

F 904 (141)

NOTES FOR TALK TO FARMERS UNION
AT BRIDGETOWN - 23-4-1970



1. Forestry is the science of managing forests. The method of management depends on the purpose of the Forests.
2. Forests can be managed for a single purpose, but are usually managed for a multitude of purposes.

Chief among these purposes are

- Water production
- Soil conservation
- Recreation
- Shelter and Windbreaks
- Timber Production



3. The last usually receives far more publicity than the others, because a sound and ⁷⁷motion picture of a tree being felled and logged out is more entertaining than a picture of soil staying where it is instead of sliding down the river, and also because this part of forestry involves far more work and planning in this part of the country.
4. I will treat ^{these} ~~this~~ points one by one, but first I would like to demonstrate why we are so concerned at conserving and where possible, increasing our forest area in the South West.
5. By far the larger portion of Australia can only be described as arid, and Western Australia is particularly so. Of our 624,000 acres only 10,000.000 acres has an average rainfall of more than 30", which is the minimum needed to support forest for timber production. Savannah forest, sufficient for soil and water conservation but capable of only moderate timber production, will grow out to the 12" rainfall limit, but this is our wheat and sheep belt and most of this land has been developed for Agriculture.

Much of the heavier rainfall area is also agriculturally developed, leaving us with only 4½ million acres of State Forest in the higher rainfall area and 1.8 million acres of reserves in the lower rainfall area. These reserves are mainly in the Goldfields area.

Does this matter?

6. Let us look at the individual factors.

1. WATER CONSERVATION

Many of our important streams arise in forest land. The result of clearing is to increase run off, so that water is not conserved through the summer months. The Blackwood River for example, which runs through farm land to Nannup is more salty at Nannup than further downstream where its salty water has been diluted by streams from Forest land. In a catchment areas near Sydney it has been shown that run off from forest land is 15% less than the cleared land. In Victoria areas of forest within catchement areas are preserved as such to maintain what Victorians claim is the cleanest untreated city water supply in the world. In W.A. we are attempting to maintain under forest the as yet unalienated land of the major rivers which will be important as future water supplies.

2. SOIL CONSERVATION

Much of the erosion, particularly in the wheat belt, would have been avoided if the streams and creeks had not been so totally cleared.

Farmers in the South West are generally aware of this trip.

3. RECREATION

We are still thinly populated and do not fully appreciate this one. But in the U.S.A. and Europe millions of people swarm into the forests every weekend to get away from it all. Our own National Parks are becoming increasingly more popular, and the Forests Department is playing a part in developing these for recreation and tourism.

4. SHELTER AND WINDBREAKS

I think most farmers in the South West appreciate the advantages of some forest on their land for their stock to shelter in. I think perhaps not so many are aware of the way in which shelter belts can be used to break down strong winds over their farm in general.

5. TIMBER PRODUCTION

At present Australia is importing \$2000,000,000 worth of timber ^{of wood products} every year. If we can grow our own we can save this amount of money. It is unlikely in any case that these imports will continue to be available to us. U.S.A. has now restricted exports.

W.A. last financial year imported \$8,000,000 worth of timber, but fortunately was able to export about the same value, 2/3 of it to the Eastern States.

In W.A. we are using 50 cubic feet of timber a year. This is not just in sawn timber. It includes particle board, hardboard, paper, ply, veneers, and increasing demands for these are more than offsetting the slight reductions in demand for sawn timber. Population has doubled in the last 40 years and is expected to double again in the next thirty, which means timber and timber products requirements will double. *per person*

We are aiming to meet this demand in two ways by increasing the output of our hardwood forests, and by afforestation with softwoods.

How do we go about this?

HARDWOOD FOREST

The hardwood forest is divided into planning sections, in which the growth has been measured. The number of mills which may operate in these areas, and their permissible intake from this forest, is limited so that the cut does not exceed the growth rate.

Every tree made available to the mill is individually selected by a departmental officer, who ensures that immature trees and ^{seed} ~~dead~~ trees are retained to restock the forest.

The forest is burned on a four year cycle so that any wild fire can be handled.

This means burning a million acres a year which was impossible until aircraft burning was introduced three years ago. Half of our burning is now done by aircraft.

Controlled burning is a science in itself, and several officers are employed in fire research.

All work in the hardwood forests is financed from royalties paid in by those who obtain the timber.

SOFTWOOD FORESTS

We have today 58,000 acres of pine plantation and are planting 6000 acres a year, with the aim of having established 240,000 acres of pine forest by the year 2000. Nannup and Kirup divisions are planting a total of 1000 acres a year.

Private enterprise has also started to plant pines in this area, and these plantations will be the mainstay of large future industries.

Of the target of 240,000 acres, it is desirable that as much as possible should be *pinus radiata*, and it is hoped that at least 80,000 acres of *radiata* will be achieved. At present we have only 50,000 acres of land suitable for *radiata* pine, and need a further 30,000 acres. This is the reason we are buying suitable land when it is offered to us. Funds to assist in this are being made available to the Department by the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth Softwood Agreements Act.

FUTURE OF FORESTRY

Of the 6,300 acres of pine now established in Kirup division, 1000 acres of pine is in production.

Twenty five people are involved in harvesting and milling the 7000 loads per year produced. A further 28 men are employed at Kirup and Grimwade, and 80% of their time is spent in plantation establishment and maintenance.

Victorian figures show that when a plantation is fully in production a man is needed for every 25 acres.

This means that in the future an industry will develop in this area which will provide employment and increase population. This will help provide the local demand for produce which farmers are so much in need of today, and will give stability to an area, which is currently losing rather than gaining population.

HOW DO YOU JOIN THE FORESTS DEPARTMENT?

1. There are four ways.

As wages employee, with possibility of rising through the ranks to overseer and then field officer. This accounts for more than half of our present field staff. - ? Does it?

2. As cadet, about 17 - 20 years of age.

The Department provides tech. school and field education as a preliminary to appointment to the field staff.

3. As mature age appointee. Men with the right experience in forestry or the timber industry are appointed to the field staff.

4. By a four year university course qualifying you for the professional staff.

SKILLEN
 MCCORMICK - 9 JUL 1971 17 SEP 1971
 EDGECOMBE
 MART - 8 JUN 1971 - 7 JUL 1971
 EDWARDS, C.
 RICHMOND 14 JAN 1971 19 FEB 1971
 LESTRAUNE 11 MAR 1971* 118 APR 92
 CAMPBELL 19 FEB 1971 18 MAR 1971
 JAMES
 WEBERLE 21 OCT 1971 - 3 DEC 1971
 BOBLEY