

EXTRACT FROM "SUMMARY REPORT, RESOLUTIONS, AND REPORTS OF COMMITTEES" ISSUED IN CONNEXION WITH THE FOURTH BRITISH EMPIRE FORESTRY CONFERENCE—SOUTH AFRICA, 1935.

**Tropical Forestry in Relation to Agriculture.**

The importance of close co-operation between forestry, agricultural and other services, in promoting the general welfare of a country, was stressed, particularly in regard to the control of shifting cultivation with its attendant destruction of forests and all the evils that it entails. Such co-operation is already effective or is developing in some countries, e.g., the Gold Coast, Mauritius and Nyasaland.

In Nyasaland, excellent progress has been made by putting into effect the village forest scheme (explained in a paper) which puts reserved forest areas under control of the village headmen and gives the people a direct interest in them. All co-operative schemes must go hand in hand with education and demonstration in modified agricultural and pastoral methods to prevent loss of soil and to maintain the fertility of the land. Co-operation between forest, agricultural and other officers is necessary in the first instance in assigning areas for forestry and agricultural purposes respectively, so that environmental conditions required for specific crops such as cocoa, rubber, clover, &c., may be safeguarded. Each service has its special knowledge to contribute to the end that the best and most enduring results may be secured. Without the help given by forestry, the agricultural possibilities of a land decrease and may ultimately disappear.

Forestry also enters very definitely into the solution of the tsetse problem. In high forest, though tsetse may be present, animals are immune or tolerant; where forests have been destroyed there are found peak regions of fatal incidence of trypanosomiasis. In the control of this pest, co-operation by many sciences including forestry is essential.

Shifting cultivation, though usually a bad master, can be made into a good servant as exemplified in the "taungya" system which, when properly applied in the formation and regeneration of forests, serves the ends of both forestry and agriculture. Stress was laid on the fact that foresters should always be ready to step out of their own province in order to help agriculture, and to combat any prejudice that might exist to the effect that forestry has no application in agricultural or pastoral pursuits. The appointment of experts trained in the science of vegetation, to act as liaison officers between forestry and agriculture, was considered to be well worth consideration.

It was pointed out that timber exploitation in the tropics is generally somewhat speculative and that a selective technique is usually most appropriate in the exploitation of rain forests in the moist tropics both on silvicultural and on economic grounds. Highly mechanized methods of exploitation entail high capital costs and highly paid labour for operation and maintenance of mechanical transport. The view was expressed that where labour is cheap and efficient, it is not economical to go in for elaborate mechanization and that simple extraction methods which rely largely on hand labour for the operation of tramways, slides, &c., will prove more satisfactory and economical.