

OVERSEAS FORESTERS IN BRITAIN

FRENCH AND RUSSIAN PARTIES:
I.U.F.R.O. CONGRESS

PROBABLY never before in such a short space of time have so many overseas foresters converged on Britain as in the last two or three months - we exclude, of course, attendance at the Empire Forestry Conference in 1947. First there was the party of French foresters, led by M. Francois du Vignaux, Director General of the French Forest Service; then the small band of Russians, headed by Mr. I. S. SHINOV, who is in charge of the Forestry Division of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture. Both these parties were here at the invitation of the Forestry Commission and both saw much of our work in widely separated parts of the country.

July has seen the 12th Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations. This was held at Oxford and attended by about 250 delegates from some 40 countries, mainly European but including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, America, Russia, Japan and Korea. As is only to be assumed, the deliberations of the Congress were highly technical, if not entirely scientific; nevertheless, there emerged a number of points of interest to forester and layman alike - for example, model shelter belts have been used overseas in wind tunnels, such as are employed in testing aircraft, to gauge the extent to which wind velocity is affected by belts of various widths, shapes and heights; in Japan an experimental tree belt appears to be having a considerable effect not only in reducing wind velocity, but in reducing sea fog density. In south east Russia the yield of various agricultural crops has doubled and even trebled in dry weather as the result of shelter from systematically sited tree belts.

There was reference to tree growth of 35 feet in 23 months - the delegate from the East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organisation said that a species of eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus saligna*) has made this amazing growth, due largely to the fact that the seasons are insufficiently marked to cause any appreciable slowing down. In four years this species produced wood for fuel; in six years poles for native huts; and in 8-10 years timber for permanent houses. It was proposed that steps be taken to develop the international exchange of information about eucalyptus and also of eucalyptus seed, with a view to the tree being more widely grown where conditions are suitable. There are, of course, about 400 different species of eucalyptus.

At the closing session it was announced that the next Congress is to take place in Vienna at a date yet to be decided. And a signal honour came to Britain, to the Forestry Commission and personally to one of our Directors - for Mr. JAMES MACDONALD, Director of Research and Education, was elected President of the Union in succession to Professor Aldo Pavari, of Italy.

Following the meetings at Oxford delegates left on various tours - three in England, three in Scotland and one in Wales - to Forestry Commission areas and other places of interest.

~~THE~~ DEPUTY SURVEYOR AND DISTRICT
OFFICER HONOURED

OWING to the time factor we were able last month to make only a passing reference to the honours conferred by Her Majesty the Queen on two of our Officers. In the Birthday Honours List Mr. WYNNE JONES, Deputy Surveyor, New Forest, became an Officer of the Order of the British Empire and Mr. J. L. SHAW, District Officer, North Wales Conservancy, became a Member of the same Order. Mr. Wynne Jones joined the Commission more than 30 years ago and, as a District Officer, he became Assistant Acquisition Officer for England and Wales. In 1932 he became Acquisition Officer for the two countries. He was promoted Divisional Officer in 1933 and within a few years became responsible for the Census and Plans Branch. Came the last war, during which he worked for some time with H.T.P.D.; he returned to the Commission in 1941 and joined the late LORD ROBINSON in the task of preparing the White Paper on Post War Forest Policy. He became a Conservator in 1946, serving at the headquarters of the Director of Forestry for England and then, in 1949, he was posted as Deputy Surveyor, New Forest.

Mr. Shaw joined the Commission as long ago as June, 1924, as a Grade II Forester. He had previously been employed on the Killearn Estate and, after Army service in the first world war, with the Timber Supply Department and in other private estate work. By the beginning of 1936 Mr. Shaw was a Head Forester and early in 1950 he was promoted Acting District Officer, Grade II, becoming District Officer

Grade I very soon afterwards. He commenced private woodlands duties in North Wales in 1946.

~~THE~~ FAMOUS ARBORETUM ACQUIRED

ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTED

Hon. L. PALMER, Treasurer of the Royal Horticultural Society, to advise generally on its management, care and maintenance. Some neighbouring woodland is included in the acquisition.

The arboretum covers more than 100 acres and is a unique collection of trees and shrubs; it was founded in about 1820 by the ancestors of the late Sir George Holford, by whom it was subsequently developed, the work being continued by the late Lord Morley. Oaks, yews and conifers form a background to numerous rare specimens of trees and shrubs collected from many parts of the world, particularly Japan, China, and the Western States of America, and including, notably, varieties of maple and rhododendron. Many of the different species in the arboretum have been collected and arranged so that their autumn colouring is seen to great advantage.

~~THE~~ SNAKES ALIVE!

NOW - AN ADDER 28 INS. LONG

produced some interesting notes.

Acquisition Officer F. D. BARRETT, North East England, points out that it is said that adders, when frightened, will swallow their young; whether the young are regurgitated later is, like the foregoing statement itself, somewhat in doubt. Some hold the view that when the parent snake opens its mouth the young merely slide beneath its body, thus, perhaps, giving the impression that they have entered the cavity. It would be interesting to hear whether any reader can give us facts.

Head Forester W. F. STODDART, Instructor at the Faskally School, writes: "On one occasion I came across an adder lying coiled up on top of a tree stump. After taking the necessary precautions I investigated the cause of its distended stomach and found therein one half digested field mouse and three young skylarks, each of which I judged to be about three times the size of the snake's head. From a reference book I learnt that snakes, having elastic jaws, swallow their victims whole and, to enable them to breathe, the snakes have a breathing tube at one side of their jaws. Incidentally, this particular adder measured 28 inches.

~~THE~~ AIR-LIFT FOR YOUNG WOODCOCK

SOME MORE EXPERIENCES

readers as a former Head Forester in the Dean, says he has seen this sort of thing happen on many occasions. "My first sight of it was when I was a lad, nearly 70 years ago", he writes. "I was in Mailsot Beat when I walked nearly on top of a woodcock before it flew off with a young bird. The last time I witnessed such an occurrence was in 1943, in the Great Doward, just north of Bibbling's Lodge. I was walking through the woods when a woodcock flew up, carrying quite a big youngster and, judging by the squeaks, the latter was not enjoying the ride very much. I saw a similar thing in Cockshoot, in Reddings Beat, in August, 1910, and as in the same year, in May, I had seen a family of young woodcock flying strongly I wondered if sometimes woodcock nest twice in a year!"

Mr. Smith goes on to cite other cases, and in quite remarkable fashion recalls incidents that took place prior to 1910. "I have heard it said", he continues, "that the old bird grips the young one between its thighs in flight, but I think the feet are used. As to obtaining a photograph, I would not give much for anyone's chance, for these things happen when least expected and a woodcock, when disturbed, is not in the habit of loitering".

"I have seen it happen once, in Radnorshire", writes Divisional Officer G. E. GODWIN, North Wales. "An adult bird flew across the road in front of me with its legs drooping, carrying a chick. I think the young was held between the thighs of the adult, which was not being pursued and, I imagine, was going to another feeding ground".

"I am quite sure the woodcock does occasionally carry its young in flight", writes District Officer H. L. EDLIN, of the

Research Directorate, "because I have seen it do so, though only once. I was exploring an oakwood near Alderley Edge in Cheshire, in the month of June, when I suddenly came across a family of woodcock within a few feet of me. The mother bird gave a startled 'cluck' and the tiny chicks at once clustered beneath her. She then flew off, carrying two or three of them with her; they were not easy to see, as apparently they were held between her feet and her breast; but as they subsequently fell off there could be no doubt at all that they were being airborne. The mother bird then alighted and the whole family scurried off into the brambles. The 'airlift' looked like a deliberate action by the bird to carry part, at least, of her brood to safety".

And now Assistant Forester E.V. ROGERS, of Kesteven Forest, East England Conservancy. "Last year I disturbed a woodcock and found a nest with two eggs. The next day there were two newly hatched young and on the third day I saw the adult bird rise, carrying something between its legs and flying with obvious difficulty. A search of the nest area revealed no sign of the chicks. So I am convinced it was the chicks that were being carried".

STAFF VISITS TO FORESTS

MORE than 30 members of the staff of Director, Wales, took part in a visit to Brechfa Forest, in the South Wales Conservancy. There something was seen of the clearing, extraction and conversion of timber blown in 1954. In another part of the forest the party saw amenity hardwoods and, nearby, some private woodland which is considered a "rarity", inasmuch as it is managed under Basis I of the Dedication Scheme. The highest plantations at Brechfa, standing at 1,200 feet, were visited and some of the more adventurous climbed the 60 ft. high fire tower.

There was great excitement during the picnic lunch - smoke was seen rising in the distance! The visitors were bundled into the waiting transport, issued with beaters, and rushed to the scene of the fire which, however, proved to be on adjoining land. Road work, cleaning and brashing, thinning and more conversion were all witnessed elsewhere in the forest before the party left for Aberystwyth, much enlightened by all they had seen. Talks were given at the various stopping places in the forest by Mr. G. B. RYLE, Director, Wales; District Officer J. H. JAMES; and Head Forester L. T. EDWARDS.

The South Wales Conservancy staff visited Coed Morgannwyg, where they were met by District Officers J. WHITE and R. J. R. MARNIE at a new acquisition in the north Rhondda Valley. Later they saw a variety of forest operations at Rheola, these being described by Assistant Forester W. E. POWELL. Another interesting feature of the tour was a visit to a small licensed coal mine, one of a number now being worked amid the plantations. After lunch and with Mr. J. Q. WILLIAMSON, Conservator, South Wales, the party went to Michaelston Forest, where they were received by Foresters J. E. W. LLOYD and D. M. MORGAN. The Cymmer Afan School forest was visited, the children having that day been filmed by a TV unit - readers interested in the school plot scheme will, of course, find full details in the Commission pamphlet "Starting a School Forest". Next came a visit to the heathland nursery and then to the scene of the devastating Michaelston fire in which 446 acres, valued at nearly £23,000, were destroyed. Head Forester N. SMITH joined the party, who travelled by lorry and landrover over several miles of the Ffordd-y-Frenhines (The Queen's Way), the forest road opened by the Princess Royal in 1953. The stone commemorating this is near the Margam fire tower, which is 80 feet high and was scaled by several of the visitors.

RETIREMENT OF HEAD FORESTER AND WORKER AGED 79

OUR good wishes go to Head Forester H. CAMERON, of Barcaldine Forest, West Scotland, who has retired on reaching the age of 65. Mr. Cameron, who joined the Commission in 1920, spent most of his time at Barcaldine, though in earlier days he was stationed at Inverlicver. To mark his retirement he received a chair and television table from colleagues, the presentation being made by the Conservator, Mr. J. E. JAMES, who handed flowers to Mrs. Cameron. Local friends and wellwishers presented Mr. Cameron with a television set.

Another retirement (through ill health) is that of DUGALD CAMERON, aged 79, of Glenloy, North Scotland, who had been continuously employed by the Commission since 1921. Forester A. GRANT writes: "Dugald was a conscientious and skilful worker, never late in the morning and never early in leaving off work. As befits a true native of Lochaber, he is a fluent Gaelic speaker; he was a good athlete in his younger days and a keen follower of the ancient game of shinty and, doubtless, a worthy exponent of the art of 'Caman Weilding'. He is still a

batchelor, but says he has had opportunities to be otherwise; we wish him a speedy return to health and some years of happy retirement - which, no doubt, he will call idleness!"

THE ESCAPEE

Forest, East England, writes:

HERE is an unusual nature note, if you like!
Assistant Forester A. C. DOVER, of Latimer

"A strange insect, about three inches long and resembling a large dragonfly, was found here by a worker at the gravel pits adjoining Broadspring Wood. On its wings were red triangular patches bearing the figures 71. Needless to say, the find aroused great interest.

"Our captive was identified as a locust and was forwarded to the British Museum, with a request for further information. Meanwhile, we were of the opinion that the locust could have strayed from Africa, since the Encyclopaedia Britannica states that in 1869 considerable numbers of this insect reached this country from West Africa. Locusts have been noted 1,200 miles at sea, and in 1899 one swarm which crossed the Red Sea was estimated to be 2,000 miles in extent. Since a swarm of these great insects could devastate a forest within a few hours, our find became something of a 'forester's nightmare' and we awaited further news or developments with some anxiety.

"In due course we learned that our specimen was, in fact, a desert locust Schistocerca Gregaria Forskal, and that it was an escapee from the Anti-Locust Research Laboratories at Kensington - a distance of 18 miles from the forest".

TRANSFERS

THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS have been notified to Headquarters in the last two months or so:

District Officers I. J. W. SALTER from Palmure, S(S), to Ae, S(S); R. J. R. MARNIE from Ruthin, N(W), to Neath, S(W); W. C. WILKINS from Narbeth, S(W), to Aberystwyth; J. B. TEASDALE from Brecon, S(W), to Carmarthen, S(W); D. PLANT from Education, Lynford, to Education, Gwydyr; J. C. VOYSEY from Bettws-y-Coed, N(W), to York, NE(E). Head Forester J. M. KENNEDY from Clashindarroch, E(S), to Drummond Hill, E(S).

Foresters D. A. BRINSLEY from Ringwood, New, to Bramshill, SE(E); J. R. MAXTONE from Glenlivet, E(S), to Rosarie, E(S); D. ANDERSON from Fetteresso, E(S), to Clashindarroch; S. J. LAW from Charlton, SE(E), to Thetford Chase, E(E); F. C. SKINNER from Parkhill, New, to Haugh, SW(E); A. LEISHMAN from Newcastleton, S(S), to Changue, S(S). Assistant Foresters J. B. WHITE from Hevingham, E(E), to Eynesford, E(E); T. C. HOPE from Greskine, S(S), to Auchenroddan, S(S); J. M. JOLLY from Glenisla, E(S), to Glenarrochty, E(S); G. L. McMAIN from Glenarrochty to Fetteresso; J. MACLEOD from Ceannacroc, N(S), to Inshriach, N(S); J. MILLAR from Inshriach to Ceannacroc; R. D. DAVIES from Aeron, N(W), to Dovey, N(W); P. H. PEARCE from Savernake, SW(E), to Research, Alice Holt Lodge.

Foreman C. ADAMS from Taf Fechan, S(W), to Hafren, N(W). Asst. Engineers A. R. BROMLEY from Dumfries to York; F. G. CHAPMAN from Inverness to Perth, E(S).

Higher Executive Officers Miss M. MANICOM from Headquarters to D(E), London; E. GOWER from D(E) to Headquarters; E.C. HARPER from Research, Alice Holt Lodge, to Headquarters. Executive Officer Miss B. M. T. DYER from D(E), to Bristol; E. S. POWELL from Headquarters to D(E). Clerical Officer I. E. WALKER from Blair Atholl to Aberdeen.

PERSONAL

MISS ANNE MITCHELL, Executive Officer on the staff of Director, England, has become engaged to Dr. A. W. BRIGHT, lecturer at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington. Congratulations also to Mr. E. BROWN and Mr. G. L. ROUND, both EOs at Princes Gate, and their wives - Mr. Brown now has a son and Mr. Round a daughter.

IF YOU DO SOMETHING, SEE SOMETHING, OR HEAR SOMETHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY, TELL YOUR SLASHER CORRESPONDENT. THERE IS A CORRESPONDENT IN EACH DIRECTORATE AND CONSERVANCY OFFICE