

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 1961

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The policy of increasing our country's forest estate to keep ahead of the expected increase in markets has been the dominant theme in official statements made during the year. To do this means planting 25,000 acres of new land each and every year over the next 40 years, as well as re-establishing the 10,000 acres of forest cutover annually. This will require the continuous efforts of at least 1000 more men than at present engaged on established work. The need to take positive steps to accomplish the targets set will be obvious to you all.

To do this a careful look must be taken at the limiting factors that may retard progress towards our goals. The most obvious of these is the shortage of manpower and it is to this problem that I would draw your most earnest attention. Manpower is at present short on all jobs throughout the country and is likely to remain short for some time to come. It is necessary that forestry take definite steps to secure at least its fair share of the labour that is available and to add its voice to the demands for an increased labour force if the available labour is insufficient to complete the allotted tasks.

Before we can do this however, we must make sure that we are making the most efficient use of the manpower that we now have. Forestry is not a job that lends itself to mechanization, but planting-machines, mechanized nursery equipment and aerial seeding can all make significant savings in manpower. Basic silvicultural work, particularly the tending of young stands, can only be done with hand labour.

To these tasks the full benefit of the latest time and motion and work simplification studies must be applied to obtain the maximum possible efficiency and work output. It must be realized that forestry is no longer a depression industry. Pay must equal that of skilled rates in other jobs and good incentives must be paid for high productivity.

Working conditions in the forest are often unpleasantly wet, and to compensate for this good accommodation and living conditions are essential. The accident rate in this work is high, although the accidents are fortunately mostly minor ones. They do, however, cause loss of productivity and every effort must be made to reduce this wastage of manpower.

From the time a new forest is initiated, either by new planting or by regenerating cutover, a strict timetable must be adhered to if a

high quality, highly productive forest is to be developed. Many excuses have been made as to why our present forests did not receive the best possible treatment. Let us be sure that we at some future date are not making excuses as to why we have not been able to complete our prescribed work.

Have you really thought of the quantity of labour required to bring a young forest to the stage of its first productive thinning, and have you really thought of what will be needed to overcome this work if it is allowed to fall into arrears? Or what is lost in money value if we do not get our forests thinned or pruned? Economists should be asked to tell us what we will lose in value if we do not thin and prune at the correct time.

Forestry needs to attract boys as they leave school and to be able to give them a full and satisfying life. Recruitment must start in the schools and, because forests are mostly situated away from established centres, good accommodation and training facilities should be made available handy to the job. The standard of amenities must be good, training regular and properly organised, and future employment assured – by this I mean that suitable work must be provided for men at all ages so that at no point must a man need to look elsewhere for a living – forestry must expect to provide employment for a man's full working life.

A comprehensive training programme is needed to cover all aspects of forestry – from junior labourers to skilled labourers; from leading hands to foremen to forest rangers; from technical trainees to qualified foresters. An adequate number of trained men of all grades is essential if this forest extension programme is to be achieved and, at the same time, our present forest estates adequately managed.

To get sufficient men for forestry work is a public relations job in which all foresters can play a part. On all occasions and in every way possible we all must act as recruiters and assist as many boys as possible on a path that will lead them into forestry work and on to a level as high as their ability will permit. This is a job that we all can do. Let us get on with it in conjunction with our present work and help to build a larger and more prosperous industry.