

ABOUT THE SLASHER

There seems little doubt that the first issue of The Slasher was well received, and it has been gratifying to read the several bouquets which have reached the Editor. "A good effort - would like to see The Slasher continued" is a typical extract. This month it is possible to increase the size to four pages, and it is devoutly hoped that the measure of contributions will be such as to ensure that this may be done on most occasions. But, as was pointed out by the DIRECTOR GENERAL in January, IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU. So do please help maintain a flow of news items, and don't just leave it to the other fellow.

TRAGIC DEATH OF FORESTER T. ALLAN

It is with great regret that we have to record the death, which occurred in tragic circumstances, of Forester Tom Allan, who for some time had been engaged on instructional duties at Lynford School. Mr Allan was cycling at Mundford on January 16 - the day after his birthday - when he was involved in an accident with a motor van and was fatally injured. Aged 45, he had served the Commission for many years, being promoted Forester in 1929. For a very long while he had been a member of the Grades Committee of the Civil Service Union.

Many of Mr. Allan's colleagues in the Department will recall meeting him during the summer of last year, when he helped with the staging of the Commission's exhibit at various agricultural shows. The forests in which he had served include Tentsmuir, Kirkhill, Clashindarroch, Durris, Drumtochty and Keilour; during the war he was with H.T.P.D.

At this stage, in the light of several communications received about the title of this news-letter, it is appropriate to mention why The Slasher was chosen as its name. The choice was made because it was necessary to decide on something symbolic of those concerned with forestry, and the slasher has for long been regarded, so to speak, as an insignia of office among a big proportion of those who serve the Commission. For those whose daily avocation restricts them to an office chair, it should be explained that a slasher consists of a shaft and a blade; originally a hedging tool, its utilitarian value to foresters will be obvious. It is invariably carried by all our woodsmen when in the plantations - including Lord Robinson.

HELP FOR THE CAMPER

Due to be

launched in the near future on an unsuspecting but, it is to be hoped, appreciative public is the new Guide to the National Forest Park of Snowdonia. It is expected that this publication will be on sale before the end of March and it should attract the interest of campers and ramblers, for it will contain a wealth of information as well as some attractive maps. Reference to this Guide reminds us that its issue, and that of Guides to the Argyll Park and to the Forest of Dean, owes much to various officers and members of the Commission's staff. The Snowdonia Guide will include an informative account of the forests and plantations by R.H. SMITH, who was formerly at Shrewsbury and is now at Woking, Headquarters of the South East Conservancy, England. Conservator F.C. BEST (North Wales) has described the butterflies and moths peculiar to the mountain region, while J.L. SHAW (District Officer, North Wales) has dealt with the many attractive walks around the village of Bettws-y-Coed, where many visitors to Snowdonia are likely to stay.

Where the Argyll Guide is concerned H. WATSON, Education Officer, Benmore School, provided some first-class photographs of Highland scenery to illustrate the publication which, of course, was a revised edition. Mr. J.M. BANNERMAN, a Forestry Commissioner and Gaelic scholar, translated the place names. Then, for the Forest of Dean Guide, the DIRECTOR GENERAL (Mr. W.L. TAYLOR) wrote an interesting account of the wild life of that area, on which he is an acknowledged authority. Conservator A.D. HOPKINSON (East, England) told the story of the plantations from 1800 to 1946, and Conservator A.H. POPERT (South West, England) described the abundant insect life. J.M.B. BROWN, of the Research Branch, dealt with plant life and vegetation in the Dean Forest and the Wye Valley. Miss ROBERTA BURNET (Edinburgh Office) and R.A. AXTELL (Office of the Director, England) provided the maps for these Guides.

By putting at the disposal of those who compile the Guides their unique knowledge of natural history and allied subjects in their own districts or areas in which they have served, these contributors assist enormously in helping to raise the Department's prestige among the general public.

NO MEAN ACHIEVEMENT

It is no secret that strenuous efforts are being made to remove the time-lag in the publication of the Commission's Annual Reports, for that for the year-ending September 30th, 1946, has only recently appeared. These Reports, apart from placing a picture before Parliament of the Commission's operations, are also most useful media for informing the public of what is being done to rehabilitate and extend Britain's forests. Not only are they placed on sale, but it is customary for the Press to refer to them and these circumstances make it all the more necessary for the facts and information which are given to be as up to date as possible. In the recently published Report there is a paragraph of outstanding significance, and one which makes a good talking point when one is discussing the merits of a Government Department as a producer. This states that from the outbreak of war to September, 1946, the timber and pitwood sold to the Board of Trade from the Commission's woods, and used for purposes directly connected with the war, totalled 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ million cubic feet, the value of which was £2,231,000.

GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

Social Clubs of Headquarters and the Directorate of England joined forces for the purpose of staging a dance and social. This took place on January 12 at the Duke of York's H.Q. Services Club. Although the event was held in Chelsea it was not Bohemian, but there was certainly plenty of fun. "JOHNNY" WALKER (Establishment Branch, H.Q.) was Master of Ceremonies and had the pleasure of welcoming both LORD and LADY ROBINSON as well as the DIRECTOR GENERAL and Mrs. TAYLOR. Other welcome visitors were the DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL (Mr. A.H. GOSLING) and Mrs. GOSLING. Among old friends was Mr. T.W. CLELAND (formerly the Commission's Secretary) and Mrs. CLELAND. Music was provided by TERRY BANNON and his Band, and prizes went to the winners of novelty dances and games. Among those who played a leading part in organising the event, in addition to JOHNNY WALKER, were E.R. LEWIS (Deputy Chief Clerk, England), F. BROWN (also of the Office of Director, England) and Miss R.M. EMSLEY, (H.Q.).

KEEP ON SAVING

Such is human frailty that memories of the war tend to be relegated more and more into the background. This, of course, is not the case where people were bereaved or suffered other serious loss, but nevertheless as a race we incline to dispense from our minds thoughts that are unpleasant or irksome. Many of us, too, have garnered unto ourselves a subconscious impression that most of the things we did during the conflict are no longer necessary. Nothing is further from the truth; we still need to plan and work for a really worthwhile peace and effective reconstruction with the same intensity that we strove for victory. Above all we must SAVE: hence this reminder on behalf of the Civil Service Savings Scheme. It doesn't matter what we put our savings into -- Savings Banks, Certificates or Defence Bonds -- so long as we save. Let it suffice that we commend you to the leaflet enclosed with your last pay slip and urge you to complete the form of authority and send it without delay to the Cashier at Headquarters, 25 Savile Row, London, W.1.

SUMMER FOOTBALL SEASON

FORESTER W.H. MACKAY, of Borgie, whom we invited in the first issue of The Slasher to tell us how life goes on in such far distant parts of Scotland, has responded and added the comment that he feels the circulation of this news-letter "helps to bring more closely together the widely scattered 'elements' of the Commission". Here, in his own words, is Forester Mackay's despatch:

"During the winter months it is

quite a usual experience to be 'snowed-up' for several days at a time, and then practically all travel is on foot. At present (early January) we are experiencing a period of severe frost, which is disrupting practically all outdoor work, for all the roads leading to Borgie are ice-bound.

"Social life at Borgie is most

noticeable by its almost complete absence. It is common for residents to have to walk or cycle a distance of five miles or more to the nearest centre of social activity -- namely the Village Hall. Here, the programme in the main is one of whist drives and an occasional dance. During the summer, however, life becomes quite 'gay', for our

football season is then at its height; it is quite usual for the local team and supporters to travel upwards of 50 miles by open lorry - the only means of transport - to play opposing teams in hotly-contested cup-ties.

"Shopping is one of the biggest problems for the housewife, for the nearest shopping centre is 40 miles distant, and groceries are delivered only once a month. Quite often it is nearing midnight when the grocer's van arrives, making its presence known by a hooting of horn and the grinding of brakes.

"Regardless of difficulties, however, work in the Forest and the Nursery goes on steadily. At present the main problem is ploughing by tractor; as the nearest maintenance engineer is almost 100 miles away and the nearest public telephone four miles distant, a silent prayer is repeatedly offered that no serious breakdown may occur, in order that a reasonable programme may be completed".

Doubtless Forester MACKAY has many old friends in the Commission. Anyone wishing to write him may care to note that his address is 9 Borgie, Skerry by Thurso, Caithness.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Photographic Competition, which had been extended, closed on January 15, by which time an interesting selection of efforts had been received. Every endeavour will be made to carry out the judging in the near future but, if this is a little delayed, it will be unavoidable. The judges, as you know, are members of the Technical Committee; their January meeting has passed and the February deliberations will most probably take place in Edinburgh, so it may not be before March that it is physically possible for them to undertake the necessary adjudication. In any case, more anon.

THE WORK THEY DO

This paragraph is the first of a series to be published in the hope readers will find it helpful to know who at Headquarters is who, what they do and why. Thus a little may be achieved towards turning a cold signature, or a name one may hear, into something of more personal significance.

"Recruitment and Records" Section at H.Q. functions under A.D. PALMER (Establishment), with A.G. MINTER in charge. The latter is assisted by the Misses TODD, FROST, MOSS and RICH and Messrs M.A.E. GUBBY and P.W. BROOK. One of the principal tasks is the maintenance of nearly 2,000 personal files for members and ex-members of the Commission's staff; lists by grade and location are kept on what is known as a strip index (more popularly referred to as the strip tease) and in this connection day to day amendments add to the general work. These records together form the basis for salary adjustments, Promotion Board lists and pension purposes, and it is obviously a priority matter that they are kept up to date. The section is consequently now responsible for the Salary Adjustment Reports and Miss MOSS does not like being kept waiting for notifications of changes in personnel and the like -- after all, we all expect our cheques for the right amount and at the right time!

The same section handles arrangements for Selection Boards (seven letters per recruit are involved, as well as attention to replies), and it is worth mentioning that in just over a year some 400 non-industrial staff have been recruited, although not all through Headquarters. Many enquiries as to potential employment are also dealt with, while other records which help to keep the team busy are those connected with sick leave, Civil Service Central Staff Register, etc.

MANAGEMENT COURSE AT NORTHERWOOD

The Management Course for State Forest Officers, to which we referred in January, duly took place at Northerwood House from January 5 - 10. Interesting talks were given by JAMES MacDONALD (Scotland) (General Organisation), C.A. CORRELL (England) (organisation of field work), Deputy Secretary E.C. SHANKS (organisation of office work) and Controller of Finance V. BATES (costing and allied problems). C.A. CORRELL also spoke on the control of mechanical transport, while JAMES MacDONALD summed up the various discussions. The following Officers attended, with J.Q. WILLIAMSON (Chief Education Officer) and H.C. CHARTERS

(Finance Section) present for part of the time: G.W. BACKHOUSE, G.F. BALLANCE, W.A. CADMAN, J.T.L. FITZHERBERT, W. FORSYTH, R.E. FOSSEY, J.E. JAMES, G.I. MACKENZIE, W.D. RUSSELL, R.H. SMITH, T.H. WOOLRIDGE and N.A. WYLIE. Two short excursions were made to the Forest. The contributor of this paragraph lays emphasis on the fact that among some private excursions was notably a short ramble by W. FORSYTH. (Mr. FORSYTH to note, please!).

NEWS OF THE TRAINING SCHOOLS

An advance party is due to leave the New Forest (temporary home of the School) for Gwydyr at the beginning of this month, and it is hoped the complete transfer will have been effected by the beginning of March. H. CRUICKSHANK, the Education Officer, is therefore due for an exceptionally busy time and will be helped by the new Assistant Education Officer, M.K. MACDONALD. It may take a full year before conversion work at Gwydyr is fully completed. At Benmore the two courses being run concurrently are both progressing satisfactorily. H. WATSON (Education Officer) is well pleased with the quality of his latest recruits. Glentress now holds its full complement of 60 students, to the gratification of Education Officer T.A. ROBBIE, while at The Dean a new first year class of 26 students reported for duty on January 5 and is settling down under Education Officer T.E. EDWARDS. The three months' course for partially trained men at Lynford Hall, under the direction of Education Officer E.J. STREETS, finished at the end of last year and the men concerned have now reported for duty to the various Directorates. A new class commenced training on January 12.

So much for a brief, over-all survey. Now we want some news of the men themselves - of social activities, participation in sport, for instance, and so on. May we hear from you, students?

Arrangements have been made for special short courses to commence in March. These will be held in England at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, and Raby Castle Estate, Co. Durham; and in Scotland at Bowhill Estate, by Selkirk, and Darnaway Estate, Forres. Instructor at Dartington will be T. BROWN, at Raby H. SMITH and at Darnaway E. GRANT. At the time of writing the Instructor for Bowhill had not been appointed.

PRESENTATIONS

MRS. C. UNDERDOWN, who for a long while has been assisting the Director of Research and Education (Mr. W.H. GUILLEBAUD) at Headquarters, resigned from the Department at the end of December. She had been with the Commission (and the Ministry of Supply) for a total of about eight years. On leaving she was the recipient of gifts from her many friends. Mrs. UNDERDOWN was specially suited to her work, being a clerical officer with a flair for producing statistical tables as they should be produced. Another departure is that of Miss D.M. HUTCHINSON, who has left to take up training as a nurse. Miss HUTCHINSON, a shorthand typist, joined the Department ten years ago; in her case the presentation took the form of a cheque.

SIGNING OFF

In this final paragraph the Editor takes the opportunity to thank contributors and to add that, if YOUR particular contribution hasn't been used in this issue, it should appear in the near future. Generally speaking only considerations of space will be responsible for the temporary holding back of material. One further point. The Editor will welcome suggestions as to any special form of item readers would like to see in THE SLASHER; moreover space will, if the response is adequate, be given over to a certain amount of correspondence. Remember! The address is The Editor (Information Officer), THE SLASHER, Forestry Commission, 25 Savile Row, London, W.1.
