

There is great scope and urgent need for the extension of tree-planting on farms, with a threefold objective : provision of shelter for stock and farm crops ; protection of the soil against gully, slip, sheet, and wind erosion, and river-bank protection ; and utilization of small waste areas of land for production of timber, and firewood for farm use. Admittedly, these three purposes overlap to some extent : where the object of planting is fairly clear cut, however, advice and, in some cases, other forms of assistance are available from the Department of Agriculture (farm shelter-belts) ; from the Soil Conservation Council and Catchment Boards (soil-conservation planting), or from the Forest Service (farm woodlots). Planting of coniferous trees where subsidized by the Soil Conservation Council and Catchment Boards is subject to the advice and guidance of local forest officers or the forestry liaison officer attached to the Soil Conservation Council.

COMPANY FORESTRY

No new planting by afforestation companies is reported, their principal activity at the present time being either felling and extraction operations or forest maintenance. The term "afforestation companies" means companies which planted forests out of bond or share capital. Of those now exploiting their forests, many dispose of their stands to sawmillers under agreement, the sawmillers carrying out the felling and extraction. In a few instances, however, and including some of the most extensive forests, the companies themselves fell and extract their trees as raw material for their own utilization plants, whether sawmills or pulp-mills. Only one of the afforestation companies is undertaking any thinning ; but, although this thinning has been done on unorthodox lines, it has nevertheless benefited the company by returning an early monetary yield and by enhancing the increment of the final crop trees.

There are also several company forests which have been established on a different basis. Here long-established sawmilling or paper-manufacturing companies have planted or are still planting softwood forests to furnish raw material for their main line of business. One such plantation was recently commenced on a tract of sand-dunes under a measure of subsidy from the Soil Conservation Council. The company in question planted a few acres during the year with trees raised in its own nursery ; and a similar concern which in 1948 planted 800 acres is reported to have half a million trees in its nursery for planting out in the winter of 1949.

LOCAL BODIES

According to available information, at least 153 County, City, and Borough Councils and Town Boards control reserves which are at least partly under forest, and, in addition, there are at least 20 local authorities of other designations and 55 semi-public bodies, committees, trusts, &c. Their areas range from a few acres to tens of thousands of acres.

At present only one body, the Wellington City and Suburban Water Supply Board, controlling 70,000 acres of State forest vested in the Wellington City Council and other lands, is required to submit forest working plans to the Minister ; and this requirement has been faithfully adhered to since it was instituted by statute in the year 1927. A number of other local authorities in which Crown land has been vested for afforestation purposes are supposed to submit proper working plans to the Minister ; but this practice where it was observed, has fallen into abeyance. Several of the local bodies employ professional foresters to undertake orthodox forest management of the communal forests concerned.

During the past year the planting of 320 acres of new exotic forest by local bodies was reported, while a considerable quantity of material was removed from older forests by sawmillers and firewood-cutters under sales agreements with a number of local bodies.