

Report of the Director of Forests for the Year ended 30th June, 1943.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS.

SIR,—I have to present my report for the year ended 30th June, 1943.

The strong demand for timber for defence purposes continued unabated during the past twelve months. The difficulties of supply, however, were considerably accentuated. The man-power position in the logging industry and in access road construction became worse; logging plants, which had been transferred to defence works in North Queensland, were not returned as anticipated, and those remaining in the industry deteriorated; spare parts and tyres were in short supply; repairs were difficult to effect, and the railway transport system became more overloaded.

Despite all this the mill log output from Crown forests (198,970,000 superficial feet) exceeded the production of any pre-war year, although it was 33,700,000 superficial feet less than that of the record year of 1941-42.

The hardwood mill log cut was an all-time high at 49,650,000 superficial feet, whilst the output of scrubwoods increased considerably.

In addition, a record quantity of round timber was supplied from Crown lands during 1942-43. This was largely made up of piles supplied for defence purposes.

To maintain continuity of supplies the Department adopted a policy of negotiating haulage contracts with Departmental contractors in lieu of calling tenders, and also extended the non-competitive system of sale of standing timber to sawmillers.

Logging contractors have been given every assistance in obtaining trucks, tractors, spare parts, rope, petrol, tyres, &c.

It is of interest to report that during the year 1,250,000 superficial feet of small thinnings from eight to twelve year old pine plantations were disposed of for case-making.

Early in 1943 two cypress pine mills, which had been out of action, were taken over by the Department and operated with C.C.C. labour on behalf of the Allied Works Council.

Because of man-power shortage, the protection staff on the State forests was inadequate during the past fire season, but very welcome assistance in fire fighting was rendered by the Army. This is gratefully acknowledged. Fortunately, owing to spring rains, the fire season was short, the only dangerous period being encountered at the beginning of summer.

Natural regeneration work and establishment of new plantations has been practically abandoned as a result of loss of staff. Protection and essential maintenance work has been concentrated upon.

Before the war the forests of the State had been heavily depleted. The war has imposed a further drain upon limited resources. The post-war demands for building needs to counteract the suspension of building during the war years will make the situation more difficult. There is an urgent need to rebuild the wasted forest capital, and this work must bulk largely in any programme of post-war work.

REFORESTATION.

In accordance with the policy put into effect in the latter part of the previous year, operations were confined almost entirely to those of essential maintenance.

Except for the carry-over winter plantings of exotics in July, 1942, and a small area of hoop pine, no new plantations were established. Treatment of the natural forests was limited to that necessary to maintain staff after protection works were completed. New construction works were eliminated, except for minor items. Plantation tendings aimed at the clearing of those areas planted in the previous three years and areas carrying lantana and bad vines. No new pruning operations were started, the only work in this direction being the carrying-up of previously pruned areas.

In spite of this heavy curtailment of works it was not possible, due to loss of man-power, to complete even this minimum maintenance programme. From a wages staff of over 950 in January, 1942, engaged in reforestation works, there remained 377 in July, 1942, and 263 in June, 1943. This excludes the numbers of non-refugee enemy aliens employed in the previous year and transferred to other war works in November last.

With such a reduction of staff it is inevitable that the risk of failure to control serious outbreaks of fire must be incurred.

Fortunately, the fire season was less hazardous than for a number of years. In spite of this, however, 4 acres of plantations were lost, and a number of areas under treatment were burned. Despite record heavy falls of rain in South Queensland in December, which produced prolific grass growth, rainfall for the first six months of 1943 has been considerably below

average, all months being particularly dry. In fact, the unusual occurrence of quite a large fire on a hardwood area in April was experienced. Conditions for the forthcoming season promised at the close of the year to be bad, and opportunity had already been taken of the circumstances to have firebreak maintenance work initiated.

Additional sales of plantation thinnings were made during the year. The total quantity now under sale is approximately 4,000,000 superficial feet. Removals to date amount to 1,450,000 superficial feet, of which 1,250,000 superficial feet was removed in 1942-43.

Experimental work was maintained on the reduced basis mentioned in the previous report.

Plantations.—The total area of new plantations established within the report period was 315.7 acres, almost all of which was planted at S.F.R. 589, Beerwah, in July, 1942. Only 3 acres of hoop pine were established during the year. These plantings bring the total area established at 30th June, 1943, to—

	Acres.
Softwoods	29,806
Eucalypts	2,270
Other	443
Total	32,519

Only a small amount of refilling in the previous plantings was necessary. The number of trees planted, including refills, was 320,000. The total area of plantations tended was 28,265 acres, while 1,907 acres were subjected to carry up pruning.

Nurseries and Seed.—Twenty-three nurseries were maintained in plant production. Stock which would ordinarily have been planted during the year was composted. Maintenance of production is necessary to ensure available planting stocks immediately the war is over, since the production period in most cases is two years.

No hoop pine seed was collected, but collection of *P. caribaea* and *P. tada* seed from plantation trees at Beerwah amounted to 77 lb. and 114 lb. respectively.

Natural Forests.—Areas treated during the year were:—

Type of Forest.	Subjected to First Treatment.	Subjected to Other Treatments.	Total Treated.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cypress Pine	191	609	800
Hardwood	1,744	7,759	9,503
Hoop Pine	126	..	126
Totals	2,061	8,368	10,429

This work raised the total of areas treated at least once at 30th June, 1943, to—

Hardwoods	261,050
Softwoods (Cypress Pine-Hoop Pine)	167,361
Other	405
Total	428,816

Protection.—Protection works occupied the major part of the year's operations. Firebreak operations comprised—

(1) Cleared Breaks—Western Forests—

<i>Firebreak Construction—</i>		Miles.
Cutting and grubbing .. .. .	.. .. .	37.3
Stacking and burning .. .. .	.. .. .	76.9
Cutting auxiliary roads .. .. .	.. .. .	22.2
<i>Firebreak Improvement—</i>		
Grubbing roads .. .. .	.. .. .	35.5
Grading .. .. .	.. .. .	77.1
2-chain green strips .. .. .	.. .. .	299.8
<i>Firebreak Maintenance—</i>		
Sucker and buras .. .. .	.. .. .	908.7
Grade .. .. .	.. .. .	271.9

(2) Green Breaks—Coastal Hardwood Forests—

<i>Firebreak Construction—</i>		Miles.
Felling dangerous trees .. .. .	.. .. .	1.0
Stacking and burning .. .. .	.. .. .	2.4
<i>Firebreak Improvement</i> .. .. .	.. .. .	190.6
<i>Firebreak Maintenance—</i>		
Brushing .. .. .	.. .. .	92.0
Chipping and/or ploughing .. .. .	.. .. .	1,003.4
Burning .. .. .	.. .. .	658.9
Grading .. .. .	.. .. .	66.5
Roads .. .. .	.. .. .	214.9

(3) Cleared Break—Plantations—

<i>Firebreak Construction—</i>		Miles.
Clearing .. .. .	.. .. .	3.1
<i>Firebreak Maintenance—</i>		
Chipping .. .. .	.. .. .	102.7
Ploughing and/or grading .. .. .	.. .. .	128.6
Burning .. .. .	.. .. .	15.7
Scrub breaks .. .. .	.. .. .	570 acres

In addition to the above, follow-up operations were carried out as far as possible on areas previously cleared of lantana and other noxious weeds.

Plantation protection called for the erection of 10 miles of fencing.

Capital Improvements.—New construction items were eliminated, except for a few small items. Maintenance was possible only on the more urgent jobs. Considerable maintenance leeway is building up.

Expenditure and Labour.—Expenditure for 1942-43 on reforestation works was £95,746, made up as follows:—

	£
Plantations	17,645
Natural regeneration	2,513
Nurseries	4,897
Protection (including fire fighting and patrol) ..	30,572
Research	828
Capital improvements	1,438
Wet time, holidays, and leave	11,894
Tools, tents, supervision, fodder, &c. ..	19,298
Workers' compensation	1,690
Pay roll tax	2,219
Miscellaneous	2,752
Total	£95,746

This total excludes salaries. In addition to the above, an amount of £12,097, representing 25 per cent. (State's share) of the total cost of the employment of non-refugee enemy aliens during 1941-42 and 1942-43 was expended.

This expenditure covered not only reforestation works but also firewood and charcoal production and sleeper block cutting.

The number of men employed on reforestation works at 1st July, 1942, was 377, and 263 at 30th June, 1943. These figures exclude enemy aliens. At 30th June, 1943, only five of these remained in forestry employment.

NATIONAL PARKS.

From £4,871 in the previous year, the expenditure on National Parks work during 1942-43 was reduced to £2,405. This represented maintenance of tracks and other assets by a skeleton force; supervision costs were similarly reduced from £334 to £257. The National Parks will offer a valuable field for employment on post-war reconstruction. Queensland Parks are unique, and have become known to thousands of visiting military personnel, both from other States and overseas. With the necessary protection and development they should provide an extremely valuable tourist and recreational asset after the war.

FOREST SURVEYS.

Only one small camp operated throughout the financial year, maintained for the purpose of assessment surveys of reported timber stands in North Queensland.

Particulars of work carried out are tabulated hereunder:—

Area Dealt With.	Acreage.	Cost.
V.C.L. Parishes of Ashton, Ryeburn, &c.	28,000	178 3 0
Timber Reserve 28, Parish Blackfriars ..	19,600	250 5 0
V.C.L. Parish of Garrawalt	Proceeding 4,208	374 13 6
Portions 7-25, Parish of Garrawalt		
Totals	51,808	£803 1 6

FOREST RESERVATIONS.

At 30th June, 1943, there were 6,378,976 acres of forest reservation, as compared with 6,373,361 acres at the beginning of the year.

Over the twelve months the area of National Parks was increased by 551 acres.

Comparative figures are—

	30th June, 1942.	30th June, 1943.
State Forests	3,277,232	3,281,428
National Parks	676,805	677,356
Timber Reserves	3,096,129	3,097,548
	7,050,166	7,056,332

HARVESTING AND MARKETING.

Due to military and defence needs, the demand for timber of all classes was particularly heavy.

Excepting the normal wet season, logging conditions were favourable. The Department, however, experienced considerable difficulty in fulfilling orders on account of the shortage of labour, particularly skilled timber-fallers, and loss of logging plant attracted to the Allied Works Council and elsewhere on account of higher rates being paid.

Owing to heavy military traffic there was occasionally some delay in the supply of empty railway timber waggons.

Mill Logs.—The total cut of logs from Crown forests for each year from 1935-36 onwards is as follows:—

1935-36	148,000,000
1936-37	162,000,000
1937-38	196,000,000
1938-39	188,000,000
1939-40	212,000,000
1940-41	223,000,000
1941-42	232,000,000
1942-43	199,000,000

Revenue.—The gross receipts and net revenue on account of timber sales for the last three years are—

	Gross Receipts. £	Net Revenue. £
1940-41	955,915	465,871
1941-42	959,220	439,678
1942-43	927,982	415,777

Log Timber.—The quantities of the several species' classes of log timber cut and removed from Crown forests during the past five years is as follows:—

Year.	Hoop and Bunya Pine.	Kauri Pine.	Cabinetwoods.	Scrubwoods.	Hardwoods.	Cypress Pine.
		(1,000 superficial feet).				
1938-39	124,000	11,000	13,681	2,526	29,341	5,169
1939-40	137,928	12,386	19,413	3,749	32,981	5,988
1940-41	146,056	9,584	25,306	7,381	33,846	5,628
1941-42	127,390	12,010	26,771	9,685	48,528	7,323
1942-43	101,289	8,627	15,250	16,116	49,649	6,776

The following table gives a comparison of milling logs cut on Crown and private lands for the last two years:—

	1941-42.				1942-43.			
	Crown.	Private.	Total.	Per Cent. of Crown to Total.	Crown.	Private. (Estimated).	Total. (Estimated).	Per Cent. of Crown to Total.
	Superficial Feet.	Superficial Feet.	Superficial Feet.		Superficial Feet.	Superficial Feet.	Superficial Feet.	
Hoop and Bunya Pine	127,390,000	3,510,000	130,900,000	97.3	101,290,000	7,340,000	108,630,000	93.2
Kauri Pine	12,010,000	610,000	12,620,000	95.2	8,630,000	170,000	8,800,000	98.1
Cypress Pine	7,820,000	6,510,000	14,330,000	54.6	6,780,000	5,170,000	11,950,000	56.7
Hardwoods	48,530,000	71,820,000	120,350,000	40.3	49,650,000	70,640,000	120,290,000	41.3
Cabinetwoods	26,770,000	17,160,000	53,620,000	68	15,250,000	11,620,000	42,990,000	73.0
Secondaries	9,690,000				16,120,000			
Totals	232,210,000	99,610,000	331,820,000	70	197,720,000	94,940,000	292,660,000	67.6
Plantation Timbers ..	180,000		180,000		1,250,000		1,250,000	
Imported Timbers (log only)			750,000				5,000	
Hardwood Sawn into Sleepers ..			10,610,000				6,790,000	
Grand Totals	232,390,000	99,610,000	343,360,000		198,970,000	94,940,000	300,705,000	

PLYWOOD AND VENEERS.

The following table shows sales made during 1942-43 by the Plywood and Veneer Board:—

Market.	South Queensland.		North Queensland.	
	Square feet 3/16 inch basis.	Value.	Square feet 3/16 inch basis.	Value.
Queensland	17,043,380	£ 140,649	8,932,701	£ 73,694
Interstate	30,229,028	249,389	9,030,374	74,502
Overseas	294,557	2,430	147,909	1,220
	47,571,965	£392,468	18,110,984	£149,416

This includes all rotary cold pressed plywood, also veneers, the species being mainly pine.

Returns from plywood and veneer mills give the following approximate total quantities treated and produced:—

Logs treated	Super. Feet.
Plywood produced (3/16 inch basis)	22,400,000
Veneers produced (1/16 inch basis)	66,500,000
	41,400,000

NORTH QUEENSLAND TIMBERS.

In Northern Queensland timber supplies were well maintained during the year in spite of many difficulties, such as shortage of skilled timber workers, logging plant, spare parts, and tyres.

Because of the diversion of road gangs to work of greater priority the Department's policy of provision of access roads to timber stands was hindered. Efforts are being made to secure resumption of an adequate road-building programme, without which the Department will be unable fully to supply the log requirements of mills.

The following table shows the quantities of various species cut for the past two years:—

Species.	1941-42.		1942-43.	
	Super. Feet.	Super. Feet.	Super. Feet.	Super. Feet.
Kauri Pine	11,958,825	8,621,172	11,958,825	8,621,172
Maple	7,616,248	3,082,909	7,616,248	3,082,909
Walnut	1,632,513	86,705	1,632,513	86,705
Silky Oak	12,930,807	8,568,725	12,930,807	8,568,725
Hickory	1,369,288	373,676	1,369,288	373,676
Other Cabinetwoods	3,083,991	1,902,768	3,083,991	1,902,768
Scrubwoods	7,826,914	13,099,287	7,826,914	13,099,287
Hardwoods	1,182,710	4,539,769	1,182,710	4,539,769

Logging.—The enlistment and call-up by the Allied Works Council of many experienced timber men caused some difficulty in maintaining deliveries.

Particularly in the early part of the year, logging plant was scarce, principally in Northern Queensland, owing to impressment or renting to Allied Works Council. Much of the plant eventually returned was in a bad state of repair and, owing to the difficulty of obtaining spare parts, was out of action for long periods. The co-operation of the United States Army authorities in making available a quantity of tyres and tubes for North Queensland contractors was of great assistance in maintaining deliveries.

The system of inviting tenders for logging contracts was causing delay in placing contractors on new areas. Authority was granted to enter into non-competitive contracts, subject to suitable safeguards. In entering into logging contracts the necessity of conserving petrol and tyres was kept in mind.

The Liquid Fuel Control Board co-operated as in the past in regard to supplies of petrol in order that contractors should not be held up. The Board also did not insist on the fitment to trucks of producer gas units where the conditions were found to be unsuitable.

The quantities hauled and payments made to logging contractors are as follows:—

	Superficial Feet.	Amount Paid.
South Queensland—		£
Pine	66,456,503	..
Hardwoods	3,391,498	..
Fancywoods	1,240,393	..
Scrubwoods	956,878	..
Total	72,045,272	215,550
North Queensland	26,761,110	£103,323

LOGGING ROADS.

Expenditure on logging roads, including new construction to provide access to additional areas, and to maintain existing roads, amounted to £26,743, made up as follows:—

Revenue	£ 22,382
Loan	4,361

The above figures exclude expenditure by Main Roads Commission (P.E.I.) on Forestry roads not charged to Forestry funds and amounting to approximately £40,000.

CONSTRUCTIONAL TIMBERS.

The year has been an extremely busy one in respect to Departmental contracts for constructional timbers especially round timbers for bridge and wharf construction, deliveries of which were over four times as great as in the previous year and over ten times as great as in 1940-41.

Comparisons of the major supplies with the two years previously are—

Specification.	1942-43.	1941-42.	1940-41.
Bridge timbers .. (lineal feet)	433,225	93,850	38,999
Sleepers .. (pieces)	291,027	306,209	293,251
Crossings .. (super feet)	262,596	246,425	275,855
Transoms .. (super feet)	430,458	349,451	283,122

Orders have all been either for new construction for Defence purposes or for the maintenance of essential services.

There has been no lack of employment for cutters, and in cases of extreme urgency the men have worked from dawn to dark under very adverse weather conditions.

Despite the fact that over 400 contractors, including employees, operated during the year, supply was actually short of the demand, and only work of the highest priority could be undertaken.

The following table shows the total quantity of constructional timbers and miscellaneous items sold by the Department both at stump and from operations of Departmental contractors for the year. Here, also, the notable feature is the very heavy increase in the supply of round timbers, principally piles. During the year 785,038 lineal feet of bridge and wharf timbers were recorded as Departmental sales, as against 244,685 lineal feet in the previous year:—

Girders, Corbels, Piles, Sills, and Round	
Headstocks	785,038 lineal feet
Sleepers	118,731 pieces
Sleeper Blocks (Sleepers contained)	174,377 pieces
Headstocks, Transoms, and Crossings	899,339 superficial feet
Poles	281,356 lineal feet
House Blocks	35,898 lineal feet
Fencing Material	63,712 lineal feet
Fencing Material	58,768 pieces
Bridge Timbers	322,290 superficial feet
Bridge Timbers	3,362 lineal feet
Mining Timbers	929,230 lineal feet
Mining Timbers	78,456 pieces
Fuel	64,323 tons
Miscellaneous	2,338 pieces
Miscellaneous	11,885 superficial feet
Bark	50 lb.
Sand	6,577 cubic yards
Gravel	4,753 cubic yards
Soil	541 cubic yards
Charcoal	62,459 bags
Clay	1,208 cubic yards
Leaves	40 lb.
Lawyer Cane	5 tons
Sleeper Chips	1 load

Of the above the following quantities were obtained from private lands by contractors supplying orders to the Department:—

Girders, Corbels, Piles, Sills, and Round	
Headstocks	115,950 lineal feet
Sleepers	6,375 pieces
Headstocks, Transoms, and Crossings	26,419 superficial feet
Poles	15,539 lineal feet

SAWMILL LICENSES.

At 30th June, 1943, there were 500 sawmill licenses in force, of which 398 were for general milling, and 102 restricted licenses. Of the latter 45 were for resawing, 26 for cases only, 9 for sleepers only, and 22 otherwise restricted.

Three cases were under review.

One hundred and sixteen exemptions were also in force.

LOGGING-MILLING PROJECT—MILLMERRAN.

To provide timber urgently required for Defence purposes, the Forestry Sub-Department acted as agent for the Allied Works Council in the operation of two sawmills in the Millmerran district, by C.C.C. labour.

Operations commenced in February, and by the end of the financial year the quantities dealt with were—

	Superficial Feet.
Logs cut	808,443
Logs hauled to mill	659,042
Logs sawn	524,762
Sawn timber recovered	311,916
Sawn timber dressed	71,240
Sawn timber rafted	261,371

OFFENCES.

During the year ended 30th June, 1943, 58 cases of offences against Acts and Regulations administered by the Department were reported.

Proceedings were instituted in 11 of these cases (1 for a breach of the Rural Fires Act), and fines totalling £52 were imposed. Prosecution is pending in 2 cases.

In 33 cases royalty was collected or the timber seized and sold and warnings issued.

There were 12 cases of minor offences where warnings only were issued.

In all cases revenue to the extent of £175 was recovered.

FOREST PRODUCTS—INVESTIGATIONS.

Under the conditions prevailing the work of the section was limited very largely to matters concerning charcoal and producer gas developments.

Production of charcoal continued in all centres until wood stocks were exhausted, resulting in production of 30,494 additional bags. Subsequently, in view of demand, a limited amount of production took place in the Brisbane district and at Passchendaele. During the year 13,128 bags of charcoal were sold in Brisbane and 247 in other centres.

The section has maintained contact with producers by means of questionnaires, returns of production, and more recently by the employment of a field inspector who, beginning in April, had contacted 50 separate production concerns to the end of June. Assistance has been rendered to the industry in problems of man-power, materials supply, and general technique.

An officer of the section visited Victoria and New South Wales in December, 1942, to investigate matters relating to charcoal technical questions and production generally. As a result valuable information was obtained, a revised Bulletin No. 7 was published, and a new design of brick kiln has been tested.

Records of operational data on producer gas units have been kept and assistance given to the Producer Gas Committee

in engine-wear studies. In co-operation with the Technical Officer, Producer Gas Committee, an investigation was made of the effect of particle size on producer gas performance.

Timber Seasoning and Utilisation.—A considerable number of enquirers were assisted with technical advice, and 7 charges were dried in the Ipswich road kilns.

EXPENDITURE.

Total expenditure for the year was £691,691, subdivided as follows:—

	Revenue.	Loan.	Trust.
	£	£	
Salaries	40,561	..	..
Extra Living Allowance	328	..	..
Travelling and Incidentals	5,717	..	..
Reforestation	78,102	17,643	..
Alien Employment	12,087	..	..
National Parks	2,662	..	..
Harvesting and Marketing—			
Log Timber .. .. .	..	..	361,802
Hewn, Split, and Pole Timber .. .. .	..	..	134,159
Roads	22,382	4,961	..
Charcoal Production, &c.	11,377	..	..
	£173,726	£22,004	£495,961

CONCLUSION.

I have to acknowledge a loyal and sustained effort on the part of officers during the year.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

V. GRENNING,

Director of Forests.

