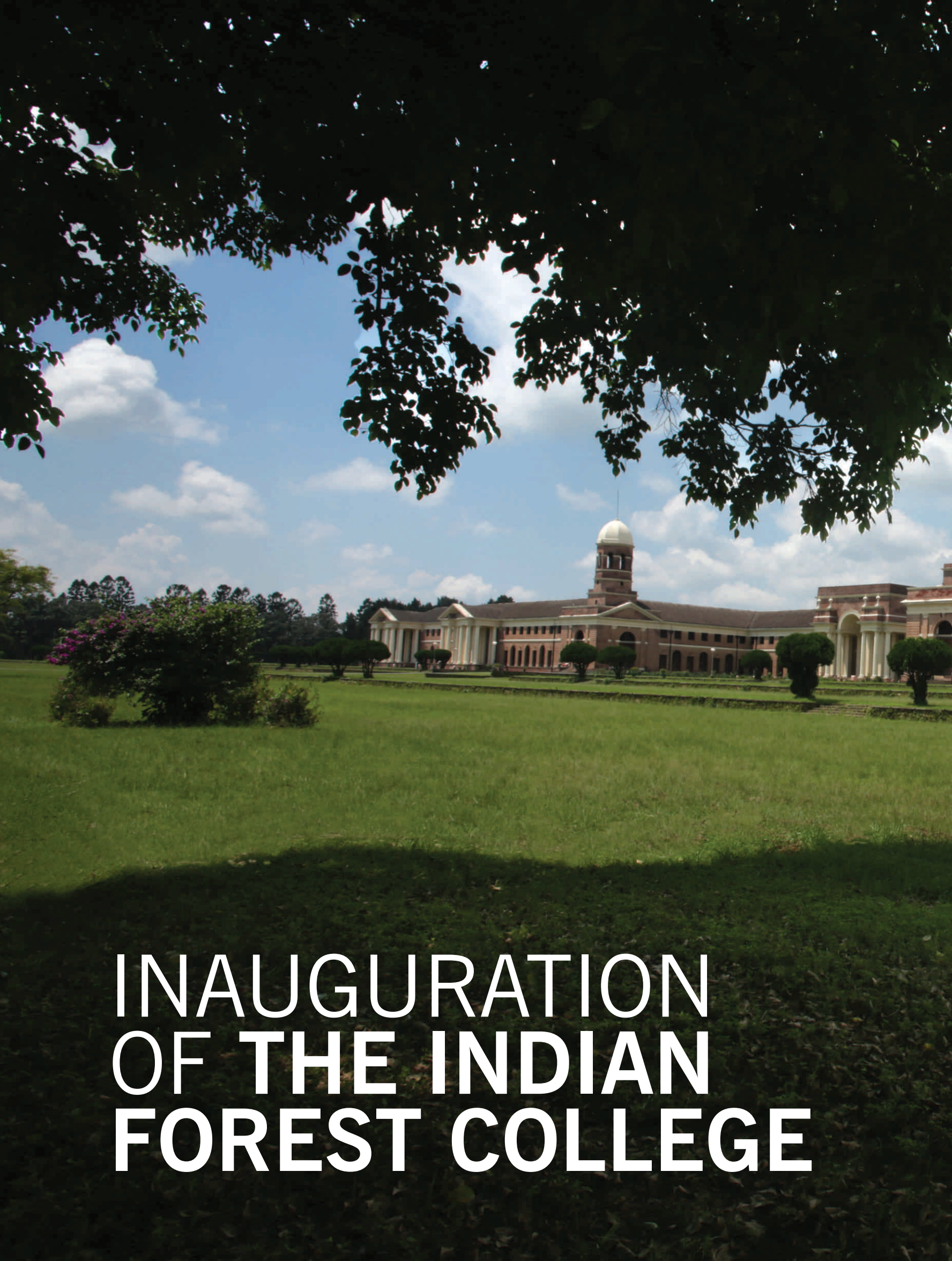




# **A NEW BEGINNING : ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF IFC & IGNFA**

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**1938-2012**



# INAUGURATION OF THE INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE



CHAPTER

04

THE INDIAN FOREST SERVICE'S HARD WORK AND PROFESSIONALISM HAD EFFECTIVELY COMBINED TO SEE INDIA'S VAST FORESTED LANDS DEMARCATED AND BROUGHT UNDER SYSTEMATIC MANAGEMENT. BUT IN 1930, THE DECISION TO STOP NEW RECRUITMENT WOULD PLACE THE IFS'S PERMANENCE IN JEOPARDY, SENTENCING IT TO A GRADUAL DISAPPEARANCE. NO RECRUITMENT MEANT NO NEED FOR THE IFS COLLEGE, AND CONSEQUENTLY NO INFUSION OF NEW BLOOD INTO THE IFS.



## The Indian Forest College opens its doors

The picture was bleak indeed! But Mr. A.D. Blascheck, the inspector general of forests and president of the forest research institute and colleges at the time, refused to be defeated by this looming cloud. Instead, on 31st October, 1931, while the 1929-1931 batch was finishing, Mr. Blascheck gave this heartening forecast, "it is unfortunate that the college has to be closed so soon after its foundation, but there is no real occasion for gloom or depression. It is almost certain that it will have to re-open in the course of a few years and I very much hope that it will be in even closer association with the Forest Research Institute where all the most modern facilities are available for studying forestry in all its aspects."

It didn't take long for Mr. Blascheck's predictions to come true. Just a couple years into the closure of the IFS College, a number of provinces began feeling the pinch from the shortage of gazetted-level officers to manage the forests. The retirement of the most experienced officers each year was only adding to the problem. To relieve this pressure, some provinces, like Bombay, started sending their new recruits to Universities in England again. Mr. Hari Singh, who eventually served as Inspector General of Forests and who played a key role in the reconstitution of IFS, was one of the officers who was trained in England during the closure of the IFS College.

The shortage of IFS officers was becoming such a grave problem that it was set as the main agenda item for discussion at the 1937 Forestry Conference in New Delhi. Two days of intense discussions led to the following resolutions.

→ A new beginning

→ Top - FRI building, part of which housed the IFC

→ Above - Logo of IFC



Their wisdom paved the way for revival of training of senior forestry personnel in India -  
*Delegates who attended the Forestry Conference in 1937*

- i) There should be only one Superior Forest Service in each province, direct recruits to which should receive their training at Dehradun.
- ii) The aforesaid training provision should be made with effect from 1st April 1938 at the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. The instructions should be of the highest standard necessary for Indian requirements.

Armed with these resolutions, the Government of India opened the Indian Forest College (IFC) on 13th May 1938. Six years had passed without an option to train new recruits in India, but now, once again, training for the Superior Forest Service of the provinces was up and running.



*South West wing of FRI*



## The IFC's Facilities and Administration

The IFC was housed in the Forest Research Institute building in the New Forest Campus at Dehradun. The upper floor of the southwest wing of the building served as the IFC campus. There were two lecture rooms, a good biological laboratory, access to a good chemical laboratory, the Principal's office room and one Students' Common room. The IFC also enjoyed free access to the museum, herbarium, laboratories and workshops of FRI, which formed an integral part of the college programme. The central library of FRI was also made available to the IFC students while the college's own library started in a common room with an assortment of books of science, travel,

biographies, novels, etc., mostly gifted by officers at New Forest and United Province.

The administrative leadership of the IFC was provided by the Inspector General of Forests and President of FRI and Colleges. Under him was a Professor of Forestry cum Principal and a lecturer in Survey and Engineering. These were joined by research officers serving as lecturers in their areas of expertise in Botany, Entomology, Biochemistry, Utilisation and Silviculture.

At the time of the IFC's opening, Sir Herbert Howard was the Inspector General of Forests and President FRI, and

so carried the overall responsibility for directing the college. Mr. E.C. Mobbs, an IFS officer, who joined service in 1922 and worked in the United Provinces and Rangers' College, was posted as the first Professor of Forestry and Principal of the college. Assisting these officers was Mr. Owen Williams, the first lecturer in Survey and Engineering.

The Principal, Mr. Mobbs, gave oversight to the day to day, practical functioning of the college. He was known to be extremely particular about the details of everything, including things like the layout of the furniture and other articles in the classrooms and laboratories. No detail seemed too small for his attention!



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Once, the curator, Mr Nagi, who was asked to arrange a barber for the college, reported that he had found one. Mr Nagi said that the barber he had located was the son of the barber who was working in the IFS College at Chand Bagh. Mobbs reportedly said, "Being a son of a good barber does not mean that he too is good. I want to test him." Mr. Mobbs served as Principal for 7 years. In 1945, he was posted as the Director of Forest Education, responsible for supervising the IFC and Rangers College.

### The Students

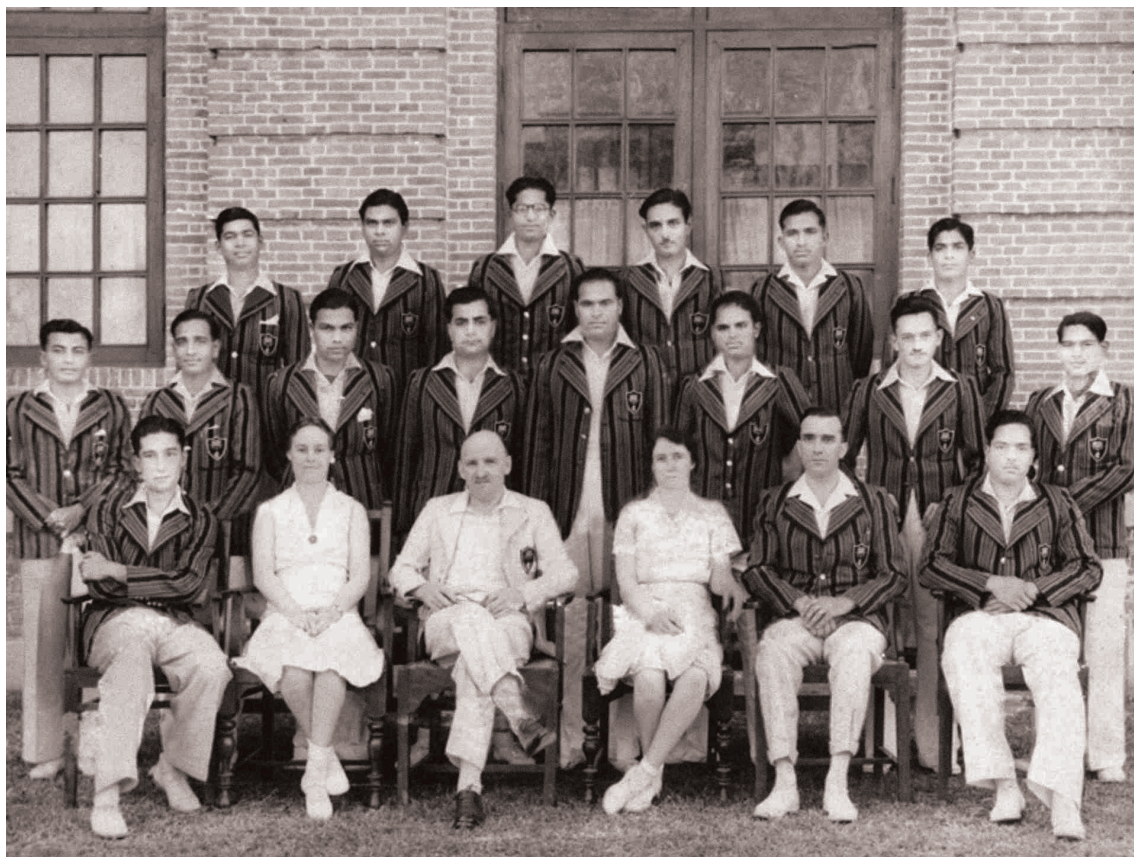
Entry into the college was through selection by provinces and states. Candidates had to be between 19 and 23 years of age and a B.Sc. (Honours) not lower than second class, in Botany, Zoology or Chemistry or holders of an M.Sc. degree in any subject, as long as Chemistry, Botany or Zoology was studied at the bachelor's level. There were, however, special circumstances that would allow exceptions to these qualifications. The provinces and states, for their part, had to guarantee that the selected candidates would be granted a gazetted appointment upon successful completion of the course.

The IFC's first students were a batch of 16 who had come from 8 different states and provinces. For this first group of students, four Class II Officer's bungalows were converted into hostels, providing each student the convenience of their own bedroom and bathroom. A fifth bungalow was converted into a common mess containing two small dining rooms.

The Principal would instruct the students, very soon after their arrival, about the conduct he expected from them in their interaction with the Institute staff, the servants and mess staff and the officers of the neighbouring Indian Military Academy.

The mess had a very western flavour. The students were required to wear western style clothing, and to eat in the western way. They also had to get used to eating English food every day except Sunday. The Principal had secured a catering contract with the same people that served the Indian Military Academy. They agreed to provide the same meals that they were serving the Cadets. The food was mostly non-vegetarian, and this was creating quite a difficulty for some of the students. One particular student from the 1938-1940 batch, Mr. Nandan Bhargava, a pure vegetarian from Rajasthan, was having a terrible time with this diet. The class got up the nerve to approach the Principal, Mr. Mobbs, and request that students be given the option of exemption from non-vegetarian meals. To everyone's relief, the Principal agreed, and the mess became much more comfortable for everyone. Mr. Mobbs, always attentive to detail, was also very vigilant about the quality of food being served. To help keep the mess staff motivated and doing top-notch work, he would occasionally grace them with surprise visits!

One day, a group of students from the first batch were invited to Dr. Bor's place for dinner. Dr. Bor and his wife were both Botanists. The dinner was served and



→ **Sowing the seeds**

→ Above - First Principal of IFC Mr. E.C. Mobbs

→ Right - First batch of IFC - 1938-40

→ Left - Museum of FRI



everyone had eaten to their full. Dr. Bor then politely asked each of the students if they wanted any more. When he came to Bhargava, he replied, "I am fed up." Dr. Bor had a hearty laugh and jested to his wife, "Dear, Mr. Bhargava is fed up with your food!"

→ A humble but firm beginning -

- Clockwise from top
- Dr. N.L. Bor - the Botanist of FRI
- Copy of programme of two years
- Instructions to orderly officer
- Weekly time table
- IFC Pavillion in 1939

### The Training Program: Blending Theory and Practice

The educational standards for the course were on par with the forestry degree courses at British Universities. The training schedule for the first 2 year course (1938-1940) was divided up between lectures (10 ¾ months), tours (8 months), examinations (1 month) and vacations (3 ½ months). These course features brought the total training time to 23 ¼ months.

The cost of the training for the first course (1938-1940) came to about Rs. 10,500, which included annual fees, travelling expenses for field training and tours, camping expenses, etc. This also included a monthly stipend of Rs. 100 to cover basic living expenses. Fortunately for the recruits and their families, the training expenses were mostly borne by the Provinces and States.

Trainees began their day with physical training (PT) before breakfast. After breakfast, at 8:30 am, classes would start. There were four classroom sessions of 55 minutes each before lunch, with a quick 5 minute break between each class. Lunch ran from 12:25 pm to 2.00 pm. The afternoon classes, which were practicals, would go from 2 pm to 4 pm. In the winter months, the afternoon schedule was shifted slightly, holding classes from 1:45 to 3:45 pm. The probationers would finish off their day with mandatory games in the evenings. The students enjoyed some great options for sports. There were three tennis courts and a huge playing field which had a cricket pitch, a football ground and a hockey field. At the hostel premises there were also badminton, tenniquoit and volleyball courts. And in the second year of operation (1939) a pavillion was built

INDIAN  
Time Table for 2 weeks

	Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.
8.30 - 9.25	Silviculture (Mr. Mobbs)	Mensuration (Mr. Mobbs)	Silviculture (Mr. Mobbs)	Mensuration (Mr. Mobbs)
9.30 - 10.25	Zoology (Dr. Beeson)	Botany (Dr. Bor)	Zoology	Botany (Dr. Bor)
10.30 - 11.25	Practical	Practical	Practical	Practical
11.30 - 12.25	Botany (Dr. Bor)	Botany.	Botany (Dr. Bor)	Botany.
2 - 3	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)
3 - 4	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)	Survey & Drawing (Mr. Owen Williams)

Tuesday, 24th May, is a holiday.  
Wednesday, 25th May, will, therefore, not be a half holiday, but will be "Survey & Drawing" (Mr. Owen Williams) in the afternoon.



Saturdays were reserved for field excursions and Sundays were holidays when on campus. Trainees would often use their free Sundays to visit Dehradun City, using bicycles as their mode of travel.

A system of Orderly Officer was established to ensure proper conduct of the students. Students were nominated to serve as the Orderly Officer for 2 week stints. The Orderly Officer's primary responsibility was to communicate with the students and to ensure that instructions were being carried out in letter and spirit. Outside of regular office hours, the students could approach the Principal only through arrangements made by the Orderly Officer. The responsibilities given to the student Orderly Officers provided them a great opportunity to gain valuable management experience while still trainees.

There was also an extracurricular opportunity for students called the College Science Society where students were able to contribute papers on various research topics.

The subjects covered in the formal IFC programme were Forestry, Botany, Utilisation, Engineering and Survey. Forestry proper included the study of Silviculture, Mensuration, Management, Valuation and Protection. Forest Botany and Ecology were also essential elements, and Pathology was included as well. Entomology was covered as an important component under Zoology. Much weight was given to Surveying and Engineering, affording them a prominent part of the course. Utilisation and Forest Law were also taught in the college as part of the curriculum

The programme was much more than just classroom instructions. Time in the classroom was supplemented by field-based, practical application. This was accomplished through study tours to various parts of the country. For tours where there was no housing accommodation available, trainees would stay in tents, which were brought with them from the college. The trainees were required to pitch the tents themselves, and it was the duty of the Orderly Officer to ensure proper pitching and layout. Once they were pitched there would be an inspection by the Principal, and if the alignment or pitching was not proper, then the tent would have to be pitched again. Tours involved long treks and manual work for various forestry activities under the active supervision of local forest officers. Each student had his own axe and had to learn to use it in actual forestry tasks. The probationers would take on chores like thinning and cleaning, nursery and plantation work and departmental burning of forests.

The trainees' first tour would happen after about one and half months of classroom studies. They would be taken to Chakrata in the nearby Himalayan forests for about 26 days. In this tour, trainees learned about local vegetation and performed mensuration exercises to study the growth pattern of trees. The rainy season was used for classroom lectures, laboratory practicals, and vacations of nearly 1 month. After vacations, students would return to the campus for about 1 1/2 months of theoretical instructions and laboratory practicals. After this, there would be the tour to Sal and to a variety of forests in Dehradun, Saharanpur, Haldwani, Gorakhpur and parts of

Summary of Revised Proposed Programme for first 2 year Course of Indian Forest College.  
April 25th, 1936 to March 31st, 1940.

Total time = 23 1/2 months.		Previous course.
Allotted as follows :-		
Lectures. ...	10 1/2 months	10 1/2 months.
Examinations. ...	1 month	9 months.
Tours. ...	8 months	4 2/3 months.
Vacations. ...	3 1/2 months	24 months.
<b>Total.</b>	<b>23 1/2 months.</b>	

*E. E. Hobbs*  
Principal,  
Indian Forest College.

INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE.  
May 16th to 28th, 1936.

NOTICE BOARD

Friday.	Saturday.	Remarks.
Silviculture (Mr. Hobbs)	Mensuration (Mr. Hobbs)	
Zoology (Dr. Beeson)	Practical Botany (Dr. Sor)	
Botany (Dr. Sor)	Botany	
Totals:-		
Silviculture		6
Mensuration		5
Botany		5+10
Zoology ...		6+6
Survey & Drawing ...		8+8

*E. E. Hobbs*  
Principal,  
Indian Forest College

Orderly Officer.

Will you please have the attached statement filled in by the students and returned to me as early as possible. (C/o. 3, 4, 7-9).

*E. E. Hobbs* 7/5/42  
Principal,  
Indian Forest College.

7.5.42.

The students are requested to fill in the attached table.

*P. Banerjee*  
8/5/42

No. 670/40-III

FROM L. Mason, Esq., C.I.E., O.B.E., M.C., I.F.S.,  
Inspector General of Forests.

TO The Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Lucknow, U.P.

P. O. New Forest (Dehra Dun), the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1940.

Sir,

I have the honour to say that the final examination of the Indian Forest College will be held from the 19th to 28th February 1940 and I am anxious to have three external examiners for Silviculture, Management and Engineering. I intend to ask Mr. H.G. Champion to examine in Silviculture, Mr. S.H. Howard in Management and Mr. P.R. Duncan in Engineering. Of these only Mr. Champion will be required to come to Dehra Dun.

I should, therefore, be most grateful if you would allow Messrs. Champion, Howard and Duncan to set and correct the papers on the subjects allotted to them, provided, of course, they are agreeable to do so.

I am writing to them demi-officially asking that subject, of course, to your approval, they will undertake to help us in this way.

A copy of the proposed programme of final examination of the Indian Forest College is enclosed for your information.

I have the honour to be,  
Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,  
L. Mason,  
Inspector General of Forests.

Bengal. The irrigated plantations of Changamanga, and the erosion areas of Punjab were also toured during this time. Around Christmas time there were winter vacations which were used for riding lessons at the IMA. The probationers then had a time of classroom lectures and finished the year with their first year examinations.

The second year training schedule was again divided between classroom sessions, practicals, tours, vacations and examinations. Tours were taken to Kullu forests and to evergreen, deciduous and dry forests of Bombay and Madras. A course of practical engineering was done at Roorkee with King George V's Own Bengal Sappers and Miners. During this course, trainees constructed trestle, suspension and cantilever bridges. Other activities included practical training in handling of explosives. Towards the end of the 2-year training, each student would prepare the all-important working plan for part of a forest division. The students used to be divided into different houses for doing their field work, and their collection of data. They would use the Dehradun Division for this exercise, and the month spent on this work formed the crowning culmination to all preceding instructions.

Examinations were conducted at the end of each year. External examiners were brought in to conduct the examinations, especially for subjects like forest management for which forest officers from different provinces were preferred.

Examinations were not the only place for assessing the probationers. They were also evaluated for their work done during the tours, their botanical and entomological collections, their plates for survey and engineering and also for general considerations such as proficiency and keenness in sports and games, character and conduct and the

demonstration of general qualities of leadership. The grading would be made public at the time of convocation which was held at the Convocation Hall of FRI. Two kinds of diplomas were given at the convocation: the Honours diploma and the Pass diploma. The Honours diploma was given to a student who had secured an overall score higher than 74%. Other special awards for students were the Currie Scholarship, Hill Memorial Prize for Silviculture, college prizes for Botany, Engineering and Surveying and a college prize for the Most Practical Forester.

**INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE**  
1938-40 COURSE  
**1ST YEAR REPORT**

Name M. H. Khan  
Province or State Kashmir  
No. in class 16 Place in combined order 1

Subject	% obtained	Place	Remarks
<b>1ST YEAR EXAMINATIONS:-</b>			
Silviculture ... ..	79	2	Attended a Course of Fieldwork at the I.M.A. & made good progress.
Mensuration ... ..	81	1	
Botany - theoretical ... ..	84	2	
" practical ... ..	82	7	
Zoology - theoretical ... ..	76	5	
" practical ... ..	77	2	
Chemistry - theoretical ... ..	49	3	
" practical ... ..	53	2	
Surveying - theoretical ... ..	83	1	
" practical ... ..	90	4	
Engineering ... ..	77	2	
<b>TOURS</b> ... ..			
<b>GENERAL</b> ... ..			to be allotted.

**PRINCIPAL'S REMARKS.**

A keen and willing worker, in his studies, on tour and at games. Well deserves his place as top of the class in the 1st year examination. Has a good influence on his fellow students.

E.S. 17/1/40  
Principal,  
Indian Forest College.

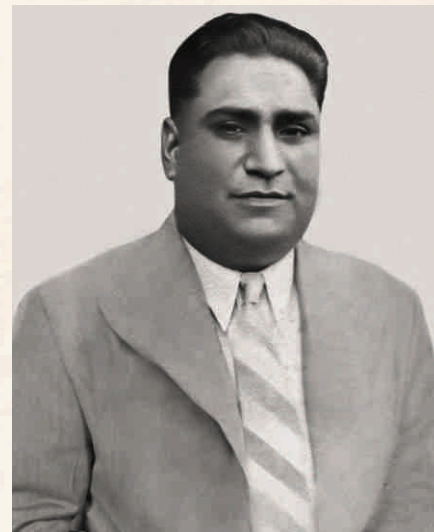
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## → Maintaining High Standards -

- Anti Clockwise from top
- Letter for external examiner
- First year report of a student with principal's remarks
- Note for Currie Scholarship
- Mr. Hari Singh, former Inspector General of Forests - one of the recipients of Currie Scholarship

**A Special Scholarship**

The Currie Scholarship, which originated in the year 1887 at Cooper's Hill College in England, deserves special mention among all the student awards. During the award distribution event at Cooper's Hill that year, Mr. B.W. Currie, who was the Vice President of the Council of India, made a personal gift of 1000 Pounds in response to a plea by the president of the college. This gift was to be used for funding scholarships for the most deserving students. In 1906, when Cooper's Hill College was being closed down, it was decided in consultation with Mr. L Currie (heir of Mr. B.W. Currie) that the scholarship should continue to be made available, now as a prize to the probationer who headed the list of final examination scores, prior to appointment



into the Indian Forest Service. When the new Indian Forest Service College was opened in 1926, the Currie Scholarship continued on. And when that college was closed down in 1932, the award continued to be given out, benefitting the Probationers who were being trained in England (Mr. Hari Singh who studied at Edinburgh University during the period was one of the recipients of this scholarship). With the start of training in India again, now at the Indian Forest College, the Currie scholarship continued forward in benefit of trainees there. In 1940 it was reshaped again, and provided aid to students all the way into the mid-eighties.

Principal's Copy.

President.

Herewith I return the various papers and files regarding the Currie Scholarship.

His Majesty's Secretary of State for India has apparently approved the proposal of the Government of India that 75 % of the net annual income shall be applied in awarding one or more prizes to Forest Service candidates in India, and that 25 % shall similarly be allowed to Burma.

The Govt. of India have further suggested that as the course at the Indian Forest College is biennial, two prizes should be awarded to the two students passing out highest in alternate years.

It would appear that no prize has been awarded for 1937, 1938 & 1939, the last award being for 1936 to Messrs. J.V. Karamchandani and Hari Singh of Bombay Forest Service, Class I.

I, therefore, recommend that two prizes be awarded for 1940 to the two students standing highest in the Indian Forest College class for 1938-40 which passed out on April 6th, 1940.

I send herewith an official recommendation, together with details required concerning the two students.

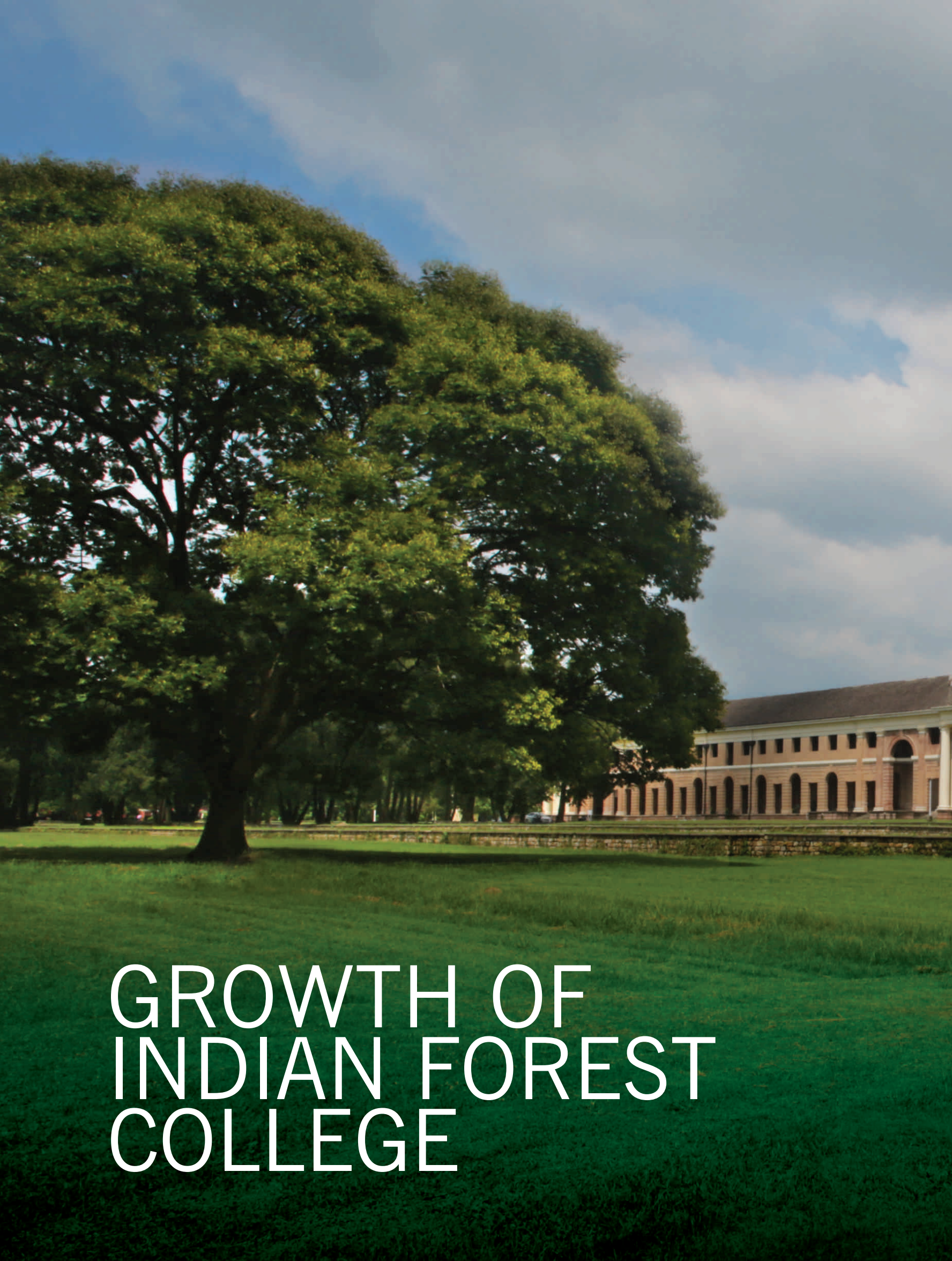
13.4.40,  
Principal,  
Indian Forest College.

DRS.

**A Great Start for the IFC**

There was a great sense of accomplishment as the IFC's first course came to a successful close. It was marked by a convocation ceremony at 11 a.m. on 6th April 1940, in the Convocation Hall of FRI. Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, Hon'ble Member for Education, Health and Lands (who was also a participant in the crucial Forestry Conference at New Delhi in 1937 where a decision to start IFC was taken), distributed the diplomas and prizes.

The first 2 years of labour at the IFC had produced a batch of world class foresters. But that wasn't all! There was also a growing esprit-de corps being engendered through the sharing of life and purpose in the common college.



# GROWTH OF INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE

CHAPTER | 05



1940-1954

### Initial Years

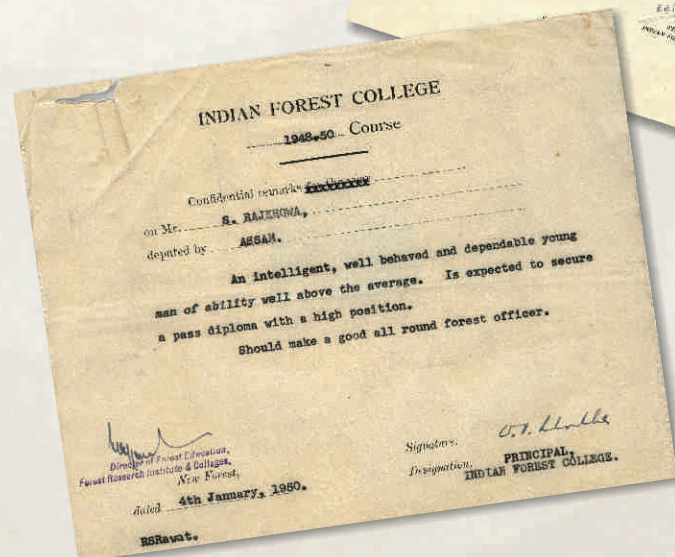
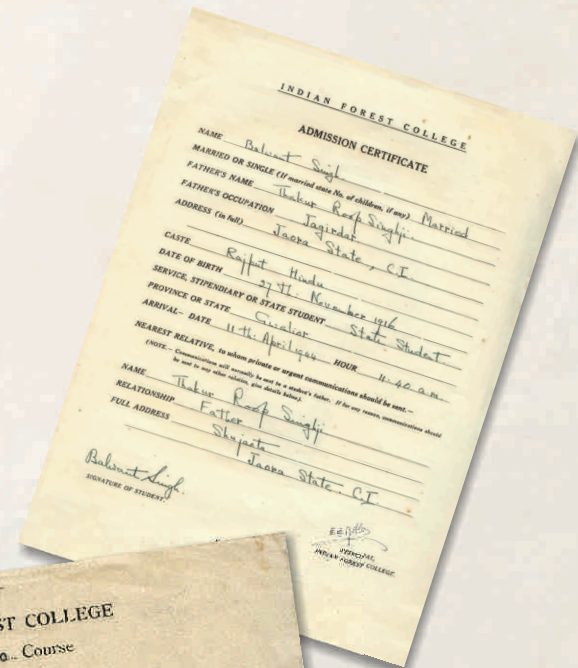
The IFC started its journey with 16 students in the first biennial course of 1938-1940. With every passing year the College grew and scaled new heights. The second batch of IFC started in 1940 with 20 students but had 21 students by the time it concluded. One Mr. Gurbakhsh Singh Dhillon from Punjab was accepted midway through the IFC course as a concession to the Punjab state government. Mr. Singh had completed his training as a ranger trainee in 1941, and placed first in the list of successful graduates. Therefore, his state government selected him for gazetted service and sent him to IFC for further training. Due to the growing number of students at IFC, the class II quarter, which had been used as the mess in the first course, was converted to an additional hostel. A new mess was accommodated in the building formerly used as the New Forest Club.



From  
Mr. Ghulam Naqushbund,  
IFS (retired)  
1940-42 batch of IFC



The number of students increased with every successive course. Educational qualifications for entry were broadened, and now required an honours degree, not lower than second class in any science, mathematics or agriculture. However in exceptional cases there was a provision to relax educational qualifications. The upper age limit for entry into service was also increased to 24 years, as recommended by the Board of Forestry. Beginning with the third course, IFC diplomas were recognized as post graduate diplomas and the holders were granted the designation of Associate of the Indian Forest College. They were allowed to use the letters A.I.F.C. after their names. A close watch was kept on performance of students and this was reflected in their confidential reports.



#### Top to Bottom

- Trainees after a hectic day during tour.
- Fancy dress competition
- Group photo of 1940-42 course of IFC
- Admission Certificate of a trainee
- Confidential report a trainee



I arrived at Indian Forest College in New Forest on 6th April 1940 and the first thing I did was to present myself to the Principal. While walking up the stairs I noticed a handsome, young British Officer walking behind me. I was stunned when a few minutes later I found out that the gentleman was the man I had to meet, Principal E.C. Mobbs. He greeted me affectionately and informed me to go to Bungalow 21, where I had been given a room for my stay.

As the Principal, Mr. Mobbs taught us subjects of Silviculture and Forest Management, Dr. N.L. Bor who was a well known Botanist and authority on Indian Grasses taught us Botany, Dr. Chatterjee taught us Entomology and Dr. Gupta had Chemistry as his line and Mr Harrison taught us Engineering. Mr. H.L. Howard was the President of the Institute and he had some eminent Scientists in his staff. The teachers although strict were very caring and solicitous towards the students. Strict discipline was the first step the students had to stand on and one could not deviate an inch from the Code of Conduct, whether at Class or in the Sports Grounds or at the Dining Mess.

It is true that Mobbs taught us Silviculture and Management, he also did teach us the Code of Conduct and how to behave and approach others. Mr. Mobbs had a sharp biting tongue, but he was very affectionate and loving to his students. I am sure none of us have forgotten the words that would be said by him....according to him his words were jewels ..but pebbles to us. At the same time he was very professional and loved his duty. As a British Forest Officer he took pride in managing and serving Indian Forests.



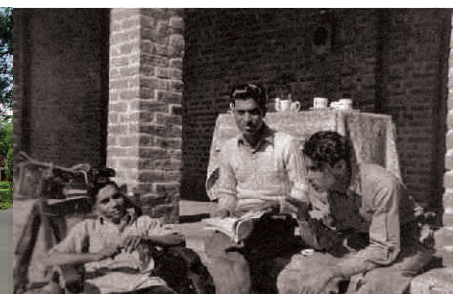
The demand for trained foresters was on the rise, so beginning in 1945, the course was changed from a biennial programme to an annual one. Faculty positions were also augmented in order to manage the increased work load at the college. In the same year, a proper hostel for the accommodation of the trainees was completed and the quarters that were previously used as hostels were vacated. This hostel is the one known today as the "old hostel," and is still in use for housing trainees

By this time, the IFC's fame was spreading beyond the borders of India. In 1946 the IFC received its first foreign trainee, from Nepal, as a member of the 1946-1948 course. From that point forward, the training of students from other countries became a regular feature of the IFC.

IFC Started growing

*Left & Below - Old Hostel*

*Bottom Left - Old Hostel Mess*



*Above - Probationers in old hostel Sh. A.L. Rao, Sh. C. Kirpekar and Sh. N. Goswami of 1950-52 course*



## IFC in Independent India

Demand for trained forest officers continued rising in the post World War II period. So in 1947, the IFC doubled its intake capacity by admitting two parallel classes. The existing hostels were not enough to handle the double load of trainees, but the "sisters quarters" had potential. These were the temporary war-time quarters and mess used by the hospital nurses. A renovation rendered these facilities more than adequate for the large batch of students.

*Sisters' Quarters*



Life on the FRI campus was not seriously affected by the disturbances of the partition, although for some students of the 1946-1948 course, it indeed resulted in major change since they had come from places that now belonged to the newly formed Pakistan. These students left the training at the halfway point in order to return to their homes, which no longer belonged to India.



**Ramesh Chandra**

1947-1949 course

It was April 1947 when I was only 22 years old and came to New Forest. There was a big competition to get to this stage. I was going to enter a discipline of my liking. The environment of New Forest (F.R.I) was breath taking and inspiring. It was for the first time in my life that I was full of enthusiasm.

Mr. E.C. Mobbs was the Director of Forest Education and Mr. C.A.R Bhadran was the Principal of the Indian Forest College. Both were great teachers and strict disciplinarians. The course started immediately. A very tight time table and after a months' initiation we were ready for the hill tour to Jammu and Kashmir. We did lot of practical botanisation and mensuration exercise. Long marches and visits to glaciers and most fascinating was the one to "Alphather" beyond Gulmarg which is now a developed Resort.

Everything was going on very well with our field studies and camp fires when suddenly we heard on the All India Radio in Srinagar that British are going to quit India and that our mother land will be free. There was all round happiness in general, but there were some reservations because details were not very clear and soon after the declaration some small rioting started in parts of Punjab and Bengal.

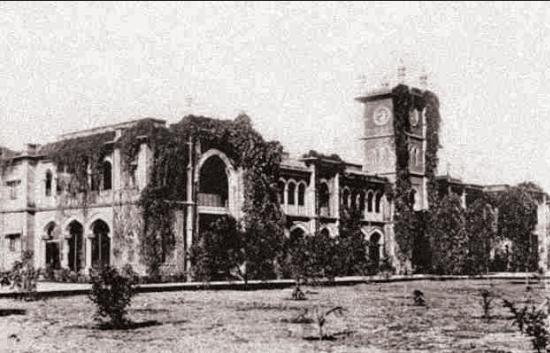
Our return journey from Jammu to Dehradun via Lahore was uneventful and we escaped the effects of communal riots and reached Dehradun safely. The classes started again, but there were more and more disturbing news about communal tensions and even killings. The programme at the Indian Forest College, however, continued as per schedule. The British Staff at the F.R.I and colleges started leaving for their country (U.K) including Mr. Mobbs who was the pillar of the strength of the Forest College in late July, 1947.

It was declared that India would be independent about the middle of August, but as a divided country India and Pakistan. Rioting, however, intensified. 15th of August was celebrated, but horrible killings started particularly in Punjab.

Our summer vacations started and all students left for their homes, but I (the only Hindu from Punjab) could not go home due to stoppage of all travelling to my home district of Sargodha now in Pakistan through Lahore.

From then on till passing out in April 1949 was the worst period in my life. Worried about my parents and their evacuation and all the accompanied financial and mental problems. This was one time when I was not interested in anything including my studies. Anyhow, I got my diploma and done a good job.





The number of trainees continued to rise for the next batch, and it seemed that the limitations of the Dehradun campus were going to result in a compromised quality of training for such a large student body. To manage the growing number of trainees, 32 trainees from the 1948-1950 course in Dehradun were shifted to Madras Forest College, Coimbatore, in October 1948. The IFC also sent one Lecturer and one Assistant Lecturer to lend a hand to the Coimbatore faculty while these parallel classes were running. This system continued for the next course also, but then the number of new students began to wane, so the parallel system was phased out.



In 1949, the IFC engaged its first regular Physical Training instructor, the legendary Mr. O. E. Peters, who remained a pillar of strength at IFC for nearly 25 years.



## THE LEGENDARY O.E. PETERS

*By-Sh.Vinod Rishi, 1969-71 batch IFS*

Our toughening up program started on the second day in IFS. Paan Singh woke me up with a hot cup of tea at 6:00 am, with a curt "Get up, sir. You have to report for the morning P.T. at 6:30 am. Get ready, and keep your shoes outside the room for cleaning." Later I found out Paan Singh was a word-thrift - it must have taken him quite some effort to speak so many words at a go.

In the ground a Triumph motor-cycle thundered in from the gate near the Basket-ball court. A tall, elderly, bald-headed, dark complexioned man stepped off the bike, set it on its stand, and ambled along towards us. He was in white shirt and trousers. Athletically built except for an alcoholic belly, he introduced himself as Mr. O.E. Peters, the man who had trained every single officer of the forest service, right from the Inspector General of Forest to the President of the Forest Research Institute down to officers who had just completed their training and left IFC the day we had arrived. And now he was going to see what he could do with the lot standing before him!

One by one he stepped close to us, casting piercing stares at us and asking us about the disciplines of sports and games of our interest. Our batch was small, but many of us were quite proficient in field games and sports. I had played football at Inter-universities tournament level and senior division football at Delhi before I came to Dehradun. Most of the former army officers had a good list of games they could play. But there were also those who did not play anything worthy of note by Mr Peters. He felt there were a whole lot of novices fit only for learning volley-ball, and he will change that.

In the convocation of the 1947-1949 course, which was held on 24th March 1949, India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, was the chief guest. During his address he exhorted the officers with these compelling words: "I am a great lover of mountains, trees, birds and animals and therefore of nature and natural forests. I appeal to the forestry students and forest officers that they should maintain intimate contact with the forests with a view to their development, for the benefit of the masses."

During the 1948-1950 course, it was determined that the physical demands of the programme were unnecessarily strenuous for the students. Reducing the amount of time spent on tours, and increasing the hours of classroom instruction remedied this. At the same time, lectures were limited to morning hours only, so that students would have more time for studies, recreation and social contacts.

Beginning in the 1950-1951 course, a new programme for senior students was opened. They would be assigned a special subject for intensive study, and be guided by experienced research officers.

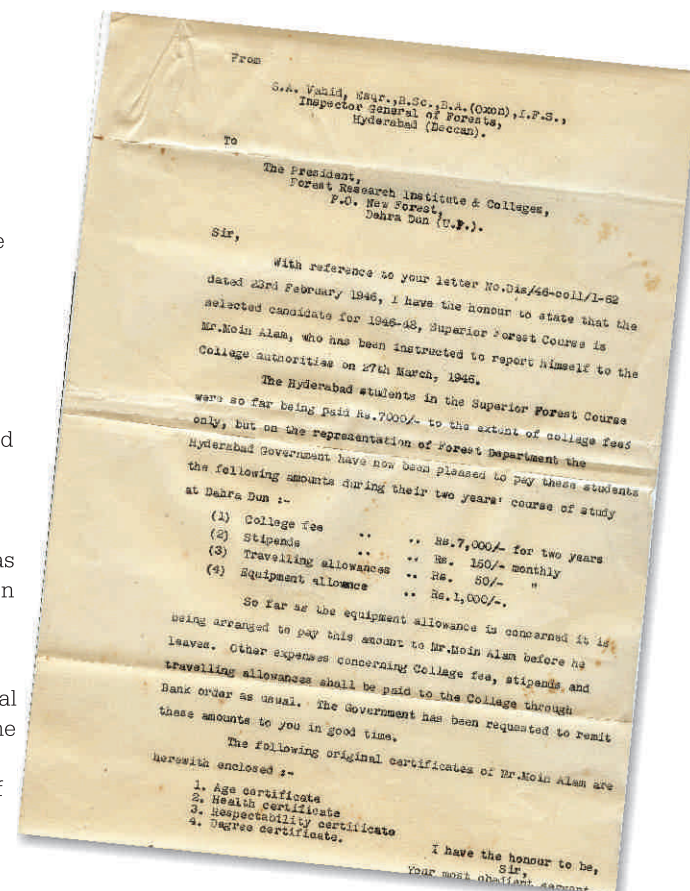
The educational qualifications for applicants were broadened a bit again in 1950, allowing admission to graduates in

science with a second division. Degrees in civil, mechanical and chemical engineering, statistics and economics also became included in the list of approved minimum qualifications. The final selection of candidates depended upon the results of a competitive examination through state public service commission, also introduced that year.

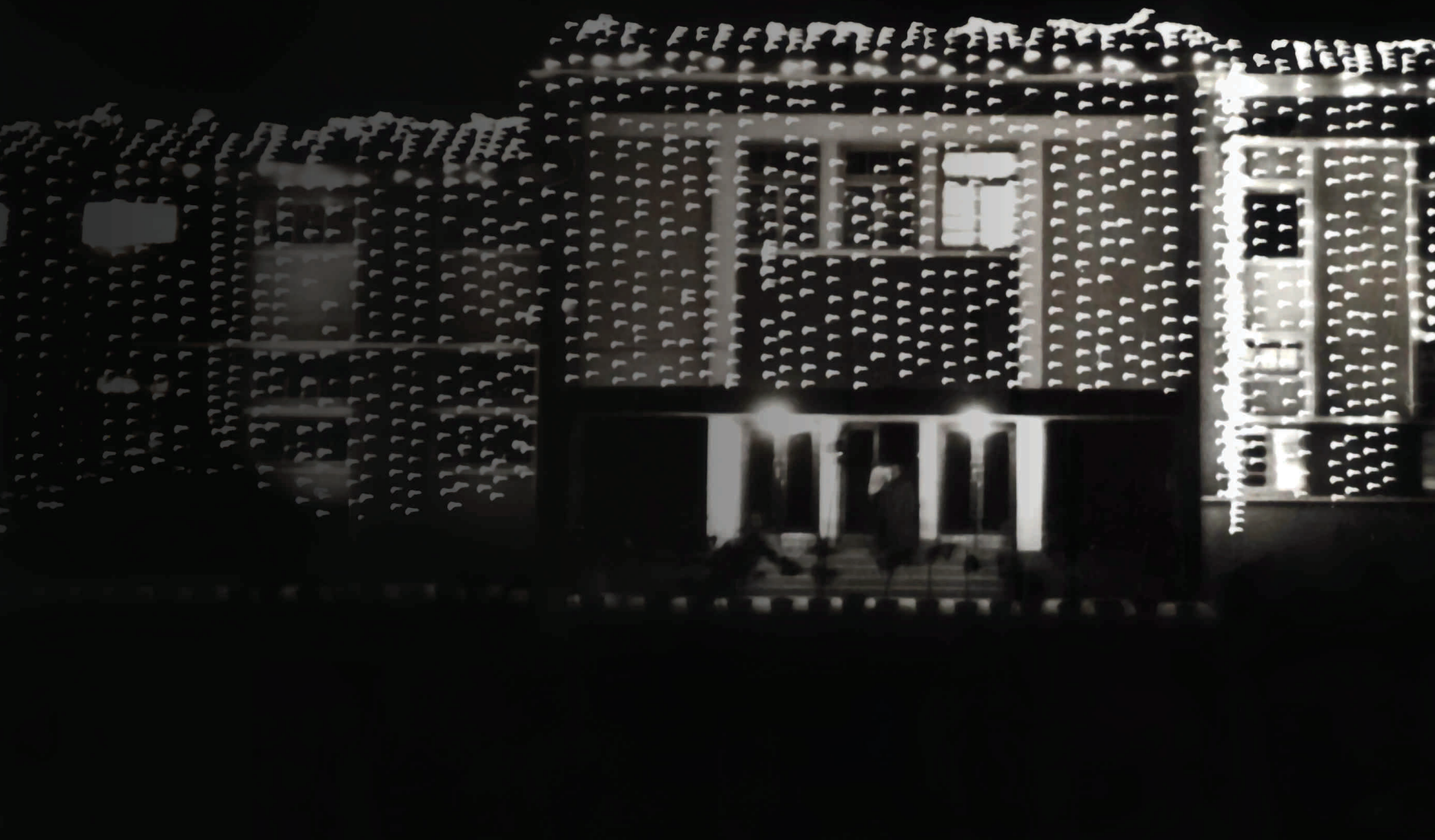
In 1951, opportunities for extracurricular activities were improved through the provision of new facilities for outdoor hobbies such as photography and rifle shooting. In the same year, the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) formally endorsed the college as an International Centre of Forest Education for the Southeast Asia and Pacific regions. It was also around this time that the designation of Principal was changed to Dean.

Another important development during this period was the recognition of the vital importance of wildlife management to the domain of forestry. In order to equip the students with an adequate knowledge of this critical subject, a full course of 18 lectures on Wildlife Management was introduced as part of the curriculum.

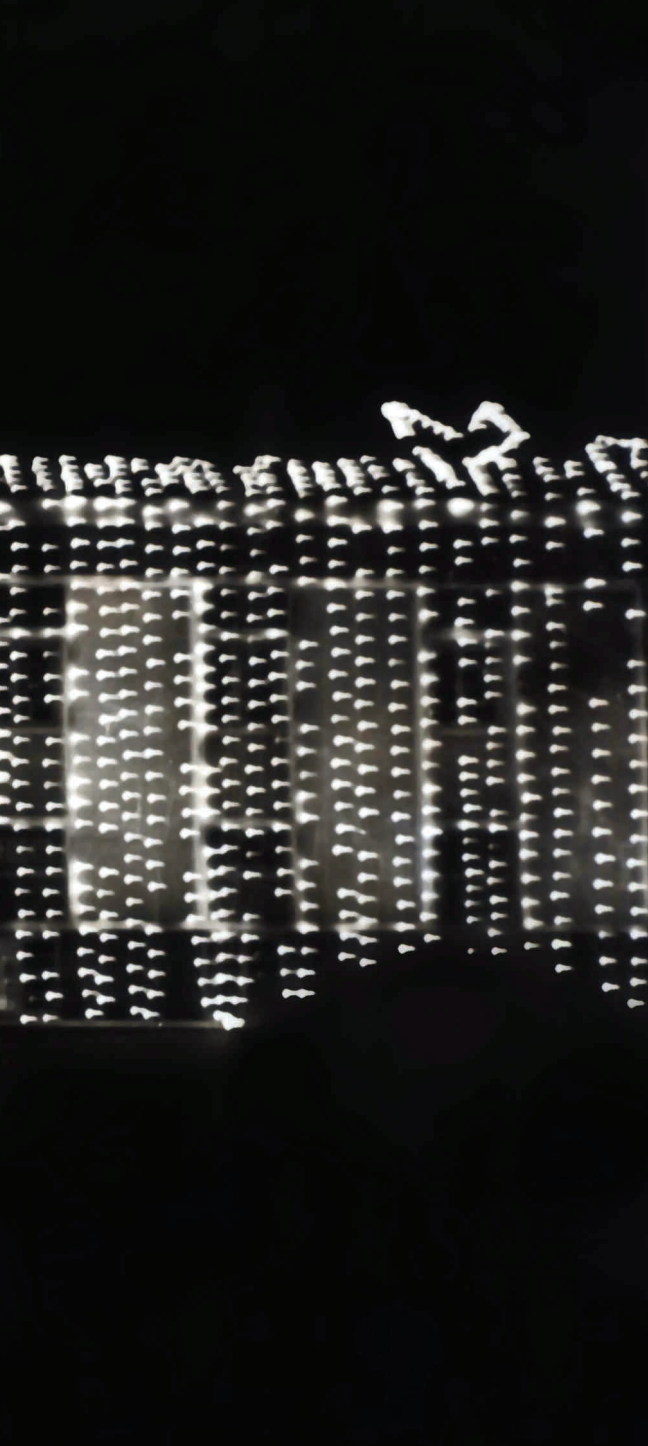
Training course, tours and other activities of training otherwise remained similar to first course. Cost of training was borne by state governments who were sending the candidates for training.



→ Above - Letter showing cost of training at IFC



# THE ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE



## CHAPTER

# 06

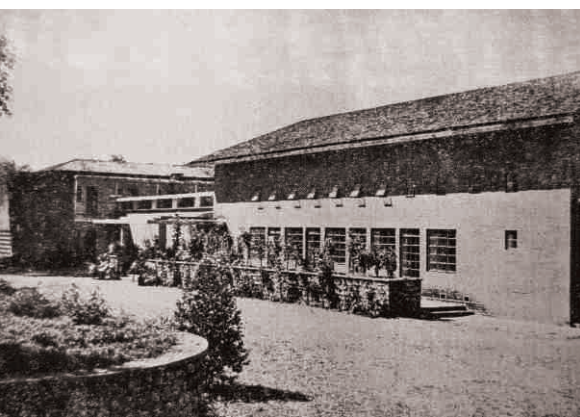
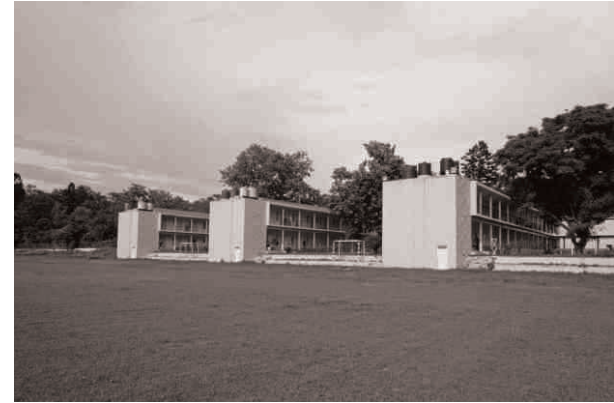
### **TOWARDS THE SILVER JUBILEE**

IN 1955, THE LENGTH OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SUPERIOR FOREST SERVICE (SFS) TRAINEES WAS INCREASED FROM 2 YEARS TO 3 YEARS. ONE MAJOR CHANGE THAT BEGAN WITH THAT FIRST 3-YEAR COURSE (1955-1958) WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 6-MONTH PERIOD OF ON THE JOB TRAINING THAT THE PROBATIONERS WOULD RECEIVE IN THEIR HOME STATES. CANDIDATES FOR THE SFS WOULD SPEND THEIR FIRST 2 YEARS STUDYING IN THE COLLEGE, AND THEN HEAD OFF TO THEIR RESPECTIVE STATES FOR THEIR PRACTICAL TRAINING. AFTER THE 6 MONTHS OF ON THE JOB TRAINING, THEY WERE REQUIRED TO COME BACK TO THE IFC FOR THE FINAL 6 MONTHS OF THE COURSE. STUDENTS WOULD BE AWARDED A PRELIMINARY DIPLOMA AFTER 2 YEARS OF STUDY, BUT THEIR FINAL DIPLOMA WAS GIVEN ONLY AFTER COMPLETION OF FULL 3-YEAR PROGRAMME.

# 1955–1967

Beginning in 1956, the start of the academic year was shifted from April to October. This was done to enable the fresh graduates to join the Service in the same year of their graduation, saving them the 6-month wait that had become customary. This change also made for a helpful adjustment in the schedule of the practical training period. Now the students would take their practical course after two years training, from October to April, allowing them to avoid the rainy season.

Until 1956, student accommodation was handled primarily in the Old Hostel. But then the much bigger New Hostel was built. It had three wings, 84 single occupancy rooms and common bathrooms. This New Hostel complex also had a Lounge, an Auditorium and an Officers' mess. Trainees began using this hostel on 1st October, 1956, but the IFC continued to make good use of the Old Hostel. Initially, while the IFC programme was a 3-year course, the Old Hostel was used for senior students when they came back for their last 6 months of training. Later on, when the programme was again trimmed to a 2-year course, and the student batches were quite large, it was used to accommodate the junior class trainees.



→ Improving the infrastructure

Top to Bottom

- Three wings of New Hostel, constructed in 1956
- Inside view of New Hostel
- New Hostel Auditorium and Lounge - view from outside

The reason the 3-year course was compressed to 2 years was because of the difficulties in administration and in running the tours. The final 3-year course was completed by the 1958-1961 batch. The next course, 1959-1962, actually took two and half years, providing a transition down to the 2-year course. The probationers from this course graduated in April 1962 instead of October 1962. The next batch of recruits, joining in 1960, would be the first to take the new 2-year programme. Since there was no fresh batch joining in 1961, that year was used to produce a new revision of the training syllabus.

Besides the 2-year diploma course for the Superior Forest Service, the IFC also offered a special 1-year management certificate course to students from foreign countries, who were already graduates in forestry. The certificate course covered subjects dealing with Forest Management, and was supplemented by tutorial coaching.

In 1964, two prizes were instituted to encourage excellence among the students. The first was for the foreign student who secured the highest total marks in the diploma course. For funding this prize, money was donated by Sh. V.S. Rao, ex-Inspector General of Forests. The other prize was for the student who

secured the highest total marks in forestry subjects in the first and second year terminal examinations. To fund this prize, money was donated by Sh. K.P. Sagreiya, ex- President of FRI and Colleges. These two prizes were awarded each year, funded from the interest being earned by the donated money. Another fine award was begun in 1964: a book donated by the Director of Commonwealth Forestry Bureau, Oxford would be awarded to the course's outstanding student.

The faculty of IFC was strengthened in the year 1964, as four distinguished retired foresters were posted as Professors Emeritus for delivering special lectures on important forestry aspects.

#### Top to Bottom

→ *Wildlife Trophy of Wildlife Club*

→ *Professor Emeritus (Retired Senior Forester) taking a class*



### Life outside the Classroom: Extracurricular Activities

Over time, along with the development of the academic aspects of the course, there was also a growing richness in the extracurricular options available to probationers. The Wildlife Club was established at IFC in 1955. This Club was key in fostering a love for wildlife among young forest officers and in coaching them in the correct method of nature study, especially in the critical issue of game preservation. The Club also organised a highly popular shooting competition each year between the students of IFC and the students of the Northern Forest Rangers College. The best marksman was awarded the "Chaturvedi Shield." The IFC Wildlife Club was equipped with an excellent library and a fine collection of trophies and mounted specimens of wild animals.



There were other clubs and societies that gave students opportunity to learn new skills or pursue new interests. There was the camera club, the science society, the sports club and others. In 1958, these clubs were all amalgamated into one Student Association for the college that had several branches covering the different activities. This was done to lighten the management load, while still ensuring that the students would be the ones to control the activities that were being financed from their own pockets. Only the Wildlife Club remained separate, as this was an organisation for both the colleges (IFC and Northern Rangers'

College) as well as for F.R.I. At the end of each year there were tournaments and photographic exhibitions, organised by the Student Association responsible for the particular activity. Starting in 1956, an annual Students' Magazine was launched by the IFC Magazine section of the Association. In 1962, the Student Association added a drama and entertainment section. This enthusiastic group of students organized cultural programmes at the end of each year to provide a platform for students to showcase their performance talents.



**Top to Bottom**

- Cultural Programme by Drama and Entertainment section of IFC club
- Convocation

### Silver Jubilee: the IFC Celebrates 25 Years of Service

The 25-year anniversary of the IFC should have been celebrated in 1963, but the Indo-China war precipitated a national emergency, and forced a delay in the celebration until the next year. The time for commemoration came on 23rd October 1964, when the IFC was finally able to celebrate its Silver Jubilee in the Convocation Hall of F.R.I. Shri C. Subramaniam, Minister for Food and Agriculture, Government of India, was the chief guest. The event started with a welcome address by Sh. M. A. Rehman, President of F.R.I and Colleges. Sh. Rehman had accomplished something that no one else could boast: he had taught every single batch of probationers from the college's inception, through to its silver jubilee. After the welcome address, the Director of Forest Education, Sh. R.C. Kaushik provided a review of the IFC's first 25 years of functioning. Next, the inaugural address was delivered by the chief guest. During his address, the chief guest included some words of tremendous motivation to all who serve as part of the IFC: "Today, almost the entire Forest Service in the country is manned by the alumni of this college and in no small measure; the history of forestry in India has already been shaped and will continue to be shaped in our country by them. The numerous alumni from foreign countries who passed out from the portals of this college might also be doing the same in their countries. The Indian Forest College can rightly be proud of this achievement." The anniversary event then concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Sh. Hari Singh, Inspector General of Forests.



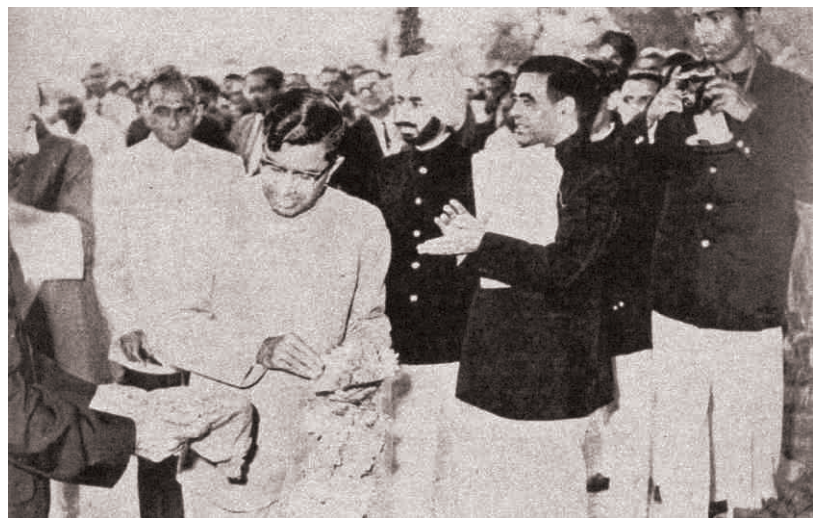
Convocation Hall of FRI

→ **Achieving a milestone**

Clockwise Below

- *New IFC building*
- *Opening of the new College building of the IFC by Shri C. Subramaniam, Minister for Food & Agriculture, Govt. of India*
- *Silver Jubilee Souvenir of IFC*

In the afternoon of the same day, the Hon'ble Minister also performed the opening ceremony for the new IFC administrative building. This building is still the main building of the Institute today. For a period of time before its formal inauguration, this building had been placed at the disposal of the Indian Military Academy. On the night of its opening ceremony, the building was lit up splendidly as part of the celebration. A Silver Jubilee souvenir was also published on this occasion, accentuating its importance as a milestone of the IFC's development and value.



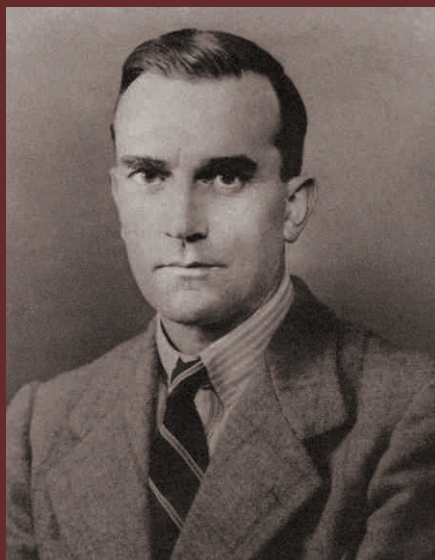


*On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of The Indian Forest College*

*As appeared in silver jubilee souvenir*

## REFLECTIONS

BY E.C. MOBBS, I.F.S. (Retd.)



It is always a pleasure to a forester to have the opportunity of seeing the results of his work, whether they be the effects of his thinnings on the forest, the progress of his plantations, or the way natural regeneration is establishing itself after his regeneration operations. In this way he continues to learn; and when he stops learning, it is past high time for him to retire!

These are in general short-term effects, and although in carrying out the various works he has often had to keep in mind the long-term effects, to think and to plan in terms of decades, or even of a century or more, it is not often given to him to see or to be able to review these long term effects, which are the ultimate result of the work of many others besides himself.

The Silver Jubilee of the Indian Forest College affords an excellent opportunity for such a review of the work of the College. As its first Principal for 7 years, from 1938 to 1945, and then as the first Director of Forest Education under the Government of India for the following two years, 1945 to 1947, it was the privilege and pleasure of the writer, as well as his duty, to start the college off on its life, which has already passed a quarter of a century, and will doubtless be very, very long, and which has already established a world - recognized reputation for the high standard of its training and the quality of the officers it produces.

It has been interesting to see how many of the students of the earlier classes are now at the head of their services as Conservators and Chief Conservators, and how many have occupied posts as research officers; and interesting also to read their publications in various journals.

What is it, one wonders, that these early alumni remember most vividly about their college days? Probably not just the teaching they received in the various aspects of forestry, for that at best only provided the solid basis on which they have been able to build the superstructure of experience and wisdom, which has led them to their present positions.

Was it the tours, which took them to all parts of India, and parts of what now Pakistan, from the pine and deodar forests of the Himalayas in Chakrata, Kangra and Kulu, to the evergreen, deciduous and dry forests of Coorg, Madras and Bombay, and from the erosion areas of the Pabbi Hills and the irrigated plantations of Changamanga, through the sub-montane Sal and miscellaneous forests of North India, to the taungya plantations of Bengal ?

Or was it the P.T. at 6 in the morning, and the compulsory games every evening, and the succession of blisters-blistered hands from felling trees in the practical thinning exercises, blistered feet climbing the steep slopes of the Himalayas, and blistered seats on the riding



course at the Indian Military Academy? Or perhaps it was just a single day: the "picnic" day that so many have reminded me of in subsequent years, on the very first tour of the course, in the Chakrata division, when starting at 6 in the morning, we climbed up and down 6,000 feet, walked 28 miles, studied the forests and changing vegetation from over 9,000 ft. down to the Tons valley, a little over 3,000ft., and spent the afternoon in the stifling heat of the valley measuring and drawing plan and elevation of the Thadiar suspension bridge. Each class took a delight in telling their successors of this picnic day, so soon to be "enjoyed". Only once did all the class get back to the camp at Kathian by 10 p.m. where Mrs. Mobbs would be waiting up with balm for tired and blistered feet!

It was certainly a strenuous two years' course. Only a few weeks ago, at the Forestry Commission Exhibition at Blackbushe in Surrey, an Indian gentleman introduced himself to me. He had been a student at the Indian Forest College, but after my time. "You gave them a very tough time," he said; and on my replying that he must have had a much easier time, he replied emphatically, "Oh no, Sir! Our instructors had been your students, and they did the same as you did, and we had just as tough a time!"

Perhaps, however, it is none of these aspects of the College course which linger longest and

fondest in the memory, but rather the more social side of life; the games and the tournaments; the science society; the life in the bungalow "hostels", four men together from different parts of India; the common mess; the dinner parties in the houses of the Principal and other instructors and the various officers of the Forest Research Institute and the social relations these engendered, which led up to the guest nights held in the mess during the second year of the course. They were "good show", enjoyed by students and guests alike.

But whatever may linger longest in the memory, it was the combination of everything—the lectures and the practical classes, the tours and the playing field, the common mess and the social relations, which prepared the students for the positions they were called to take up, and particularly for the responsibilities they have had to shoulder since the inauguration of India as an Independent country.

And the same is, of course, true today; for the College has established its reputation not only on the technical grounds of its teaching, but for the way it instills a sense of professional integrity and devotion to duty and service, and encourages the development of the esprit de corps, characteristic of forest services the world over, which transcends local barriers of district or province, and looks to the welfare of India as a whole and on the entire forest

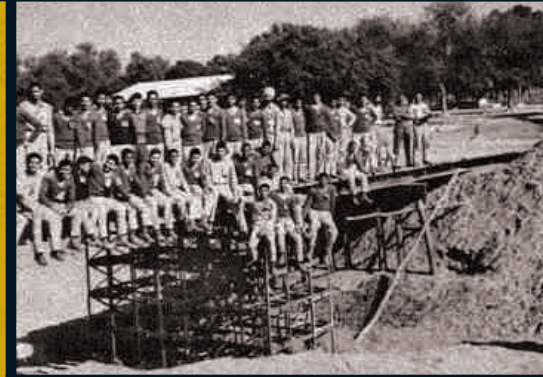
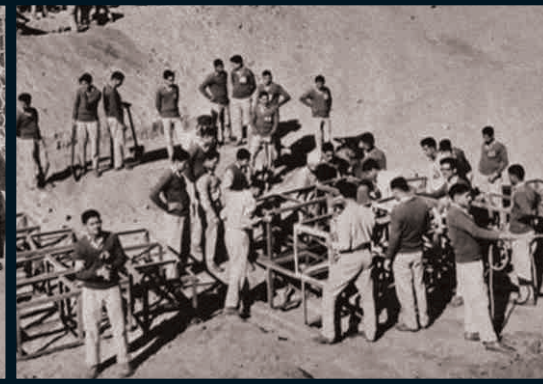
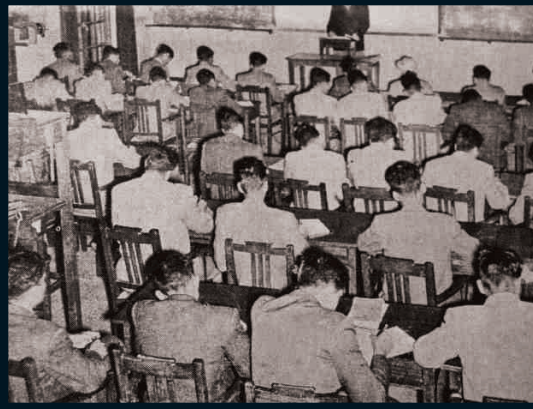
service as one professional brotherhood.

It has been a great pleasure to Mrs. Mobbs and myself to receive letters from time to time from a number of our former students at the College, and to receive a few of them in our home when they have come to Britain; and to myself to meet others of them on my travels in various parts of the world, particularly at the 5th World Forestry Congress at Seattle in the United States in 1960, and to talk to various people who have been to Dehradun and have visited the College since we left. And it has been an even greater pleasure to us to know that the Indian Forest College, towards which we cherish such warm affection, continues to develop in all ways.

We regret very much that we cannot be present at the Silver Jubilee celebrations, which we hope will be very successful and joyous occasion, and we send our united good wishes for the continued growth and success of the College for very many years to come.

→ Forestry is a multi disciplinary subject

- Top to Bottom
- Class in progress
- Practical Class
- Teaching Faculty in 1964
- Forest Engineering practical in Roorkee
- Plantation Activity



## **Beyond The Silver Jubilee Mark 1965-1967**

Beginning with the 1964-1966 course, training in the maintenance of motors and heavy vehicles was added to the field engineering practical in Roorkee at the Bengal Engineering Centre. To accommodate this upgrade, 5 days were added to the field engineering practical. Another advance took place in 1965, when a 1 week Plantation Camp in a plantation area was added to the students' array of subjects.

Due to the growing number of students, a house tutor system was introduced to supplement the classroom efforts, providing additional, personalised attention for personality development. One officer was in charge of 20 students in each house. In recent years, students have also been furnished with a system of special coaching in the areas of mathematics, botany and zoology, giving basic grounding to those who had not studied those subjects during their University education.

Beginning in 1965, in addition to the admission of state sponsored candidates, the diploma course of IFC was also thrown open to nominees from a variety of industries. One Sh. H.N. Verma, of Rohtas Industries attended the 1965-1967 course.

The faculty for the IFC was primarily drawn on a deputation basis from different States. Normal tenure for these officers had been limited to 5 years. But in 1965, in order to more fully utilise the services of experienced instructional staff, the limit on the period of deputation was raised from 5 years to 8.



→ **Sound mind in sound body**

**Top to Bottom**

- Students during a tour
- Students learning timber depot management
- Physical Training in the morning
- During a tour
- Evening Sports
- Weapon Training in IMA



From the time of the IFC's birth, it had always been part of the vision to provide "Refresher Courses" for officers already in service. This vision was fulfilled in 1965 when, beginning in January of that year, as per the decision of the Central Board of Forestry, a 6-month refresher course for promoted officers was established. To be eligible for the Course, trainees had to be holders of the Rangers Certificate and have a substantial period of field experience. The primary purpose was to help them improve their performance as gazetted officers.

A physical training shed for IFC students was also constructed during this period in the mid-60s. Another improvement was the construction of barracks used by IFC trainees during tours. These were built at Sukna in West Bengal, at Allappali in Maharashtra and at Tholkabad in Bihar, saving everyone the trouble of hauling tents when on tours. These barracks were completed in 1967.

Practical training activities such as tours, exercises, horse riding, weapon training, physical training and games etc. continued to be engaged during this period as valuable features of the IFC programme.

The last trainees to be admitted to the SFS course were those of the 1967-1969 batch. At that point, SFS training was suspended as the Indian Forest Service had been reconstituted in 1966, and the training done at the IFC would now be for the all India level.

# REMEMBERING THE ALMA MATER

## **D. C. Khanduri**

1966-1968 course

I joined Indian Forest College (IFC) as State Forest Service trainee in 1966-1968 batch. Though I belong to the Garhwal hills, I was recruited for Punjab forest service and was ultimately allotted to Himachal Pradesh, on trifurcation of Punjab state in the November of 1966. Ours was relatively a big batch of about 110 probationers, and hence divided into three sections--A, B and C. However, most of the time C section was further subdivided into two and each half was asked to join either section A or B. The sections and houses within each section provided excellent opportunity to work in team spirit and develop camaraderie, as most of the time field tasks, such as enumeration, stump analysis, field surveys, etc., were assigned house-wise or section-wise. Apart from the dress code, etiquettes and table manners, making courtesy call on instructors and seniors was a part of grooming of trainees. Calling between 11 AM to 1 PM, on Sunday, was considered most appropriate and convenient time for both the visitor as well as the host, as Sunday matinee movie show, after a sumptuous lunch, was almost a regular routine of most of the trainees. These courtesy calls provided an opportunity for the trainees to develop social relations and discuss topics, other than the forestry and studies, in a cordial atmosphere. Involvement of house lady was very important and effective, as a communicative lady host would encourage the trainees for a repeat visit.



Life at IFC would have been very dull had there not been the photographer Mr. Arora. As and when there was an indoor or outdoor activity, on the very next day one would see the photographs of the event, in black and white hues, spread on the table of common room and trainees leaning over each other to get a glimpse of his own face and book the copy. Ali, the supplier of the items of daily use, Kohli, the tailor and the barber, were other persons important in the life of trainees. But the person with whom most important relationship each trainee developed was his bearer. Most of them were very efficient, pleasant and affectionate. One bearer used to serve six trainees of the house and was able to keep each one in good humour. This was not an easy job.

Visiting petty shops for tea and sweets at Panditwari was out of bounds and on being caught would result in "conduct marks" being deducted though I could never figure out as to how many were the maximum conduct marks from which these deductions were made. There was dress code (including foot wear) for every occasion and one could not defy it. Putting on clothes other than prescribed dress code was a big offence, but visiting Panditwari in Dinner Jacket (DJ) was still bigger one, which most of the trainees did commit. However, there was difference of stages, as some did it in the very first month of the joining IFC while others in last month before leaving IFC. The first time I visited Panditwari, sometime in November 1966,

was a terrible experience, as while I was cycling down to the road, everyone coming from the opposite direction looked to me either Mr. Vaishnav or Mr. Sahariya.

On the eve of passing-out from IFC, there was a tradition of organizing a farewell dinner, which was called the "Guest Night" and juniors used to perform cultural show. Preparation was being made by us for this occasion for about twenty days under the guidance of Mr. Saharia, who was in charge of these activities. Three days before the "Guest Night", when everything was in final stages and trainees were rehearsing, after dinner, in auditorium of new hostel, Mr. Kaushik, the DFE, dropped in. After various items were presented, he disapproved of everything and questioned "Are you organizing a dinner or a stage show? Will you ask your guests to sit in auditorium? This is rubbish. You can entertain them by some fancy dress show or presenting some songs, while they are enjoying their dinner." Everything had to be changed overnight. However, the Guest Night went off well, highlight of the evening being a pipe smoking gentleman (S.K. Dutta, Senior class) and his charming lady wife (J.S. Nayal, junior class).