

Report of the Director of Forests for the Year ended 30th June, 1944.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS.

SIR,—I have to present my report for the year ended 30th June, 1944.

There has been no lessening of demand for timber for defence purposes during the past year. Despite the continuation of the difficulties of the previous year the mill log output of Crown forests (202,000,000 superficial feet) showed an increase of 3,000,000 superficial feet.

Whilst this amount was considerably below the record output of 1941-42 it was still in excess of the cut of any pre-war year. There was a marked increase in the utilisation of scrubwoods from Crown forests, whilst the supply of round timbers for defence needs, particularly poles and piles, exceeded all previous figures.

Because of shortage of man-power the maintenance and protection of plantations and natural forest previously treated were concentrated upon.

If our future timber requirements are to be met it is essential that much land in South-east Queensland whose best use is the production of timber must be managed for the permanent production of timber. An amount of £50,000 was allotted for the purpose of acquiring such land. At the close of the year much suitable land had been inspected and valued and a start had been made in the acquisition thereof by purchase.

REFORESTATION.

Owing to a further decrease in man-power available for these works it was not possible to carry out even the minimum maintenance programme adopted in the previous year. As a result an amount of tending, pruning, and firebreak maintenance could not be done. Fortunately, due to exceptional spring and early summer rains, the fire season was the least hazardous experienced for a considerable number of years.

During the year funds were made available for the repurchase of areas for forestry purposes. Several officers of the Department were engaged on the investigation of likely areas, but insufficient progress had been made by the end of the year to permit finalisation of purchases, excepting in isolated cases. The districts where the major investigations have been commenced are Maryborough, Gympie, Brisbane, Dalby, and Inglewood.

Planting was confined to an area of 89 acres. Of this, 40 acres were primarily of experimental purpose; the balance was possible only by providing slack period winter work for adjoining farmers.

The more recent plantings were tended, but many of the older planted areas are in urgent need of tending, it being possible only to remove lantana and bad vines from these.

Further sales of plantation thinnings were made during the year and others are pending. Although the quantity under sale is still relatively small the time is approaching when the plantations will make an appreciable contribution to ease timber supplies.

The total area pruned was 1,339 acres, but this was almost entirely composed of carry-up work, it not being possible to carry out work on those areas becoming due for first operation. Twenty-three nurseries were maintained in plant production, but because of unavailability of suitable chemicals it was not possible to compost stock due for planting as in the previous year.

No seed collection of hoop pine, *P. taeda* or *P. caribaea*, was made, but the first major collection of *P. patula* was made, some 50 lb. being secured.

As the lantana bug is becoming effective in checking lantana in parts of South Queensland, but is not yet active in many important State forests where lantana is a major pest, action was taken during the year to collect and liberate the bug in suitable localities. The principal liberations were in the Mary Valley and Gympie districts.

The ladybird (*Scymnus*) which has been effective in reducing Chermes infestation at Pechey and Passchendaele is now reported to have established itself at Beerwah.

The work of assisting in the establishment of school forestry plots was continued. The first sale of merchantable thinnings from these plots was made during the year at a school in the Stanthorpe district.

Silvicultural work in the hardwood and cypress forests was limited to that necessary to maintain staff when protection works were not possible. The area treated during the year amounted to 7,983 acres, of which 654 acres were areas receiving first treatment.

Protection works represented the major operation for the year. Generally work was confined to maintenance or improvement of existing breaks, but some new breaks were added to the protection system.

Operations for the year comprised:—

	Miles.
(1) Cleared Breaks—Western Forests—	
Firebreak Construction—	
Cutting and grubbing	11.5
Stacking and burning	31.9
Auxiliary roads	8.0
Firebreak Improvement—	
Grubbing roads	9.3
Grading	76.4
Green strips	119.5
Firebreak Maintenance—	
Sucker and burn	1,084.9
Grade	578.9
(2) Green Breaks—Coastal Hardwood Forests—	
Firebreak Maintenance—	
Chipping and/or ploughing	969.0
Burning	685.3
Roads	203.0
(3) Cleared Breaks—Plantations—	
Firebreak Maintenance—	
Chipping	54.4
Ploughing and/or grading	187.2
Burning	52.3

Plantation fences totalling 2.4 miles were erected.

Experimental work on silvicultural problems has been continued on the same reduced basis as during the previous year. By modification of procedure it has been possible to follow the progress of all of the more important experiments and many interesting results have been secured.

Perhaps the most interesting are the results from free growing experiments carried out with hoop pine, from which it now appears that hoop pine will give response roughly parallel to that already recorded for *Pinus taeda*, but that this response occurs at a more advanced age.

There are indications also that well-stocked hardwood stands will give a higher increment than previously expected. On the best sites, and where utilisation at small size is possible, merchantable growth of up to 1,000 superficial feet per acre per annum is possible.

The tree-breeding experiments at Beerwah were advanced a further stage during the year, and the first stock resulting from hand pollination of specially selected trees of outstanding form were transferred to the field. It has not been possible to extend this work as originally intended because of wartime staff shortage.

Works on capital improvements were limited to minor maintenance generally, though some miles of telephone line construction were possible.

Expenditure on reforestation works for the year totalled £98,717, made up of:—

	£
Plantations	15,140
Natural Regeneration	2,722
Nurseries	4,944
Protection (including fire fighting and patrol)	36,022
Research	964
Capital Improvements	2,614
Wet Time, Holidays, and Leave	11,237
Tools, Tents, Supervision, Cartages, &c.	13,087
Workers' Compensation	2,324
Pay Roll Tax	2,152
Miscellaneous	2,511
	£98,717

The number of men employed on reforestation works at 1st July, 1943, was 263 and at 30th June, 1944, 331.

NATIONAL PARKS.

Departmental work on these areas was confined to the maintenance of existing assets by a skeleton staff. It is hoped after the cessation of hostilities to increase expenditures very considerably with a view to making the scenic, recreational, and educational values of these areas more readily accessible to the public.

Expenditure on work on the parks for 1943-44 was £2,291 as compared with £2,405 for the preceding year, and £235 was spent on general supervision as against £257 for 1942-43.

FOREST SURVEYS.

Only one camp operated during the financial year, work being confined to North Queensland.

Class 2 survey work effected was as follows:—

	Acres.	Miles	Chains.
Vacant Crown Land, Garrawalt	7,520		
Vacant Crown Land, Culpa (proceeding)	16,120		
Compass and chain survey		32	34
Strip survey		110	32
Costs amounted to £1,242.18s. 10d.			

FOREST RESERVATIONS.

At 30th June, 1944, there were 6,393,529 acres of forest reservation, as compared with 6,378,976 acres at the beginning of the year.

Over the twelve months the area of National Parks was increased by 714 acres.

Comparative figures are:—

	30th June, 1943.	30th June, 1944.
State Forests	3,281,428	3,284,015
National Parks	677,356	678,070
Timber Reserves	3,097,548	3,109,514
	7,056,332	7,071,599

HARVESTING AND MARKETING.

The demand for timber required for essential war purposes continued throughout the year, particularly for constructional timber and for hewn timber required by the Railway Department for maintenance purposes.

Difficulty was experienced in maintaining supplies due to general man-power shortage and the difficulty in obtaining spare parts, tyres, and essential tools such as crosscut, saws and axes. Release of new trucks under the lease-lend system for timber haulage assisted in maintaining deliveries.

The Sub-Department acted as a medium for forwarding applications for release from the Army, and Allied Works Council of skilled timber men, and a number of releases were secured. These, however, were largely counterbalanced by defections of skilled fallers from the industry on account of health and other reasons.

Owing to more favourable weather conditions and release of new motor trucks the output of pine logs in South Queensland was nearly 2,000,000 superficial feet more than the previous year and quotas were supplied to 65½ per cent.

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	186,000,000
1939-40	212,000,000
1940-41	228,000,000
1941-42	232,000,000
1942-43	199,000,000
1943-44	202,000,000

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

	Gross Receipts.	Net Revenue.
1941-42	959,220	439,678
1942-43	927,982	415,777
1943-44	1,094,325	442,013

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.	Cabinet Woods.	Scrub-wood.	Hard-woods.	Cypress Pine.
			(1,000 superficial feet).			
1939-40 ..	137,923	12,386	19,413	3,749	32,981	5,988
1940-41 ..	146,056	9,584	25,306	7,381	33,846	5,623
1941-42 ..	127,390	12,010	26,771	9,685	48,528	7,823
1942-43 ..	101,289	8,627	15,250	16,116	49,649	6,776
1943-44 ..	102,790	10,443	11,315	25,422	44,251	6,518

The following table is an amended comparison of Crown and private lands log cuts for 1942-43, estimated figures having been published in last year's report:—

Species.	Crown.	Private.	Total.	% Crown of Total.
Hoop and Bunya ..	101,300,000	7,200,000	108,500,000	93.3
Kauri	3,600,000	.. .. .	3,600,000	100.0
Cypress	6,800,000	5,700,000	12,500,000	54.4
Hardwood	49,700,000	74,600,000	124,300,000	39.9
Cabinet Woods ..	15,300,000	10,800,000	26,100,000	74.4
Secondaries	16,100,000	.. .. .	16,100,000	.. .. .
Total	197,800,000	98,300,000	296,100,000	66.8
Plantation timbers imported ..	1,250,000	.. .. .	1,250,000	.. .. .
Hardwood into sleepers .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	(5,000)	.. .. .
	.. .. .	.. .. .	6,700,000	.. .. .
Grand Total	199,050,000	98,300,000	304,050,000	.. .. .

The amended figures do not cause any noteworthy variation in the percentage of Crown log cut.

For the year under review sufficient mill return figures are not available to present a similar table, but the indications are that the position is substantially the same—viz., Crown forests produce nearly 100 per cent. of the hoop and bunya and kauri pine-log supplies, 35 per cent. to 40 per cent. of the hardwood logs; 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. of the cabinet-woods and secondary jungle (rain forest) species, and 45 per cent. to 50 per cent. of the cypress pine milled.

Plywood and Veneers.—The following table shows sales made during 1943-44 by the Plywood and Veneer Board:—

	South Queensland Mills.		North Queensland Mills.	
	Sq. ft. 3/16 in. basis.	Value.	Sq. ft. 3/16 in. basis.	Value.
Queensland	20,889,914	£ 169,730	7,047,483	£ 57,260
Interstate	26,006,423	211,303	11,456,834	93,087
	46,896,337	381,033	18,504,317	150,347

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 for the year 1943-44:—

	Logs.	Ply on 3/16 Basis.	Veneer on 1/16 Basis.
	Super ft.	sq. ft.	sq. ft.
Kauri	3,400,000	12,000,000	18,000,000
Hoop and Bunya ..	15,800,000	52,000,000	12,000,000
Hardwood	50,000	160,000	.. .. .
Cabinet Woods ..	1,200,000	4,000,000	2,000,000
Secondary Woods ..	5,400,000	7,000,000	4,000,000
	25,850,000	75,160,000	36,000,000

Plantation Timbers.—The quantities of plantation timbers cut during the past three years are as follow:—

	Super feet.
1941-42	137,380
1942-43	1,250,000
1943-44	1,260,000

North Queensland Timbers.—Despite the difficulties referred to, the year's operations in North Queensland created a record for the quantity of timber cut and delivered, revenue being £42,704 higher than the previous record year 1941-42.

The heaviest demand during the year was for constructional and building timber which, in spite of labour and plant troubles, were supplied on time.

Man-power difficulties have affected progress on road construction by the Main Roads Commission to open up fresh timber areas.

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

Species.	1942-43.	1943-44.
Kauri	8,621,172	10,418,697
Maple	3,082,909	3,183,603
Walnut	86,705	30,245
Silky Oak	8,568,725	7,872,560
Forest Hardwoods ..	4,539,769	2,940,531
Scrub Hardwoods ..	15,375,731	6,470,637
Miscellaneous .. ..	.. .. .	13,489,490
Cedar .. .. .	.. .. .	149,085
	40,275,011	44,554,848
		Of these figures from private lands.
Silky Oak .. .. .	.. .. .	13,825
Maple .. .. .	.. .. .	32,493
Scrub Hardwoods ..	.. .. .	122,838
Miscellaneous .. ..	.. .. .	99,800
	1,241,975	268,956
Net from Crown Lands ..	39,033,136	44,285,892

Of quantity of 44,554,848 super feet:—
30,790,676 super. feet was delivered "on trucks."
13,764,172 super. feet was sold "at stump."

Logging.—It has been the Department's policy to keep under review rates paid to logging contractors for cutting, snigging, and hauling, and during the year these have been increased to meet higher costs.

As in previous years, the Liquid Fuel Control Board gave every assistance in ensuring that contractors' requirements in petrol supplies should be promptly provided for.

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

	Superficial Feet.	Amount Paid.
		£ s. d.
South Queensland—		
Pine	74,121,708	.. .. .
Hardwoods	3,981,690	.. .. .
Miscellaneous	1,745,023	.. .. .
Scrub Hardwoods	832,888	.. .. .
Cedar	30,350	.. .. .
Total	80,211,659	272,658 3 0
North Queensland	30,790,676	£128,536 0 10

Logging Roads.—Expenditure on logging roads, including new construction to provide access to additional areas and to maintain existing roads, amounted to £22,506 17s. 2d., made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Direct Expenditure (Harvesting and Marketing Vote)	14,912	15	2
Loan	7,594	2	0
Total	£22,506	17	2

In addition to the above, subsidies for road work amounting to £3,352 1s. 9d. were paid to shire councils.

Constructional Timbers.—The demand for constructional timbers for Defence purposes was exceptionally heavy during the year. Predominant supply was in bridge and wharf timbers. Comparison of departmental supplies with the two years previously are—

Specification.	1941-42.	1942-43.	1943-44.
Bridge Timbers .. (lineal feet)	93,850	433,225	779,960
Sleepers (pieces)	306,209	201,027	252,311
Crossings (super. feet)	246,425	262,596	327,466
Transoms (super. feet)	349,451	430,458	271,096

As in the case of mill log timbers, difficulty was experienced in maintaining adequate supplies of sleepers and other railway maintenance timbers, deliveries being short of demand, through man-power shortages and lack of the necessary tools.

The year's operations entailed the employment of some 400 contractors and their employees.

The following table shows the total quantity of constructional timber and miscellaneous items sold by the Department both at stump and from operations of departmental contractors for the year:—

Sleepers	160,830 pieces
Sleeper Blocks (Sleepers contained)	197,236 pieces
Headstocks, Transoms, and Crossings	755,993 superficial feet
Girders, Corbels, Piles, and Sills	763,320 lineal feet
Poles	1,114,238 lineal feet
House Blocks	182,517 lineal feet
Fencing Material	55,891 lineal feet
Fencing Material	91,078 pieces
Hewn and Bridge Timbers	45,870 superficial feet
Hewn and Bridge Timbers	1,126 lineal feet
Mining Timbers	1,180,646 lineal feet
Mining Timbers	99,018 pieces
Fuel	109,676 tons
Miscellaneous	977 pieces
Miscellaneous	12,693 superficial feet
Charcoal	99,256 bags
Stakes	3,820 No.
Mulga	12 tons 16 cwt.
Lawyer Cane	12 tons
Leaves	55,800 lb.
Sand	5,877 cubic yards
Gravel	896½ cubic yards
Soil	31 cubic yards
Shell Grit	41 tons

Timber obtained from private lands in South Queensland by departmental contractors during the year was as follows:—

Piles	207,004 lineal feet
Poles	57,113 lineal feet
House Stumps	11,541 lineal feet
Girders	13,255 lineal feet
Headstocks	478 superficial feet

SAWMILL LICENSES.

At 30th June, 1944, there were 459 sawmill licenses in force, of which 366 were for general milling, and 93 restricted licenses. Of the latter, 43 were for resawing, 26 for case only, 4 for sleepers only, and 20 otherwise restricted.

Eight cases were under review.

One hundred and fifteen exemptions were also in force.

LOGGING MILLING PROJECT—MILMERRAN DISTRICT.

Reference was made in last year's report to this project, which was managed by this Sub-Department on behalf of the Allied Works Council. Operations which were carried out by C.C.C. men lasted over a period of about ten months, the mills being closed down in December, 1943. During this period 1,840,000 superficial feet of cypress pine logs were sawn, 1,048,000 superficial feet of sawn timber being produced. Of the latter, 331,700 superficial feet were dressed.

OFFENCES.

During the year ended 30th June, 1944, 57 cases of offences against Acts and Regulations administered by the Department were reported.

Proceedings were instituted in 5 of these cases (2 for breaches of the Rural Fires Act) and fines totalling £22 were imposed. Prosecution is pending in 2 cases. In 36 cases, royalty was collected or the timber seized and sold and warnings issued. There were 9 cases of minor offences where warnings only were issued.

In all cases, revenue to the extent of £245 was recovered.

FOREST PRODUCTS INVESTIGATIONS.

Work under this heading has been considerably reduced owing to absorption of trained staff in other national duties, but the aim has been to preserve as far as possible the Department's service to the public by way of advice on seasoning preservation and general utilisation of timbers.

Six hundred and sixty-six bags of charcoal were produced in furtherance of the Government's scheme to provide against shortage of this commodity. Sales from Departmental stocks during the year amounted to 11,649 bags, and 39,022 bags were in stock at 30 June, 1944.

Advice on charcoal-burning and observation of performance of various kinds of charcoal in producer gas units were two other features of activity. The Department's kilns were used to dry several lots of timber for commercial purposes.

EXPENDITURE.

Total expenditure for the year 1943-44 was £845,572, subdivided as follows:—

	Revenue. (Treasury.)	Revenue.	Loan.	Trust.
	£	£	£	£
Salaries .. .. .	..	40,279	..	..
Extra Living Allowance .. .. .	..	754	..	..
Travelling and Incidentals .. .. .	..	6,300	..	..
National Parks .. .. .	..	235	..	..
Emergency Firewood Supplies .. .. .	..	281	..	..
Reforestation	83,577	..	15,140	..
National Parks	2,291	..	..	..
Access Roads	18,265	..	7,594	..
Charcoal Production	3,613	..	..	..
Resumption of Land for Post War Forestry Purposes	1,128	..	..	..
Forestry and Lumbering Fund .. .. .	..	..	..	..
Harvesting and Marketing Timber .. .. .	..	..	..	444,755
Hardwood Supplies to Railway Department and Others .. .. .	..	..	..	221,360
Total	£ 108,874	47,849	22,734	666,115

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.

