

14 The Forest Estate

(Tables 1, 1B and ALG 1–ALG 5)

At the beginning of 1951, the total area of LFRs amounted to 627 sq miles (1,620 km²). By the end of the period (30th June 1965), it was 1,600 sq miles (4,150 km²).

Working plans were prepared by DFOs for a number of LFRs including one for the LG reserves and plantations near Gulu. With the production in 1956 of working plans for the Busoga Bush Reserves and the Busoga Plantations, the whole of the forest estate for the district was under plan. The districts of Acholi, Ankole and Kigezi were declared to have AFE in 1954 and similar recognition was made in 1955 in the case of Bukedi and Busoga. Buganda followed suit in 1956.

The first sawmilling licence in an LFR was granted in the Olwal reserve in Acholi. The total cut in 1953 was 31,000 cu ft (870 m³) but a major problem was the technical difficulty of sawing *Sapium ellipticum*, one of the commonest trees in the area.

Silviculture

The areas of fuel and pole plantations managed by ALGs were:

	1952 (acres)	1965 (acres)
Buganda	390	*
Acholi	410	630
Lango	850	1,150
Madi	50	110
West Nile	205	2,070
Busoga	2,120	6,440
Mbale	750	200
Teso	860	880
Bunyoro	300	230
Toro	160	220
Ankole	290	*
Kigezi	480	*
Bukedi	nil	470
Bugisu	nil	190
Karamoja	nil	20
Sebei	nil	10
	6,865 acres (2,780 ha)	12,620 acres (5,110 ha)

*returns incomplete or not received

In connection with the above table, an official return from Teso reported that '40,887 Cassia, 73,181 Elira and 31 donkeys were planted by private individuals' but the DFO considered it 'unlikely that either such numbers or variety were in fact established'.

With the improving staff situation, the plantation programme and various peasant planting schemes went ahead vigorously, as did the creation of new nurseries for the raising of plants for official use and for sale or free distribution to the public. The chief species used were *E. saligna* on favourable sites and *Cassia siamea* on difficult ones. Replacement of Cassia by *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* was started on a field scale in plantations in Lango and Acholi.

There was a considerable improvement in silvicultural treatment of plantations but in many cases, beeting still suffered from lack of forethought on the part of the staff – too few plants were raised too late. Despite this, nursery techniques were improved, largely due to a nursery course held by the Horticulturist, EAAFRO, in 1956 which was attended by, amongst others, 12 ALG Rangers. Substantial improvement in nursery work in the Eastern Province was effected by centralisation of nurseries.

In 1961, half a million plants were distributed for communal and individual planting in the Western Province. The area of greatest demand was Toro where approximately 300,000 plants were taken by farmers. In Buganda, demands for plantation fuel and poles from LFRs gradually dropped because there were so many private plantations. Arboretum plots and trials of quick-growing timber plantation species were expanded in all provinces in 1960/61, especially in Buganda, Eastern and Northern Provinces.

The Busoga District Council sharply criticised the mvule harvesting policy – which had been followed since 1958 – on the grounds that it had not been consulted during its formulation; this was despite the fact that the Secretary for Agriculture and Forestry had been concerned at all stages in drawing it up. A sub-committee of the Council was appointed to redraft the policy. The enumeration of mvule on public land in Busoga was completed early in 1961/62. Calculation of the harvestable trees indicated that as many as 15 mill units – a unit being taken as 7,200 tons (7,350 tonnes) were available. However, because of the distribution of the trees and the difficulties of demarcating units and providing supervisory staff, it was decided that only three units should be offered in the first instance and then only *after* the mvule harvesting policy had been approved by the District Council. Since it had not been approved, no concessions were offered. In the following year, the harvesting policy and the draft Forest Rules were returned for certain amendments to be made and for the final approval of the Lukiko. Busoga produced the biggest crop of illegal felling of timber, nearly all mvule.

The total cut of timber under Local Government control in 1960/61 was 434,200 cu ft (12,300 m³) of which Busoga produced 356,200 cu ft (10,100 m³), Bugisu 74,900 (2,200 m³) and Bukedi 3,100 (90 m³). There was a sudden demand for African Blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*) for export to Japan. Two licensees cut 3,000 cu ft (80 m³) between them and a third 1,600 cu ft (45 m³) in Northern Province but the first two stopped cutting when they experienced difficulties with the Japanese traders and the third one left the produce lying in the bush.

An innovation in Busoga was the enrichment planting of 10 acres (4 ha) in Lubani LFR.

Half was planted in lines of musizi and the remainder in groups of the same species. In the Northern Province the severe dry season caused a heavy toll amongst *E. saligna* planted by the West Nile Tobacco Fuel Scheme.

In 1961/62, about 100 sq miles (260 km²) of public land were earmarked for reservation in Buganda counties lacking natural forests for the purpose of planting exotic species or quick-growing indigenous species of timber value. Large scale planting of musizi was started in forests with poor timber stocking in Mubende District.. Arboricide treatment and enrichment planting with musizi was started in Mengo District.

Encroachment remained a big problem in the Mityana, Mukono and Bowa Divisions of Buganda in 1961. Steps were taken to serve eviction notices to encroachers without appropriate licences. In the Eastern Province, the PFO reported that he feared the District Councils had little true appreciation of the value of a forest estate. Two requests for opening reserves to cultivation were seriously considered in Teso and one in Bukedi. Fortunately wiser counsel prevailed and the estate remained intact.

In the Northern Province, the Lango District Council continued to be the only area in the country except Karamoja which had no LFRs, without a declared AFE. Three local councils still refused to reserve one square mile (2.6 km²) of woodland in each of their areas in this District. The Uru (Atyak) bamboo area in West Nile was finally agreed. It was expected that the area would amount to about 1,000 acres (400 ha).

Forestry Staff

The strength of District Administration and Kingdom Government Forest Services at 31st December 1965 is given in Table ALG 5.