MAINTENANCE OF FOREST ROADS AND TRACKS

by F. J. McKay

Every year a considerable amount of money is expended on road and track maintenance throughout the forest areas on log removal, grading and drainage.

To avoid some of these costs we should:

1. Remove millable trees leaning over roads during construction or realignment.

2. Plan grading with controlled burning.

3. Supervise and educate grader drivers to a higher standard of grading and drainage.

1. When constructing new roads or realigning existing roads, and while trees removed in road clearing are being salvaged, treemark for removal any millable trees leaning over the road, plus dry trees and stags. Dry trees and stags close to the road could be pushed during clearing, which would greatly assist in fire control.

2. Unnecessary grading can at times be avoided by drawing up the grading plan to coincide with controlled burning as quite often it becomes necessary to regrade minor roads and tracks one or two years after grading, so that controlled burning may be carried out and confined to a specific area.

3. Inefficient grading and supervision can cause undue scouring of roads necessitating frequent grading both in natural forests and plantations.

Well-used major roads require grading two or three times a year, depending on the traffic. In summer the corrugations are cut down and the spoil deposited close to, but not in, the table drain. Then just before the heavy rains start this spoil is spread back over the road to leave a slight crown, taking care not to leave ridges along the edges of the road which would cause water to flow back onto the road or scour the edges. At this grading, run-off drains should be constructed in suitable places to ensure that water from table-drains runs clear before reaching a fill over pipes or bridge foundations.

Many minor tracks and roads have become rough and severely washed due to persistent grading from the uphill side to the low side. This practice removes the gravel and soil from roots and stones on the uphill side and forms a mound on the low side which holds the run-off water and channels it down the road to scour earth from roots and stones in the wheel tracks. This is avoided by grading from the low to high side at alternate gradings and keeping the surface with a slight fall to the low side. In this way the run-off is across the road providing there is no mound of earth left along the edge.

Where this type of grading cannot be practiced due to roads running almost straight up and down a slope, sufficient run-off drains should be constructed to ensure that water does not accumulate to volumes which will scour the road edges and possibly run back onto the road, causing scouring of wheel tracks. After each grading and before first heavy rains it is essential to check and clear pipes and culverts.