REPORT ON

GEORGE WATSON'S BOYS' COLLEGE FORESTRY CAMP

AT

CLARILAWMOOR, ROXBURGHSHIRE.

JULY - SEPTEMBER, 1940.

BY

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ALEXANDER DARLING SCHOLARSHIP. 1940.
GENERAL. The organisation of this Camp was somewhat experimental in nature since there was no precedent scheme on which to base the employment and billeting of so large a number of schoolboys. Besides, the position was rather an anomalous combination of paid employment under the detailed supervision of those not directly connected with the Forestry Commission. The general arrangements as to finance, insurance, etc., were made between the Forestry Commission, Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, and the School Authorities, but the actual work on the forest was controlled by the Timber Supply Department of the Forestry Commission at Dumfries.

The general scheme of the undertaking might be subdivided for convenience of treatment into:-

Preliminary Organisation,
Organisation of Camp Arrangements,
Organisation of the Actual Work in the Forest,
And Financial Arrangements -

which were a mixture of Forestry Commission transactions regarding payment of wages and expenses and the domestic accounts of the Camp. As I was more particularly concerned with the finance, I soon came to realise that the methods evolved or adopted were hardly those that would commend themselves in orthodox business circles, but since they were bequeathed to me by Former Pupils who were Chartered Accountants - and in one case a Company Secretary - I took it that the unusual methods were a reflection of the peculiarly mixed nature of the accounts and hesitated to recast the whole in view of the comparative shortness of the period still to run.

PRELIMINARY ORGANISATION. Only boys over 14 years of age were eligible for employment. As a general insurance was taken out covering all employees at the camp, the authorising signatures of the boys’ parents were obtained on a special/
A CORNER OF THE CAMP SITE - CLARILAWMOOR.
special form. Under the terms of the policy no boy under 16 years of age was allowed the use of axe or saw, and it may be noted here that, apart from several gashes requiring stitches, there were no serious accidents.

A serial register was kept in which was recorded the name and class of the boy, his address, parents' name, age group, under which evacuation scheme he was registered - if any, whether he could bring a bicycle (those with bicycles were quartered at Selkirk High School - more than 3 miles from the work), a note of the payment of a deposit of 7/6 to cover preliminary expenses (this was repaid in full after the books had been satisfactorily closed); then followed spaces for the weeks during which the Camp was to be in operation with a note in each individual case of the weeks when the particular boy had agreed to attend. These provisional attendances were checked off, of course, each week to ascertain if the boys concerned were actually in attendance, so that lists of gangs and paysheets, etc., might be correctly drawn up.

CAMP ORGANISATION. The Camp was originally set up on a wooded site adjoining the Clarilawmoor Forest and on the Selkirk - St. Boswells Road - near a farm from which the water supplied for cooking and drinking purposes had to be wheeled. For the 4 weeks from July 1st. to 28th., the Camp was opened and occupied by a party of former pupils and senior boys excused school attendance, together with one or two masters similarly released from duty.

A great deal of equipment, tents, cooking utensils, etc., was hired from the Y.M.C.A., Edinburgh, etc., but some had to be purchased for the occasion. The cooking was done by selected members of the Camp in rotation with the assistance of a number of orderlies. These were paid according to their grade at the same rates as the timber workers. Besides the sleeping tents there/
there were a large marquee with seating accommodation for meals etc., and containing a canteen, radio, etc., a cooking shed with primus stoves, outside boilers for water and cooking, and a store tent.

The feeding arrangements for a community of this size - returning at regular intervals for meals prepared by a limited number of workers - require considerable insight and foresight e.g. the drafting of menus, the ordering of supplies suitably in advance, bearing in mind the distance from Selkirk - where most of the supplies were obtained - and the shortage of petrol for delivery vans.

Matters were even more complicated with the arrival of the main body of workers for the 7 weeks from the 29th. July to 15th. September. By far the greater attendance was in the first few weeks, the numbers then reading somewhere in the neighbourhood of 200. From 29th. July to 1st. September, the larger part of the company was quartered in the classrooms of Selkirk High School, and it was from there that most of the official work of this period was done. The cooking in this instance was done in the school kitchen of the Domestic Science department with, on the average, the assistance of two or three lady cooks (Domestic Science mistresses, Atholl Crescent students, etc.), helped by a number of boys as kitchen orderlies. The boys at the school had breakfast, dinner, and supper there and lunch at the Camp. The lunch was made up partly at school and conveyed by car to the Camp where some additional light cooking was done. Thus one meal was prepared and taken jointly by the whole company, while the other meals were cooked and partaken separately at school and Camp respectively.

A canteen, apart from the catering arrangements, was run both at the school and the Camp. The supplies were obtained wholesale from confectioners and fruiterers/
TOO MANY COOKS! - AT SELKIRK HIGH SCHOOL, AUGUST 1940.
fruiterers in Edinburgh and aerated water manufacturers in Galashiels.

It is regrettable to record that in this nominally respectable society the difference between purchase and retail prices was at best offset by pilfering; this occurred mainly at the Camp where the goods were displayed on an open table with an open cash box intended for unattended transactions, but from which - over a period - the undetected culprit or culprits surreptitiously removed considerable sums.

The rationing of food involved the collection and return of the ration cards (alphabetically arranged), from which the appropriate coupons had to be cut and forwarded to the respective dealers.

ORGANISATION OF THE ACTUAL WORK IN THE FOREST. The timber in this forest had already been felled by regular employees of the Forestry Commission at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940, during part of which time the snow on the ground was probably responsible for the trees being cut several inches from the ground with unfortunate results to which we shall refer later.

For each timber tree cut the worker was paid 4d. and he naturally expended as little time as possible on the process, so that all deciduous trees were left standing and had to be felled by the boys in the course of exposing and extracting the valuable wood.

The working hours commenced at 8 a.m. and finished at 5 p.m. There was an hour's break for lunch between 12 noon and 1 p.m. with shorter unofficial rest intervals after every hour or so according to the nature of the work. The boys who had to travel the three miles from school by bicycle were allowed to/
A SPOT OF WORK - THE VANISHING FOREST OF CLARILAWMOOR.
to start half an hour later and finish half an hour earlier than the official times.

For the purposes of the work the boys were divided into gangs of about 9 members, each in charge of a senior boy or former pupil as ganger who was paid at a higher rate. The boys were allocated to their gangs at the beginning of each week, the lists being arranged at a meeting of the executive and posted up every Sunday evening. The regular gangs, usually about 9 in number, were not kept at the same type of work incessantly but were changed round to different categories of tasks described later. Thus variety was introduced into the work and probably increased zest for it and reduced the retarding effect of monotony. Any practice effect lost as a result of the change was probably not considerable since most of the jobs were relatively unskilled.

The first type of work undertaken by these general gangs was the laying bare of the fallen timber by extracting all encumbering brushwood which was not undergrowth but the lateral branches of the pines, firs, and spruces - the main species in this coniferous plantation. The trunks were cleared by "snedding" i.e. lopping off with the axe all lateral branches. The resulting brush débris was piled on roads made straight through the wood at more or less regular intervals. Before the brush piling could proceed, however, the foundation of the roads had to be prepared - first, by axing squads who, with 5½ lb. woodsman's axes which required a little technique in the wielding at ground level, have to remove the tree stumps left by the lumbermen in their haste to get the timber felled speedily. These stumps, if left in the roads, would probably have broken the wheels of the tractors for which traffic the roads were to be used. It would have been more economical from the point of view of time and also probably of expense if a horizontal sawing machine could have/
have been used to bring down the trees in the first instance, since it would take ten times as long at least to axe the stumps flush with ground level as to fell the tree originally; but of course it was only the stumps that happened to lie in the course of the road that had to be dealt with thus. After the ground had been levelled a bottoming of parallel logs of deciduous waste wood - which had to be felled as the clearing proceeded - was laid. On top of this the brushwood was piled and the road was then ready for the use of tractors which transported the timber to the loading banks near the main road. With the aid of horses and chains the various sized trunks were hauled to the roadsides. There measurers got busy marking off different standard lengths, the largest of which were logs 8 feet by 8 inches in diameter, but there were many other lesser sizes permissable and required. Such timber was taken off by tractor to the loading station and from there it was conveyed by motor lorries to St. Boswells Railway Station to be sent by rail - principally to coal pits. Any long but deformed logs were designated O.P's i.e. Obstruction Posts - for use in rendering dangerous the landing of hostile aircraft in open level spaces. Short lengths of greater diameter than 8" were marked "Box" and conveyed to the circular saws at the mill in the forest where they were reduced to planks for box wood. Greater sizes - too big to be dealt with on the site - were marked "City Mill" and taken by rail to sawmills in Glasgow for further treatment.

The timber, after being marked into suitable categories as above, was cut on the spot by the usual bi-manual saw, a process referred to as "cross-cutting". A rather more solid piece of work was the constructing of what was known as the "corded road". This was intended for lorry traffic which could proceed, by means of it, nearer to the scene where the timber lay, and thus prevent excessive/
excessive journeying of the slower tractors. However, I am still a little puzzled as to how the actual amount of work expended on it was reconciled with its ultimate saving of labour. It was not so much the idea of such a road as the direction it pursued that seemed to confer little real advantage to the expedition of the work; instead of running into the forest at right angles to the main county road with a turning space at the top end and, if required, broader areas for traffic passing, this peculiar road, not completed by the time we left, described a crescent to rejoin the main road several hundred yards further on and never at any point being more than 200 yards from this main road - which, by the way, did not require to be relieved of traffic. The road in itself, however, was well constructed by the laying of longitudinal parallel rails of substantial timber and the setting close together across this of lengths sufficiently strong to bear the weight of the anticipated loads. The cross pieces were kept from moving by the driving in at suitable intervals of stout pegs. A minor engineering achievement on this road was the bridging of a fairly wide watercourse with a horizontal timber construction.

In all the work the boys were instructed initially, where necessary, by the foremen of the permanent employees (about 20 in number) on the forest. This consisted of learning the proper technique of axing, sawing, measuring, etc., and in many jobs the older boys shared the work with the regular employees e.g. the transport of timber to and unloading at the railway station as well as the loading of the tractors at the forest, but not, however, the work of the saw-mill.

FINANCIAL ORGANISATION. As previously hinted, there was a peculiar and confusing mixture in these financial affairs between transactions involving the Forestry Commission and those of a purely internal or domestic nature. It was obvious/
obvious from the inefficiency of the Commission and its immediate local representative that there was no previous experience of the working of a scheme of this nature.

We shall examine the payment of wages first and then the Camp accounts to see how the latter were affected by the former.

The wages were paid in two different ways, viz:- directly by the Forestry Commission to former pupils and certain senior boys who acted as gangers or were promoted to this grade on account of their ability to perform a labourer's standard of work; these people were classified as A.12 from the official number on the wages list (copy attached). Nominally this class of wage earner was paid directly by the Commission but in actual practice it was the Camp authorities who had a discretionary and perhaps too free hand in saying who and how many were to be graded for payment as A.12, a fact which led to some discontent naturally amongst those who considered themselves - and in many cases actually were - doing as much as the favoured nominees. The Commission not only relied on us for the numbers working under this category but also for the number of hours worked by each person. This might of course be the only feasible plan since there were no officials of the Commission cognisant of the individuals so employed, and the matter of checking time under the nature of the work was impossible of achievement. Like a contract of insurance the whole relationship between the Commission and the Camp Supervisors savoured strongly of uberrimae fidei on both sides, but what the result of this system was as regards either labour or financial efficiency would be difficult to assess exactly.

The works office on the forest site was housed in a small wooden hut which it shared with a compartment for the storage, issue and return of the various working tools and implements. It possessed no telephone and was, apart from private/
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<th>NAME</th>
<th>Hours or Days</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Gross Amount</th>
<th>Employees Insurance</th>
<th>Net Amount</th>
<th>Signature in acknowledgment of receipt</th>
<th>Employer's Insurance</th>
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Certified correct: stamps for the contributions shown have been duly affixed to the contributors' cards.

Form A12.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Hours or Days</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Gross Amount</th>
<th>Employees Insurance</th>
<th>Net Amount</th>
<th>Signature in acknowledgment of receipt</th>
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The A.12 form referred to in the description of the method of wages payment.

This form, of the tear-out variety, was carboned in triplicate for the accounting system of the Forestry Commission, with which we were not officially concerned.
private car, bicycle, etc., isolated from the outside world, a fact which made the carrying on of its necessary business a matter of great difficulty. This difficulty which was only increased by the fact that a very limited amount of cash was retained there and the individuals in charge were obviously far from au fait with the work to be performed. In fact in practice we had to make up the pay lists for them since we knew the persons concerned and the number of days they had worked. Payment under the A.12 category was at the rate of 7/- per day, which for 5½ working days meant 38/6 weekly, but this was subject to the deduction of Unemployment insurance and National Health Insurance; this, I think, in most cases amounted to a 10d. contribution to each by the employee meaning a deduction of 1/8 per week. Actually the Unemployment Insurance contribution depends on the age group of the employee - 16-18, 18-21, 21-65 - and was raised during the course of the Camp. The work of obtaining the necessary Health Insurance Cards from the Post Office at Selkirk - which was soon exhausted of its normal stocks at this intermediate period in the currency of a card, and caused us some concern in the delay of obtaining a fresh supply - and the Unemployment Insurance cards the issue of which required the filling up at the Labour Exchange of the particulars on his account page from the ledger by the individual concerned - a thing he could not well do since his working hours and travelling distance outspanned the office hours of the Exchange - although this was the work of the Commission, it had to be undertaken by the Camp Treasurer. The Unemployment cards were actually obtained by the Manager of the Exchange allowing the serial loose leaves from the individual account ledger to be taken to the forest and there completed as required by the person concerned; then they were returned to the Exchange and the relevant cards were transmitted to the Treasurer of the Camp by post or collected personally. This may sound all very trivial but when one remembers that/
that, although - with regard to the Camp - workers were charged for subsistence by the week and broken periods counted as a week, workers might arrive at any odd time, and this process of obtaining cards from Post Office and Exchange had to be repeated time and again. As stated, it was really the work of the Commission but their representatives on the spot were so inept and unreliable that it is doubtful if the wages would ever have been paid on time without involving at least a liability to the penalties prescribed by the Unemployment and National Health Insurance Acts. As it was, it was not uncommon to find the 'office boy' at the forest automatically stamping and cancelling the stamps on cards whose owners had long since departed the work. On being notified of this we were hardly surprised to learn that the unnecessary stamps had been removed with a view to using them over again, quite oblivious of the illegality of such proceedings. It was also discovered that some workers had come and gone without ever having possessed cards and, due to the tolerance of the Labour Exchange Manager, the matter was allowed to drop. In other cases we had former pupils working at the camp while on holiday and, since they already possessed the necessary cards at their place of regular employment, none were needed for this additional employment. Considering the relatively short period of work of each worker on the average it would have seemed more reasonable if a simpler scheme could have been sanctioned, for in most cases it was unlikely that the persons concerned would ever be in insurable employment again and their contributions could not, under any circumstances, be regarded as contributions to an insurance scheme which was capable of insuring them. In other words, it was merely a levy or tax on their earnings or a gratuitous contribution to the insurance fund. It is apparently beyond the scope of the powers concerned to make special dispensing orders for a contingency of this nature; the inelastic law must follow its general automatic course and its inertia/
inertia does not permit the administration to make obvious, common-sense, minor adjustments. These A.12 wages were paid fortnightly on Thursday for the period up to the preceding Wednesday night - but where anyone left between two such regular payments, he had to be paid then and a special entry made on the form so that the money would be forthcoming at the proper time. In all cases the Camp Treasurer - with the assistance of the Chief Ganger (one of the former pupils - paid £3 per week) - had to see that the A.12 form was completed from information as to persons working and hours worked in plenty of time to allow the necessary cash to be brought to the site by the Forestry Commission.

From their wages these A.12 people paid £1 per week (£2 each regular pay day) into the camp fund as their subsistence charge.

For the other grades of workers there was fortunately no insurance payable i.e. all boys who were not gangers or promoted A.12, masters, lady cooks, and a peculiar category called staff whose exact status I was never able to determine although it must have been agreed previously by the Forestry Commission; these 'staff' people were former pupils who had special work to do in connection with the organisation and running of the Camp e.g. the treasurer, unless he was a master, the camp medical officer, etc. These categories were paid at the following rates:

Schoolboys - 15/- per week; masters - 30/- per week; lady cooks - 15/- per week; staff - £3 per week. There was also a payment made of £1: 10: -, per week for the accommodation of the lady cooks in private lodgings. Of these sums the schoolboys paid 12/6 per week for subsistence, the masters £1, the lady cooks 15/-, and the staff £1. The masters and staff paid their remaining 10/- and £2 respectively into the Camp account along with their subsistence or maintenance charge and were, in effect, working voluntarily, as were the lady cooks. The schoolboys received the balance of their wages i.e. 2/6 each Saturday/
Saturday as pocket money.

The money due on account of the above wages was received as a single subsidy from the Forestry Commission and had to be indented for each week several days in advance of the date by which payment was required. In practice it was found advisable to allow a suitable margin of overcharge of this subsidy and refund to the Forestry Commission the amount by which the subsidy exceeded the actual wages payable. This was done as any mistake in underestimating the numbers resulted in insufficient money being forthcoming to make the necessary payments on the due date, an insufficiency which could not immediately be rectified owing to the limited official scope of the Commission's Representatives on the site.

In addition, the Camp Treasurer had to indent for the number of schoolboys and masters of Selkirk High School who were paid indirectly through our wages account. There was a camp a little way from ours on the opposite side of the road containing on the average about 30 boys and 3 masters from Selkirk High School. As far as work was concerned they were quite separate and under the immediate jurisdiction of the Forestry Commission's overmen, etc., on another part of the same forest. The 12/6 retained from each boy of the Selkirk High School Group was, of course, kept by their camp supervisor for the subsistence of this particular camp so that the total amount due in wages to this subsidiary camp was paid over in full by us from the cash received from the Commission.

Finally we come to the Camp accounts proper i.e. the private and domestic accounts in which the subsistence allowances from the above wages were debited and the various camp expenditures credited. There was, of course, no attempt at a double entry system, but the books were balanced each day in the following manner. First of all, we must note the chief 'accounts' in the books. There was/
was the Camp account debited with all receipts for subsistence, etc. and credited with all payments of food and supplies where the bills for such were paid by cheque drawn on the account of the Camp Supervisor at the National Bank of Scotland, Selkirk Branch; into this account all cash received from the Forestry Commission was paid except for about £20 cash retained on hand for payment of day-to-day petty expenses, refunding of train and bus fares, etc., since cheques could only be issued on the signature of the Camp Supervisor who might be absent in Edinburgh for several days on end. There was thus a list kept separately from the Camp account of payments for petty expenses and a separate list of expenses' payments in favour of train and bus fares to the Camp from home refunded on request. Then there was also a separate Canteen Account for both the school and the branch at the Camp, the drawings from the latter being added periodically and being kept between times in a steel strong box sunk to the ground level of the Camp site. This account was of course debited daily, except for the modification just noted, with the canteen drawings and credited with payments by cheque to wholesale confectioners, fruiterers, aerated water manufacturers, etc. Since, up to the final balancing, the Camp and Canteen accounts had debit balances, the bills relating thereto being paid periodically as receipts from allowances and drawings permitted, these debit balances were added daily and from them were taken the credits of petty expenses and fares refunded and the remaining debit thus struck was reconciled with cash in hand (cheques, postal orders, notes, silver, and copper) and cash in bank totals. In practice the principle of cumulative totals was adopted i.e. all additions to debits and credits made ever increasing totals on these sides and the differences were taken between these new grand totals each day after current addition had been made. The bank obliged by making their entries similarly in the pass book.

Theoretically/
Theoretically the control of cash thus described seems simple, but in practice the work was caused, and confusion had to be guarded against, by the distances between the places where transactions were liable to occur and the odd times at which payments might suddenly, under stress, have to be made, by the difficulty of communication by transport or telephone, by the fact that many different people were apparently endowed with authority to make purchases as occasion arose and have to be paid from petty cash - transactions which had always to be carefully recorded at the time or they slipped the memory with chaotic consequences for the Treasurer.

There were of course many other items of organisation with which the Treasurer was not directly concerned e.g. the ordering of supplies of every kind - food, fuel, and the like, the bills for which had, of course, ultimately to be checked over against receipt notes, etc., the obtaining of petrol coupons for the supplies authorised for private cars engaged in liaison work - to mention only a few.

From various points of view, but particularly payment of wages, accurate lists of those actually present and engaged had to be ascertained for each week's subsidy made out against the Forestry Commission. This involved the numerical checking by name of all boys, masters, and lady cooks actually present, a number which was balanced against the total allocated to the different gangs, plus orderlies at school and Camp, cooks at Camp, those engaged with horses and those employed on the tractors. This subsidy list excluded the A.12 men but their attendance had to be entered on the register. The checking of the presence and movement of such a large number of individuals in different categories in such widely separated scenes of activity was a task involving a considerable amount of time and effort, since the whole venture, owing to its temporary nature either did not warrant or did not acquire an accurate and close-knit/
close-knit scheme of organisation. This was due to the fact that it was new
to all parties concerned and the dispersed nature of the work i.e. unlike a
factory or contract on a site where there are facilities for the recording of
time of a more permanent nature and certainly more standardised methods of
paying wages as well as the fact that how the wages are spent is little
concern of the employer paying the wages, whereas the camp authorities were
in the more difficult position of receiving the wages, after estimating them,
paying them, refunding the excess indented for, and retaining part of them for
the expenses of the Camp management. The schoolboys were probably blissfully
unaware that they were being subjected to the abuses of the truck system,
while the Civil Service Commissioners were probably equally unaware, but
perhaps not so blissfully, of the abuses of the National Health and
Unemployment Insurance Acts, and the Forestry Commissioners have perhaps not
yet arrived at any clear idea as to the relative cost of child labour in the
obtaining of timber compared with that of normal labour on their forests.
I am not in a position to give the actual cost of production per 1000 c. ft.,
say £1 market value, since, although we possess figures of the cost of
production, apart from charges of a general nature on the forest, we have no
actual figures of the production for the period under review nor of the relative
proportions of such production contributed by school Camp and regular workmen
respectively. There is a theory amongst the townsfolk of Selkirk that this
must have been the dearest timber ever produced in the district but on
empirical grounds, I am inclined to disagree, after comparing the steady but
uninspiring evolutions of the permanent workers and their output in a given time
with the desultory and more erratic but more concentrated bursts of activity on
the part of the boys and this comparable output of the boys. The tempo of
working/
working was undoubtedly different but bearing in mind the relative wage rates I am sure that the boys' production was not so far short of the average output per man per hour, and in any case I suppose the country must be willing to pay a little more when labour is scarce and the commodity unobtainable at comparable prices elsewhere at present.

NOTE. There were many other minor book entries which had no bearing on the general accounts such as the Camp bank which was opened at a specified hour each evening for transactions and the consequent payments, withdrawals and balances entered in fresh columns for each individual customer, the recording of official and personal local and long distance telephone calls which were, of course, charged to the Selkirk High School Account and the expense of which had to be collected from the persons concerned or reimbursed from the Camp account in the case of official calls; and many other miscellaneous recordings for the facilitation of the life of the Camp community.

To record the organisation of the leisure and recreative sides of the camp life, while doubtless of considerable interest, would involve a report so voluminous as to distort the raison d'etre of the undertaking and is for that reason omitted.