

Review

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In this issue Professor E. P. Stebbing, University of Edinburgh, gives a further account of forestry research in various parts of the British Commonwealth including outstanding items of investigation into forestry problems in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Dr. F. C. Hummel of the Forestry Commission gives the first instalment of a report on a visit to the Soviet Union.

This visit by six British foresters and an interpreter in September, 1956 was at the invitation of the Soviet Government.

The vastness of the forests of the U.S.S.R. can be gauged from the total woodland area which amounts to 2,640 million acres or about half the total land area of the Soviet Union. This is about 660 times the woodland area of Great Britain or about 50 times its total land area. It is about a quarter of the total woodland of the world. More than half the forest area is classed as mature or over-mature and the annual cut is less than half the estimated increment.

During the tour of inspection the spotlight was mainly on research, silviculture and shelter belts (as requested by the visitors).

It would seem the visitors found that the equipment and staffing of the research stations are much on the same lines as in Great Britain and Western Europe, and the fact that there are detailed sample plot records going back to 1876 showed that there has been continuity of work.

Planting of shelter belts as protection to agriculture against wind and snow is concentrated mainly in the arid regions of the south east, the Volga areas and semi-deserts of the central Asian republics. In this matter of shelter belts a good deal of attention seems to be paid to the balance between upper canopy and lower canopy species. The main tree species used are European larch, Norway spruce, lime, oak, birch, Norway maple and American ash while the shrubby species comprise dogwood, privet, red-berried elder, hazel, wild pear and currant as well as *Caragana* and *Euonymus* spp. The belts are considered to be effective for a distance equal to about 20 times their height. There is useful information concerning the lay-out of shelter-belts and the effects of shelter on the yields of crops.

The visitors found the Russian forest officers and foresters keen, competent and cheerful. In these islands where forestry is very much a man's job there can only be surprise at the information that quite a number of the forest officers in the Soviet Union are women.

There is an article by Mr. D. A. Francis on the use made of aerial photographs and aerial survey methods by foresters in Norway, Sweden and Finland with mention of the equipment and techniques used.

Mr. E. R. Huggard, lecturer in Surveying and Forest Engineering, University College of North Wales, Bangor, has an interesting contribution on the economics of extraction as affected by the date of road construction relative to the age of the plantation.

An article entitled "Differential Effects of Root-Infecting Mycelia on Young Trees in Different Environments" by Dr. Ida Levisohn of the Botany Department, Bedford College, London, tells how inoculation experiments have demonstrated that unequal effects produced by certain mycorrhiza-formers on young trees of birch and Norway spruce are associated with the soil condition under which the plants are growing and that ecological conditions are also responsible for the degree of virulence of a root disease fungus in parasitising Scots pine.

Mr. M. G. Yearsley, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Trinidad and Tobago has given a final report on trials, laid down in June 1939, of Copper Napthenates and Mercuric Napthenates as wood preservatives.

J.J.D.