests feel at home from the moment they cross the threshold.

THE NEW FOREST REPORT

The Report of the New Forest Committee, recently presented to Parliament, sets a new and refreshing style in official reporting. For instance, of the Forest Gypsies it could have said "Whereas and notwithstanding these alleged Romany types are, regrettably, delinquents whom we cannot in the remotest circumstances countenance", it says, simply and plainly, that the gypsies must go from the Open Forest for "they have no headman to control them" and "they have hardly reached the standard of the Stone Age." The same emphasis, and colour, is to be found throughout the whole of the Report.

The gypsies, of course, are incidental; for the Report covers all aspects of the administrative and other difficulties which abound in the Forest. One thing is certain; none of the Commission's critics in the area can say he hasn't now been given plenty of material for future debate, or has not been offered help towards seeing things in their true perspective. Much credit goes to Deputy Surveyor D.W. YOUNG, who acted as the Committee's Secretary.

NEWS FROM ABERYSTWYTH

The Forestry Commission Social Club held a highly successful dinner at the Talbot Hotel, Aberystwyth, a few days before Christmas. About 50 attended, including Welsh Directorate Staff and Friends. Toasts included those of the Commission and Club and presentations were made to the Club Chairman (Miss HORSHAM) and Committee members (the Misses LEWIS and BEATTIE and Messrs G.P. and V. WILLIAMS) in recognition of their grand work for the Club since its formation in June last. Dinner was followed by a jolly party.

MORE WORK TO MAKE LESS

C.R.C. FINK (O and M Section) and S.M.O. MCKENZIE (Cashier) have been busily engaged at Headquarters in preparing for the new salary procedures due to start as from January 1st. This system means that in future you'll get a strip showing how your monthly pay is made up (or, to be accurate, down!). Just think how nice it will be to make a collection of these slips and have a permanent record of how much you've had -- if only you'd had it. You may have seen the Salary Adjustment Report, which is one of three documents prepared by H.M. Stationery Office from Addressograph plates; the officer's record sheet, the pay sheet and the officer's own pay slip are prepared at one writing (and obviate the PAYE card).

(Editor's note: This may be all right.. Why not cut out the tax and retain the card?)

INVALIDS

F.C. HANFORD (Chief Clerk, Edinburgh) is making progress and has returned to duty. Our good wishes go to him and also to E. MYNNE JONES (Acquisitions, England), who is convalescing after a serious illness.

FORESTER TELEVISED

Holding a Christmas tree in one hand and a slasher in the other, Forester E.J. DAVIES (The Dean) made a pre-Christmas bow on the television screen. It came about as the result of publicity given to the dark and dastardly crime of stealing Christmas trees, for the B.B.C. felt that they, too, might help spotlight the offence. Like so many of us, Forester DAVIES was obviously new to the mysteries of television, but he acquitted himself well in telling of some of his past experiences in guarding Christmas trees, and of his present job.

LOOKING AHEAD

Contributions from all Commission sources for future issues will be welcomed. Please address them to The Editor (Information Officer), The Slasher, Forestry Commission, 25 Savile Row, London, W.1. Thank you! And a Happy New Year!