

course; academic qualifications required for entry are either two Advanced Level passes at the General Certificate of Education, or a good endorsed certificate in biology, but at least equal emphasis is placed on personality. Applications for admission to the course are now coming forward at the rate of fifty to sixty each year; of these a high percentage is made up of students who have been offered university places, but have preferred a course leading to a Diploma in Technology. At the same time, some students withdraw their applications on being offered university places, although this happened only in one case during 1960. There has been some wastage on the course arising from a variety of causes.

Co-operation with industry has been very close, and, during the three years for which the course has now been running, staff have been cordially received during their industrial visits. Some thirty-five firms offer industrial training at various levels and in various fields, and a number of other firms are anxious to co-operate as student numbers grow. Before a student is assigned to a particular firm, his or her interests are discussed with the head of department and the senior lecturer in biology, and the advice of various lecturers sought; an approach is then made to the firm able to offer the most appropriate kind of training and a suitable programme is drawn up. The student is then called for interview by the selected firm and a final decision is made as to the general suitability of arrangements. A member of staff from the firm is chosen to supervise the industrial training and to maintain contact with the College.

A tutor visits the student on two or three occasions, and mid-way through these industrial periods students are brought together for a residential week-

end at some selected college outside Bristol, along with students from other Diploma in Technology courses. This provides an opportunity to meet the College staff and discuss matters of general interest.

The break of six months in academic work presents problems of continuity. Difficulties are to a considerable extent overcome by close consultation between industry and the College. Students leave college with some academic assignments involving guided reading and the writing of essays. Every care is taken to ensure that this does not create too much of a burden by holding a staff meeting at which the amount of work to be given to students is finally determined. Details of the assignments are given to the industrial tutors so that they are fully aware of the work to be done by a student during the industrial period; in some cases, time to do this work is allowed for in the general programme. Over and above this, a student is required to write an account of the industrial training and of its relevance to the particular industry in which he finds himself.

This course, despite some initial difficulties, is proving to be of considerable value to students, and, while there is still room for experimentation, the general pattern is sound. All the present fourth-year students are assured of appointments on completing their course, and an increasing number of firms are willing and anxious to co-operate.

The course for the Diploma in Technology in Applied Biology also began at the Brunel College of Technology in October 1957; and, although the subjects studied differ in detail from those at Bristol, the general arrangements follow the same pattern.

## TREE PLANTING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS

A PUBLICATION has recently been issued jointly by the Standing Committee on National Parks of the Councils for the Preservation of Rural England and Wales and the Joint Action Group for the Protection of Dartmoor and Exmoor, entitled *The Case for Control of Afforestation of Open Land in National Parks\**.

The problem of land use in our heavily populated island becomes yearly more and more complex. The public memory is short, and even those who are capable of pre-vision and of determining what is desirable in the long run cannot convince Governments of the appropriate action. This is especially true of tree-planting in its various aspects. Apart from a fraction of the land-owning class of earlier centuries it is unfortunately true that those in control have always been uninterested in, even antipathetic to, forestry as a commercial undertaking at home—so long as there existed readily available supplies of timber abroad. But for the lessons of two World Wars it is very doubtful if a State forest service would ever have been set up in Great Britain with the task of creating new forests and conserving existing woodlands. Since its establishment in 1919, the Forestry Commission has made good progress

\* Standing Committee on National Parks and Joint Action Group *The Case for Control of Afforestation of Open Land in National Parks*, presented by the Standing Committee on National Parks of the Councils for the Preservation of Rural England and Wales; and the Joint Action Group for the Protection of Dartmoor and Exmoor. Pp. 24. (London: Standing Committee on National Parks, 4 Hobart Place, S.W.1, 1961.)

with its main task and its activities are widespread over most of Britain. It has clashed here and there with various land users, but, on the whole, its work is appreciated.

It would be wrong to imagine, however, that the Government has some overall plan for land use and that the various authorities who have an interest in land use are centrally controlled. It is not even the case that all the statutory authorities concerned in any way with tree conservation, tree-planting, afforestation and forestry are centrally controlled. Besides the Forestry Commission, in Britain, the following public bodies are interested in trees in one way or another—the local planning authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, the Nature Conservancy, and the National Parks Commission. In addition, there is now the Timber Growers Association of private individuals engaged in commercial tree-planting enterprises. In some respects their interests clash, especially when the problem of conservation of amenities arises.

It is not a good thing that the various bodies interested in woodlands for various reasons should quarrel among themselves; they should be in the closest association, so that the woodland heritage can be preserved and extended, wherever possible, to fulfil to the best advantage all the recognized functions of protection, amenity, recreation and production. Hitherto, the tendency has been for

State action to concern itself too much with the commercial aspect of tree-planting. Afforestation has been almost entirely directed towards the establishment of short term 'crops' of trees and not to permanent woodlands adapted to satisfy demands for amenity, recreation and protection. In harmony with this tendency special fiscal concessions are given to private woodland owners who engage in commercial forestry. Taxation, in relation to tree-planting in Britain, is not easy to understand, more especially as the tree grower is also entitled to certain grants in aid. The Government takes with one hand and gives with the other, and it is not very clear why. A case can be made for State assistance to recreate forests, and a case can be made for a simple single basis of taxation of commercial forests, namely, on the profits of the enterprise instead of on the timber capital; but it is extremely difficult to segregate the commercial forest from the amenity woodland and to say how the State should act in relation to the latter. The ideal woodland is that which fulfils the triple functions of protection, amenity and production, and many landowners could teach the Forestry Commission a lesson to that effect.

The fiscal concessions allowed to tree-growers have led to a striking and relatively recent development in forestry circles. Commercial afforestation enterprises have been set up and have become especially active in southern England and Wales. The task which they have set themselves would not be financially attractive—it would not be economic—without the subsidies and fiscal concessions at present allowed. How successful these afforestation enterprises will be eventually, that is in the establishment of healthy permanent woodland, remains to be seen. Like the greater part of the Forestry Commission plantations they are, taking the long view, still experimental. If they pay the entrepreneurs it is solely because of the State assistance and taxation reliefs.

The position in respect of subsidies for tree-planting and of taxation relief to woodland owners

certainly requires to be reconsidered; but whether it is desirable to give the Standing Committee on National Parks over-riding control on afforestation in such a way as to conflict with the duties of the Forestry Commission, or in any other way, is very doubtful.

The case for establishing such a control is put in a memorandum distributed by the Standing Committee on National Parks of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and Wales and the Joint Action Group for the Protection of Dartmoor and Exmoor. They view with alarm the incursion of commercial afforestation into the Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks in particular. They have a case. The solution does not lie, however, in resisting such encroachments but in trying to ensure that the State assistance on which the intruders depend is devoted to the creation of a type of forest which increases the amenities of the Parks while at the same time being productive.

There is no reason why the creation of these woodlands should result in the "squandering of any noble heritage of beauty" except in so far as the methods adopted are inappropriate. It is unfortunate that until recently State forest policy had subordinated too much the important protective and amenity functions of woodlands to the purely commercial function of producing timber, because it has placed the Forestry Commission in a weak position when it comes to discussing the best use of tree-planting associated with national parks.

In respect of Britain as a whole there are many districts where an afforestation policy of this kind would be welcomed, and which might benefit greatly from what is in effect the local expenditure of taxation revenues indirectly through the medium of private enterprise. Whether this is really a healthy development from the point of view of forestry is another matter. The production of figures in a book is a very different skill from that of creating and conserving a forest on the ground.

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## PARENTS' VIEWS ON EDUCATION

**D**URING the past three years Political and Economic Planning has been carrying out an inquiry to determine how far the social services are meeting the needs of the people who use them.

Of the social services none can affect the life of the individual and the nation more radically than education, and, as a preliminary to a fuller report to be published later, Political and Economic Planning has produced a broadsheet recording the findings of the inquiry on the education service\*. Since the object of the survey was to present the consumers' view of the social services, the broadsheet's approach to the education service must necessarily be a limited one. Parents' wishes cannot be equated with educational need. Parents may over-rate their children's abilities, or they may not understand what the school is trying to do. Nevertheless, it is part of the new plan for education that the parent should become more closely involved in the child's schooling. An understanding of parents' experience and opinions is, therefore,

essential when considering the present achievements of the education service.

The main inquiry was carried out among families living in the Greater London area. It had been decided that the inquiry must be concentrated in one district and that the locality chosen should be a large urban area since this is the type of community in which most people live. It should also be large enough to contain a diverse population and to include several local authority areas with a variety of different arrangements for some of the social services. Greater London fulfilled all these requirements. To make sure, however, that the findings for London were not untypical of the rest of Britain, a second smaller inquiry was carried out in Northampton, a provincial town of quite different size. This second inquiry confirms that the London findings can be considered representative. A total of 734 families was successfully interviewed in the main inquiry. Since the social services to-day are not primarily concerned with hardship, or important only to limited sections of the population, it had been decided to study samples of all families with children under the age of 16.

\* *Planning*, Vol. 27, No. 448 (January 23, 1961): Parents' Views on Education, Pp. 1-32. (London: Political and Economic Planning, 1961.) 3s. 6d.