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"THE DUTIES OF THE WORKING PLANS OFFICE."

by

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The popular conception of the work done by the Working Plans Offices may be summarised by the words :-

Air Photo Interpretation.
Assessment.
Growth Plots.

These three fields are indeed the backbone of much of the work done at the two field centres, Harvey and Manjimup.

To ensure that the State's dedicated forest areas are harvested on a sustained yield basis, it is necessary to know the volume of trees present and their growth rate. The Working Plans section of the Department was established in 1954 to provide accurate statistics of the volume of the forest capital and of its growth rate.

The volume of the forest capital is obtained by assessment based on forest types demarcated from air photos. It is believed that the use of air photos has reduced the amount of assessment needed by about 90% of that needed using "long-line" assessment. Air photos also give a picture of all the forest, whereas the old "long-line assessment" revealed only a narrow strip of it. The early workers for the Department deserve credit for their air photo interpretation which is held in high regard by foresters in the Eastern States. In 1960 the Department produced the Inventory of Forest Resources and Western Australia to make such a detailed statement of the volume of its forest capital.

The growth rate of the forest capital is determined by measuring plots at intervals of several years. About 100 x $\frac{1}{2}$ acre plots have been established throughout State Forests since 1961. More plots are being established each year and it is hoped that there will eventually be 500. These plots are easily recognised in the forest by the white paint band marking the point of measurement on each tree in the plot.

While most of the work carried out by the Working Plans Offices is connected with determining the volume of the forest capital and its growth rate, many other duties are carried out such as the keeping and checking of records (e.g. cutting records) for management purposes, and assisting divisions with their fire control duties. The various duties of the Working Plans Offices

can be grouped under the general headings of "Routine Work" and "Project Work." These are set out in some detail in the following paragraphs :-

ROUTINE WORK:

1. New Information.

- a) Obtaining volume information from A.P.I. assessment.
- b) Interpreting air photos of the entire south west land region.
- c) Establishing increment plots in the hardwood forest.
- d) Producing volume and area data for:
 - i) the forest inventory.
 - ii) the current general working plan.
 - iii) State Forest proposals.

These volumem statements are presented on Form F.D. 420.

- e) Pine Site Quality mapping of all plantations. Harvey W.P.O. handles all this work.
- f) Mapping marginal forest areas. Head Office maps the prime forest areas and where the topography is too difficult for a multiscope or sketchmaster to handle.

2. Maintaining Records for Management Purposes.

- a) Checking pine and hardwood progress plans for all Divisions and transferring the information to Head Office copies. A copy of hardwood cutting records for each region is kept at the Working Plans Office concerned.
- b) Plans showing cutting by decades in all areas are maintained at the Working Plans Offices.
- c) Maintaining summaries of monthly mill returns (FD390B) and the DFO's quarterly summary of assessment of cut over bush (FD423) for each sawmill permit.
- d) Noting changes in land tenure on our tenure plans.

3. Assistance to Divisions.

- a) Renewing tower and co-ordination plans.
- b) Manning the check point at a large fire.
- c) Distributing air photos required by the Divisions for track selection and other projects.

- d) Final preparation of some plans for the soil surveyor.
- e) Supplying volume data for areas on request.

PROJECT WORK.

This is carried on in conjunction with the routine work and currently consists of research into assessment techniques at Manjimup W.P.O., and research into grouping of A.P.I. types at Harvey W.P.O.

In the past the following projects have been completed:

- a) The Dombakup Working Plan study.
- b) The Karnet Working Plan study.
- c) State Forest proposals for vacant Crown Land areas.
- d) Timber on the Murray River Dam area.
- e) Wandoo distribution and volume in the Northern region - with the help of the divisions concerned.
- f) Interpretation of the air photos of the Dwellingup fire area.
- g) Sleeper milling resources in the Southern Region.
- h) The firewood potential for the Augusta region.
- i) P.P.T.R. resources in the Southern region.
- j) Karri regrowth interpretation and pulpwood resources in the Southern region.

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