

12. *Rehabilitation and Post-war Planning.*—While long-term planning is the essence of forest management, it is no less important that within the wider period there should be necessary short-term planning supplementary to the main scheme. Without such planning expenditure will often be incurred that does not achieve the results which are desired, or which may even bring about results that are undesirable against the background of the long-term objective.

The first instance of this occurred in the initial establishment of the supplementary exotic forestry resources first provided for in 1925 when, due to the general buoyancy of the Dominion's revenues and the availability of labour, annual planting operations were increased to a peak figure of 60,000 acres instead of being limited to a maximum of 24,000 acres or even less. The undesirable results included:—

- (a) The concentration of too much planting in one area remote from many timber-consuming centres ;
- (b) Too much planting of insignis pine due to the relative abundance of seed-supplies of this species compared with others ;
- (c) The planting of various species on unsuitable sites ; and
- (d) Poor nursery and planting practices, including 8 ft. by 8 ft. espacement, and poor planting technique due to the employment of too many inexperienced and seasonal workers.

The second instance occurred during the depression, when, in common with other public works, forestry was invoked as a means of alleviating unemployment. On this occasion the defect of relying largely upon insignis pine was remedied by the extensive use of other species and although large annual plantings were again undertaken, this does not constitute a defect, as the use of the slower-growing species permits of more elasticity in management. While planting continued to be over-centralized in one area, the gravest fault of this period appears in retrospect to lie in the failure to concentrate available labour on the silvicultural improvement of the exotic areas already established.

Taking into account the original cost and accumulated interest charges, it is not improbable that by the time the various areas affected have been reconverted to better stands of other species a wastage of as much as £2,000,000 may be involved. It is against the repetition of such errors that the whole of the Forest Service long-term planning and more especially the short-term planning of the post-war period have been directed, and it is pertinent to observe that this applies also to the intensive staff-training proposals, as it was the shortage of highly trained personnel over the two periods reviewed that was fundamentally responsible for the defects referred to.

It will be observed that the one factor common to both periods was the ample supply of labour. It is therefore fundamental that any planning for the future should take cognizance of this factor, for then, if unemployment did occur, large numbers of men could be efficiently and not wastefully employed. This is the only safe policy that can be followed with respect to the planning of any public works. It is no less fundamental to such planning that priorities for various projects should be established. Moreover, as events have demonstrated during the past year, much less labour is now likely to become available during the post-war period than was at first expected, which means, of course, that only the most essential works can be undertaken, and it is not improbable that failure to appreciate the fact, combined with the magnitude of the expenditure involved in planning against the worst eventuality—that is, surplus labour—is responsible for some uneasiness regarding the short-term—five or ten year—planning of all public works.

Naturally, the intensity of planning for individual projects varies with their priority, but nevertheless a definite assurance can be given that all projects have been sufficiently planned to avoid every major mistake that has been made under the pressure of expediency over the last twenty-five years. Among other things, planting is being widely extended throughout the whole Dominion, annual plantings of each species on each project