

PROCESS REPORT

It is not inappropriate that some space should be devoted to progress made in the various spheres of forestry operations, for while The Slasher is mainly personal in its news it is in the actual work of the Commission that our main interest lies. Readers may therefore care to note that, by the end of February, 13,083 acres had been planted, distributed over the three countries as follows: England 6,513 acres; Scotland 4,335 acres and Wales 2,235 acres. This means there is still considerable leeway to be made up if the current season's target of 36,022 acres is to be reached and it is hoped that future returns will show that much has been done to close the gap. A grand total of 15,223 acres had been beaten-up, while the lining out figure (in thousands)

was 45,867 (England 24,938; Scotland 13,243 and Wales 7,687); where the latter operation is concerned the target is by no means reached, but with two months to go at the time of writing there may be a different story to tell at the close of the season.

Seed collection appears to have been satisfactory, the target figure being surpassed or closely approached for every species except Japanese Larch and Norway Spruce.

The importance of utilisation of produce is steadily growing, no less than 1,418,155 cubic feet of material having been invoiced during the first four months of the Forest Year 1948. This total includes 285,606 cubic feet of round mining timber. The numbers of intimations to consider dedication had reached a total of 894 by the end of February, involving an area of 506,162 acres.

LONG ARM OF COINCIDENCE

In last month's issue reference was made to the temerity of would-be thieves who used markers at Delamere Forest to identify produce they intended to remove and place on the Christmas tree market.

But from W.H. HAMILTON (H.Q.) comes a story which, for sheer effrontery, beats anything heard to date. While on a Christmas visit to his home Mr. Hamilton's son, who is farming in the West Country, told his father of a raid on a local chicken farm. The thieves ignored the hens but took all the cockerels except one; behind them they left a note saying: "We have left you this bird so that you may replenish the stock in time for our visit next year."

Human nature being what it is W.H.H. was highly amused.

But that very same night his own chicken houses, in West Kent, were raided. His hens, too, were disregarded; all his cockerels - quite a number - except one were stolen. This lone bird, too, is now busily engaged in replenishing stock.

its detail is excellent and conveys much to the forester, while it will certainly have an appeal (if somewhat bizarre) to the layman, who is all too ignorant of the problems created by forest tree pests. Second prize (£3) has gone to DISTRICT OFFICER M.J. PENISTAN, of DUNFRIES, who submitted a splendid photograph of 35-years old European Larch over Chestnut coppice, while the third prize of £2 has been awarded to J.D. WATSON, a Forest Worker at Friston, (S), England, whose entry is a really fine effort depicting planting on ploughed land. It is hoped that these prize-winning photographs will be among those displayed with the Commission's exhibit this year at the leading agricultural shows. A number of photographs have been selected for inclusion in the library which is slowly but steadily being build up at Headquarters, and the competitors concerned will be hearing from the Information Officer in the near future.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Well over a hundred photographs were received for this competition, which was judged in March by the Technical Committee, and quite a number of the entries were of a high standard. The judges had no easy task; after considerable deliberation, however, the first prize of £5 was awarded to A.D.S. MACPHERSON, a Forest Worker at South Laggan, Scotland, for his photograph of Lophyrus Pini on Scots Pine. This particular photograph is an outstanding example of public-plus-technical interest:

FOREST CAMEOS

Many who serve the Commission in the field know quite a lot about quite a number of forests, either because they have worked in some of them in the past, or by repute. With the object of encouraging interest in the other fellow's beat it had been intended that The Slasher should present, each month, a pen-picture of what is going on in various units. Contributors to date, however, have shown a not unwelcome diversity of style and it would be something of a pity if their material were to be given in the form of cold, impersonal reporting. Space is therefore provided and, it is hoped, will be provided in future issues, to enable various officers and others to present cameos of forests with which they are now particularly concerned, or in which they are especially interested. Here, then, is a contribution by DISTRICT OFFICER J.A.M. KENNEDY, Forres.

"Monaughty Forest, situated about five miles West of Elgin, was one of the first eleven Forestry Commission forests to be acquired in Scotland. The first planting was done in F.Y.21 and the whole Unit was planted by F.Y.35. During the war about 90 acres of acquired and some Forestry Commission planted plantations were cut and thus at the present time this is the only planting which has to be done out of a total area of 3,000 acres.

"Thinning is the chief job in the Forest. Last year 342 acres were thinned and 80,000 c. ft. of timber produced. With a view to increasing the pace timber merchants are to thin some of the woods. The Road Section of our service commenced operations in January, 1947, and considerable headway has been made since then.

"There is one good story which is worth recording in these days when there is a cry for more production. The trapper at Monaughty is now elderly and, incidentally, in his young days was reputed to be able to split a cigarette card on edge with a .22 bullet at twenty yards. On the south side of the Forest the famous Pluscarden Abbey lies in the hollow about 400 yards away from a scree which is at present being worked by the Road Section. This Abbey was burnt by the Wolf of Badenoch in the fourteenth century and the story is that the Nuns buried their treasures of silver and gold on the hillside above the Abbey, when warned of the approach of the Wolf. The Forester, on his rounds one day, noticed extra activity on this scree and asked the reason. The reply was that our worthy trapper had told the story of the hidden treasure and had informed the workers that the treasure was hidden in that very scree."

Ode to Chopwell

District Officer M.F. ADAMS contributes the following:

"To be the first forest of the first Division of England was the distinction modestly borne, for all its 800 acres, by Chopwell Woods, sixpenny 'bus ride from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Only Destiny could have provided anme so apt, and we can disregard the philologists who would transcend our simple faith with the medieval "Choppewell" and the Roman derivation "Clappa's Well" - a mere watering place. One sighs these days for a little more of that water, for the coal mines have long since drawn off Clappa's springs, and the low rainfall and drying rigour of the N.E. Coast, with wind, snow and man's industrial pollution, together give a problem in forestry.

"From Elizabethan days, when they became vested in the Crown, these woods have been famous for Oak, and with no thought for the morrow they were exploited, until anxiety for naval timbers persuaded the commissioning of William Billington - of Dean fame - to supervise replanting in the 1820's. How much blow down on Windy Monday (7th June, 1839) and the efforts of James Brown, 20 years later, to repair this damage by clear felling the lot; makes a sad story; but his successful replanting of Larch amid the coppicing hardwoods in 1858, together with the varied and novel introductions of the Armstrong College of Forestry early in this century, promoted a burgeoning which, in the war just passed, realised more than three-quarters of a million cubic feet of saw timber (half million were Conifer), 40,000 cubic feet of poles for pitwood, and much charcoal.

"The harvest still goes on among the younger acquired and older F.C. plantations, giving profitable work in these, and the home nurseries, for 20 workers.

"Most of the 360 acres clear felled have now been replanted by Forester John CUMMING, and so a new chapter, to which he inscribes his name, is added to the story of Chopwell."

PASSING OF HEADKEEPER L.B. WREN

It is with the greatest regret that we have to record the death on 20th March of Mr. L.B. WREN, who had been Head Keeper in the New Forest since May, 1936. Mr. Wren, who was 59, had been ill since early in January.

BRAINS TRUST

Recently the Aberystwyth Social Club staged a Brains Trust comprised of Messrs. MACKENZIE, BRADFORD and EDWARDS, with Miss HORSHAM as Question-Master. Questions were invited on any aspect of the Department's activities, though spontaneous answers were not guaranteed! Enquiries ranged from the simple "What is beating-up?", "What is a Private Woodlands Officer?" and "What is the system of stores accounting?" and so on to the more formidable "What considerations affect choice of species for planting?"; but the Trust was able to deal with all comers without (much) consultation of reference books kept handy in case of need.

The session was well attended and the evening voted a success; there can be no doubt as to the value of such ventures.

STUDENT SEASON AT NORTHERWOOD

The "Student Season" opened at Northerwood House on 15th March, with a visit by a party from Cambridge University under the leadership of their lecturer, Mr. C.H. THOMPSON. District Officer L.G.T. KENYON led them on a three-day lightning tour of the New Forest, designed to cover as many different aspects of forestry as possible. The students saw in progress nursery work, planting, beating-up, brashing, cleaning, pruning, thinning, felling, preparation of produce, draining and road-making. They were shown examples of clear-felling, group, strip and seeding fellings, and natural regeneration of hardwoods

and softwoods. Soil pits, sample plots and experimental work were also inspected. More than thirty different species were seen growing in the Forest, and in Bolderwood - where the arboretum and the famous bomb crater were visited - the party stood in awe when they saw the truly massive Douglas Fir (109 ft.) which has been felled and peeled in readiness for its erection as a flagstaff at Northerwood House.

An interesting morning was spent at Messrs. Burt, Boulton & Haywood's Totton depot, where home-grown and imported telegraph poles and sleepers were seen under fabrication and preservative treatment, up-to-date sawmilling methods demonstrated, and many different species of imported timber examined.

On the third day the party returned to Northerwood weary but cheerful - this time after a 12-mile walk.

One of the lighter moments of the tour occurred when the students - diverted by their conductor to fight a vigorous fire in the open forest - came face to face with the Keeper, who had gone to much trouble to kindle the fire in order to dispose of a mass of gorse and heather. The conductor remained in the background under cover of a smoke-screen during this encounter, but the inescapable Bush Telegraph has done its work and he now passes the Divisional Office with averted head!

THE WORK THEY DO (No. 3) The title of "Industrial Section" of Establishment Branch at H.Q. is something of a misnomer, because also handled are Workmen's Compensation and traffic accident matters. H.C. HYEM is in charge, assisted by the Misses A.M. BROOKS and V.E. WOODARD.

The main work is obviously considerable, arising as it does out of the employment of about 13,000 industrial workers; there is also contact to be maintained with the headquarters of a number of Trade Unions.

Government Departments do not insure with companies for liabilities either (1) under the Workmen's Compensation Acts or (2) in connection with traffic accidents. In effect, then, the Section is operating as an insurance company (excluding the finance aspect). Each month over 100 Workmen's Compensation cases and about 20 traffic accident cases are dealt with, the latter, of course, relating to claims by us or on us arising from accidents in which some of our 850 vehicles are involved.

Here it has to be stated that some past injuries to workers and quite a number of traffic accidents (to say nothing of mental anguish to the individuals involved and to their folks) could possibly have been avoided had just that little extra care been taken. It would be so much better for all concerned, and particularly for the sufferers, if there were fewer cases claiming the attention of the Section, and the development among us all of a greater "accident prevention" consciousness has much to commend it. Will you help?

At Cadogan Square The Private Woodlands & Nurseries Section is in charge of A.W. MATTHEWS, who is assisted by Jean TUCKER, C.A. CARPENTER and F.C. REDD. Miss TUCKER's concern is Grant Schemes which she tends, so to speak, from the cradle to the grave (apart from what is done in the Conservancies, of course!). She it is who scrutinises the applications, prepares cases for payment following inspection, and keeps records (you never know who'll ask what!). C.A. CARPENTER deals with Dedication and wire netting licences for private estate forestry. So far Dedication work in the Office of Director, England, has been largely that of "getting the house in order", but now the Dedication Booklet is out there is much speculation as to the result; one Private Woodlands Officer has, it is known, been striving hard to send in the first case calling for the legal formalities. The many duties inseparable from Dedication, e.g. liaison with other Government Departments on such questions as Tree Preservation Orders and Shelter Belt cases under the Hill Farming Act, are also C.A. CARPENTER's responsibility. F.C. REDD handles records for nursery work from the time seed is collected until the plants leave the nursery for the forest, or are sold to the trade; he sees that Conservancies get as many plants, and as much seed, as possible for forest and nursery. In addition he is concerned with cone and seed collection, seed extraction, manures and fertilizers, soil analysis tests, action to be taken on the Nurseries Officer's inspection reports and, most difficult of all, endeavouring to satisfy the demands of nurserymen for forest trees. Incidentally, he is still hoping that one day Technical Officers will not find it necessary to amend their N.R. & P. forms after he has done most of the summary!

In addition to the above the Section handles Services Land Requirements Committee questions, matters arising from the Surplus Airfields Committee, and arrangements with the R.A.F. for fire-fighting co-operation.

The foregoing covers the executive work; the Section as a whole comes under the technical guidance of Mr. WYNNE JONES (Private Woodlands) and Messrs. CONNELL and PATERSON (re Plants & Nursery work).

At Aberystwyth The Welsh Directorate "Glory-Hole" is manned by H.J. POPE, Miss E.C. AKISTER and D.E. HUGHES, the two former being C.O.'s who joined the Commission in October and November, 1946, respectively and the latter a temporary Officer recruited at Aberystwyth. While still in the "nursery" stage the move to Cymru (Wales to you, foreigners!) took place with Messrs. POPE and KIRKWOOD (the latter since called up for

National Service, but still in touch) on the despatching end and D.E. HUGHES ably assisted by the locally recruited Messengers - Messrs. JOHNSTON, RAFTREE and HUMPHREYS - on the "sticky" end. No papers were lost en route (it is hoped!!) and registry has now settled down as a well oiled, smooth running machine with the motto "Service with a Smile" ever before the staff. It is whispered that having passed the 1 + 0 stage the staff consider themselves fit for lining out, and the Chief Clerk is waiting with apprehension for the expected deluge of applications from volunteers anxious to have their turn of fun and games with the 5,000 or so files.

After all, says our Aberystwyth correspondent, anyone can answer a simple memo, but it takes brains to decide which wrong file to put the copy in!

"MATCHES, MATCHES," ETC.

In a helpful and encouraging letter from Woking, H.Q. of the S.E. (England) Conservancy, District Officer JOHN WHITE makes certain suggestions regarding future issues of The Slasher. One is that there should be included a Hatch, Match and Despatch feature - Despatches, we feel, might cover departures to pastures new; if such a feature is to materialise much will depend on readers for the authentic information required. Meanwhile, to go on with, here are a few flashes from the York Office, H.Q. of N.E. (England) Conservancy: On 29th February (Leap Year Day) to S.E.O. W. FORSYTH and Mrs. FORSYTH, a son; on 6th March RENA HAYWARD (typist) married ROY PALMER (Accounts) on 22nd March MARGARET GRANT (typist) became Mrs. GEORGE ARMITAGE: on 16th February Div. Officer RAYMOND FOSSEY departed for service in S. (Scotland) Conservancy.

J.H.V. DAILLY, for two years C.O. in charge of stationery at Headquarters, has rejoined the R.A.F. as Flight Lieutenant and is to serve in the Secretarial Branch; before joining the Commission he had completed 17 years in the Service to which he has returned.

COMMUNIQUE FROM ALICE HOLT

Staff-Losses: E.S. CHILD and the Misses J. DUCKER and M.R. MORRISON have resigned from the Census, the latter to take up an appointment in the Colonial Service. J. CHRISTIE has left the Sample Plot Party for a course at the Gwydyr Forester Training School. Gains: D. MANICOM has joined the Sample Plot Party and Messrs. WHARTON and MARCHANT and Miss RUMSEY have been recruited on the clerical side. General news includes the fact that Press agency photographers have been busy taking photographs depicting the different aspects of work carried out at the Research Station. These pictorial records are likely to have a world-wide circulation. Recently a team of table tennis players visited Headquarters (full report in next month's issue).

Footnote: It is learned that R.F. WOOD (Silviculturalist, South) has made one request of the Librarian - for a copy of "The Grafters' Handbook"!

WHERE TO GET YOUR TIE

Now that the Forestry Commission tie is no longer available through Headquarters a number of enquiries have been received as to where it may be obtained. The answer is - from C.H. MUNDAY, LTD., 7, Irving Street, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2., price 7s.9d. post free, and one coupon.

FORESTERS ILLNESS

It is understood that Forester S.E. PHILLIPS (The Dean) is now making some progress; he has been sick since February, 1946, and for many months has been confined to bed. It is hoped that recovery will continue and be as speedy as possible; meanwhile the best of good wishes go to him.

CAN YOU BEAT IT?

We believe the following are records. But if you can go one better, please let us know, giving details to support your claim.

Highest Forest in Britain is The Queen's Forest of Glen More in Inverness-shire. Forester J. FRASER could climb to the top of the Cairn Gorm, 4,084 feet above sea level, without leaving his unit.

Wettest Forest is probably Beddgelert in Caernarvonshire. Forester J.E. EVANS sees about one hundred inches of rainfall every year. But the trees love it, and it keeps down the fire risk.

Farthest from Railways? What about Fiunary, Argyll? Forester A. DRYSDALE has only 45 miles to go to see a train at Fort William.

Nearest to Continent. Lyminge Forest, Kent. Forester J.P. WIMBUSH and his staff live 30 miles from the French coast; they realised just how close this was when the flying bombs came over and probably when the German long-range, cross-Channel guns were in action.

TAILPIECE

It is regretted that owing to shortage of space it has been necessary to hold over one or two items. But please don't ease up on sending along your news, for the only way in which The Slasher can become truly representative is for there to be a sustained flow of contributions from an increased number of contributors.