afforestation, and various Commissions have recommended in favour of it. It took a great war and the imminent danger of an alarming timber shortage, when we were cut off from foreign supplies, to rouse the public to action. The Forestry Commission was constituted immediately after the War, and now, at the end of its first ten-year period, there is a danger that national lassitude will allow the Commission to languish from lack of adequate funds.

Statistics of so many million trees planted on so many thousand acres are apt to be unconvincing, and we are liable to forget what lies behind these figures—an organised staff and a trained personnel which cannot be easily recruited and must not be lightly disbanded. Without continuity of administration, forests cannot be effectively managed and no efficient forest service can be built up, so that a gradual and systematic development is likely, in the long run, to be far more economic than sudden growths stimulated by war panic, unemployment, or cheap money, alternating with periods of decay due to apparent national security or financial stringency.

The benefits which may be derived from national afforestation are not confined to the timber, which, as the writer of the leading article says, can only be reaped after many years. Forestry helps to maintain the rural population, and when co-ordinated with the formation of small holdings, as in many of the Forestry Commission schemes, it stimulates agricultural and horticultural output. The agricultural depression is throwing a great deal of land out of cultivation, and it is very important that forestry should step in where possible and utilise the land and labour thus rendered unproductive. The present cheapness of land is also a direct incentive towards immediate afforestation.

W. E. HILEY.

(Editor, *Quarterly Journal of Forestry*.)

Imperial Forestry Institute,
University of Oxford,
May 9.

MR. HILEY misses the point of the article on "Forestry and Agriculture in Great Britain." No suggestion was put forward that the afforestation work now being undertaken should be discontinued. The view was expressed, however, that the Government should perhaps consider whether some of the heavy overhead charges which have little bearing on the actual planting of trees, that is, the afforestation work proper, could not be curtailed. The plea that forestry should step in and plant up land, which, owing to agricultural depression is being thrown out of cultivation, is surely unsound. The first axiom of scientific forestry is that no land which can be made to produce food should come under the aegis of the forester. The money Mr. Hiley would devote to afforesting such land would be more justifiably employed in assisting the agriculturist to bring it once more under crops or stock.

THE WRITER OF THE ARTICLE.

Salt Crystals as Nuclei of Sea Fog Particles.

I HAVE received from Dr. J. S. Owens a note of observations of a fog drifting from westward which he experienced recently on the Bay of Biscay. I cannot recall any observations exactly similar, so I append a copy of the note. It will interest readers of NATURE, and at the same time revive an old question as to the real meaning of an observation of the wet bulb in a sea fog, of which there are many thousands on record.

NAPIER SHAW.

May 17.

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"On Sunday, April 29, 1928 (R.M.S.P. *Demerara*), we were a little south of Ushant, about 49 degrees north and 6 degrees west, when after a bright sunny morning a fog came on about 12.30 P.M. and remained till about 7 P.M. The sea was very smooth, no white caps or spray. A light breeze from west. The fog could be seen blowing in wisps across the ship. My cabin being on the west, the breeze was blowing into the port, and I placed a well-polished tumbler in the port hole so that fog particles blown in might hit it and stick. After about an hour visible spots were on the tumbler, and at about 5.30 P.M. the side facing the west was well covered with minute drops obviously liquid, when magnified. I removed the tumbler and filled it with hot water, when all drops disappeared, and in their place were whitish spots, such as one would expect if the droplets contained a soluble salt. On emptying the glass and allowing it to cool again, after about 10 minutes the whitish spots became converted into drops of liquid, evidently the soluble salt deliquescent. It seems, therefore, evident that the fog particles were formed round salt crystals, and that for such a fog to form the relative humidity need not rise much above 75 per cent, assuming, as is fairly certain, the salt present was sea salt, which deliquesces at 74 per cent or 75 per cent relative humidity.

J. S. OWENS."

Correlation.

FOR the determination of a linear function of X approximating to Y for a range of corresponding values (X, Y), a graphic method is desirable.

If the plotted values are divided into two classes by the median of X , in each class, the same number

FIG. 1.

of points should lie on each side of the required line, which is thus found by inspection.

The method is much more expeditious than that of least squares. It appears, moreover, to be free from undue bias by outlying values.

For the values plotted in Fig. 1, the straight line is $Y = (40 - 3X)/5$, with a mean deviation of 1.00. The method of least squares gives $Y = (1940 - 137X)/236$, with a mean deviation of 1.05.

A. F. DUFTON.

Barns Green,
Horsham,
May 5.