

REPORT

CHAPTER I.—FOREST POLICY

1. *General Administration.*—All normal departmental work with the exception of fire protection has been sacrificed to the maintenance of forest supplies to the timber and allied industries for defence purposes, and to post-war and rehabilitation planning. Extended hours have been worked by all sections of the staff, and virtually a twenty-four-hours' service seven days a week has been provided for the war effort.

2. *Recruitment and Training.*—The policy of recruiting trainees from secondary schools and giving them even only a year or two of training before taking up military service has been continued with good results. Plans are in hand for Department participation in the Army educational scheme, which it is now proposed should be dovetailed with the early establishment of a departmental training centre at Rotorua where both short refresher and long residential courses will be available for various classes of officers and employees as well as for timber graders and saw doctors, &c.

3. *Indigenous-forest Resources.*—A national forest inventory is planned as a post-war development essential to the conservation of the remaining indigenous resource and the early transfer of production from indigenous to exotic forests. The necessary technique is being studied for early application at the conclusion of hostilities. One thing is certain. So depleted are the indigenous resources that their cutting, whether in State or other forests, must be limited as soon as practicable to the minimum consistent with the Dominion's requirements for high-grade finishing timbers, leaving the exotic forests to supply the bulk of the demand.

4. *Indigenous-forest Management.*—Within the limitations imposed by staff shortage and concentration on defence work, extensive reconnaissance is being made of major forest areas with a view to expediting the establishment of new milling units with a length of life sufficient to warrant the installation of modern milling-equipment, including dry kiln, and the provision of well-designed villages with all modern amenities, and to allow the growth of a continuing subsequent supply of exotic logs. Such units will operate under formal working plans as provided for under the Forests Act, 1921–22.

5. *Indigenous Silviculture.*—Regeneration and tending operations, whilst naturally restricted, are being persevered with incidental to forest-protection activities. This is for the purpose of developing a technique which can be applied to large-scale rehabilitation activities in the post-war period, more especially for the improvement of extensive areas of kauri and beech stands, which appear to be most susceptible to silvicultural treatment. For similar reasons, fundamental research into the behaviour of tree seeds and the phenology of significant tree and shrub species is being continued.

6. *Exotic-forest Resources.*—Assessment surveys in the older State forests are being steadily persevered with as the basis of post-war management and utilization. The results continue to emphasize the difficulties of both silviculture and exploitation, but indicate that it should be quite practicable to meet the whole of the Dominion's increased demand for timber as a result of rehabilitation and post-war activities by an expansion of exotic-timber production in both State and private commercial forests.

7. *Exotic Silviculture.*—Continued experience in departmental logging and milling operations in exotic stands suffering from lack of silvicultural treatments over appropriate periods demonstrates the imperative necessity for both technical staff and adequate funds to supervise and finance tending operations as required by current growth. The indications now are that only on a limited scale will it be practicable to apply ideal silvicultural treatments, that on not inconsiderable areas virtual abandonment of poor sites and species must be faced, that still other areas must be converted from poor to good species, and that very large areas must be clear cut. It is against a continuation or repetition of such an experience that the establishment of a staff training centre and the inauguration of working plans are being proceeded with. A very necessary protection to the development of new exotic forests is the provision of public control over the importation and collection of tree seed, the results of assessment surveys indicating that many mistakes have been due to the supply or collection of poor or wrongly named seed. For this reason seed crops, tree types, and the phenology of the more important exotics are being carefully investigated.

8. *Communal and Farm Forestry.*—Constant reference has been made in recent reports to the recently accepted policy of establishing small State exotic forests in poorly timbered districts remote from major forest areas, and as part of the departmental rehabilitation effort, areas totalling 47,000 acres have been selected in various parts of the Dominion for this purpose, the actual purchases finalized during the year amounting to 15,000 acres. Whilst an area of 8,000 acres is regarded as a desirable minimum in order that fire-protection, overhead, and administrative charges may be kept within reasonable limits, consideration has been given in some districts to units as low as 5,000 acres without, however, any success in locating suitable blocks, and it is an inescapable conclusion that in some localities where only very small areas are available communal forests should be established and maintained by local bodies. Recommendations are accordingly being drafted whereby such a policy can be implemented. Means likewise of encouraging farm forestry by the establishment of woodlots also continue to be studied as a possible post-war development.

9. *Forest Protection.*—Apart from the ever-present threat of epidemic insect and fungal attack, which is largely a technical matter and under appropriate scientific scrutiny and policing, forest protection involves three major problems—those of animal, wind, and fire damage. Animal damage in the indigenous forests is only too well known, and the rise in the deer population as a result of war conditions is serious and will require prompt correction in the post-war period. The danger of wind damage, and incidentally also of