

IRISH FORESTRY

VOLUME XIII

WINTER

NUMBER 2

Editorial

The Journal.

OUR predecessors in Irish forestry accomplished a great deal of creditable work and it is our responsibility not only to maintain the standard of efficiency set by them but to raise it. This we can do by constantly endeavouring to advance our technical knowledge and by applying that knowledge in such a manner that the productivity of our plantations may be increased.

One of the most useful aids to achieving that objective should be the Society's journal, "Irish Forestry." By its means we should be able to keep ourselves informed of modern technical developments and trends. It should be a medium for exchanging views on different aspects of our work and, through contributions from members, should express something of modern forestry thought. Unfortunately, however, maximum use is not made of the journal in these respects. It is a regrettable fact that the procuring of suitable material for publication in it has been a perennial "headache" for successive editors.

It is strange that while we foresters are well known for the cheerfulness with which we impart information on our work to others and while we may spend hours of our leisure together "chopping wood" we are very much inclined to fight shy of going into print. This is a pity because in addition to our having the technical knowledge acquired in the course of our formal forestry education and training we are, as a body, the possessors of a great amount of unusual and useful forestry lore gleaned through first-hand experience and close observation. It is very desirable that this information should not be interred with our bones but that it should be recorded and go to form a corpus of knowledge so that not only our contemporaries but also our successors may derive benefit and inspiration from it.

This journal, being the only periodical in the country devoted entirely to forestry, is the ideal vehicle by which the best ideas of to-day can be presented and by which objective observations can be passed on to the foresters of the future.

It is very desirable that the supplying of matter for publication should not be left to a small band of more or less regular contributors. There is no forester that has not got his own individual views which may be of great value and certainly would be of great interest to his

fellow members. Neither is there any forester who is not well able to express his ideas; all that is needed is the will to make the effort.

Foresters are, therefore, requested to contribute articles or notes on any of the various aspects of forestry with which they are familiar. Among possible subjects which spring to mind are labour saving devices or any aspect of the rationalization of forest work; unusual damage by insects, disease or climatic factors; behaviour of exotic species in different parts of the country; accounts of local forests, their history, composition, the type of work carried out, the problems encountered and the methods employed to solve them. It is well recognised that, very often, small points are of the utmost importance and that by recording what may seem to-day an unimportant observation somebody in the future may be enabled to obtain the answer to some perplexing question.

In forestry no less than in any other business mistakes will be made. These should also be recorded especially if by so doing others may be helped to avoid the same pitfalls.

A few years ago the Society offered to pay for contributions to the journal in the hope of overcoming the shortage of material. Recently the council in reviewing the position decided that as this offer had not influenced the volume of matter submitted for publication and as the idea was not altogether in accord with the spirit of the Society the offer should be withdrawn. It was felt that contributors got more satisfaction from the realization that their efforts played some part in the advancement of forestry than they got from any monetary reward that the Society may have been able to offer. We are confident that in this view all members will concur.

Our Advertisers.

A special word of appreciation is due to the many firms who have steadfastly supported our Journal by their advertisements during the past years, and in fact without their support it is doubtful if we could have consistently maintained the twice yearly publication of "Irish Forestry" since its foundation.

With these words of thanks we are expressing the appreciation of our members and in particular our councillors past and present, who have frequently paid vocal tribute to our advertisers in private Council sessions.

While many of our loyal advertisers maintain their insertions entirely from motives of support for our Society, our council members, and in particular our Business Editor, are fully conscious of the fact that advertising must pay by way of increased sales for the particular goods or services. Here we feel that our advertisers are getting fair

value, for although "Irish Forestry" has a limited circulation it has a highly selective circulation—reaching a reading public which is 100% interested in forestry and timber or related activities, be they land-owners, timber merchants, nurserymen or practising foresters. Moreover, our Journal circulates to all Government Departments, Public Bodies and important private firms, which collectively have a high purchasing capacity,—a prospect which is further enhanced by the fact that forestry and timber are expanding industries with a vast potential market lying ahead. We ask our members to support to the utmost the firms who are supporting us.

Concerning *Eucalypts*.

In an article relating to Australian forests which appears elsewhere in this issue mention is made of the fast growth of eucalypts in that country and of some eucalypt species likely to succeed in this part of the world. This is stimulating information.

The eucalypts, whose native habitat is Australia, form an important and versatile genus which owing to their rapidity of growth are worthy of close study in this country.

In an account of the congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations held at Oxford last July we can read that a delegate from East Africa reported that in his area *Eucalyptus saligna* had shown a growth of 35 feet in 23 months. It produced fuel in four years and saw-timber for permanent houses in eight to ten years. This rapid growth was, of course, due to a great extent to the fact that the seasons were such that there was no noticeable slowing down in vegetative activity.

The eucalypts are not entirely unknown in this country and some fine specimen trees and trial plots are to be found in private collections and on state forest lands.

At Avondale, Co. Wicklow, small trial plots were laid down by the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction as far back as 1908 and during the period 1934-37 a further number of plots was laid down in various state forests. Some of these give proof of the suitability of certain species to at least the milder parts of this island and of the rapid growth of many of them—in some plots trees 90 feet high and 10 inches Q.G.B.H. have been produced in 22 years. They also show the eucalypts' adaptability to varying soil conditions and the fact that many are growing satisfactorily on dryish bilberry-heather slopes makes them seem an attractive proposition for large scale planting and prompts the laying down of trial plots on our poorer peat areas.

So far in this country we have scarcely any experience of handling mature eucalypt timber but experience from abroad indicates that we

may expect some trouble from brittle heart, veins and pockets of gum and that during seasoning there may be uneven shrinkage, internal splitting and buckling. These defects are overcome to some extent by quarter-sawing and special methods of drying.

The production of saw-timber need not, however, be the only object in the cultivation of this genus. The timber is also suitable for pulp and is widely used in the cellulose industries in some countries notably in Australia, Spain, the Union of South Africa and Brazil. According to an F.A.O. publication, entitled *Eucalypts for Planting*, Portugal possesses the oldest eucalypt paper-pulp mill where sulfite pulp has been made from *E. globulus* for 50 years. Other uses are fibreboard, pitprops, fencing material, firewood, charcoal, tannin and essential oils.

It would appear that in most of the countries in which the genus has been introduced foresters have taken advantage of its great rapidity of growth by working their stands on rotations of 7 to 15 years; quantity not quality is, of course, the aim under such management. The eucalypts lend themselves well to such a system as owing to the fact that most species coppice freely no replanting is necessary. Viewed in that light they would seem to be particularly suitable for the private land owner in this country as they would quickly provide a constant supply of rough timber of all types which are needed on a farm such as boards, poles and paling posts.

Up to the present the private planter has had some difficulty in getting seeds of this tree group. This need no longer be an obstacle as in the current F.A.O. Forest Seed Directory there is an offer from the Forestry and Timber Bureau of Canberra, Australia to arrange the supply of small quantities of seed of 118 different species. The price of small packets of any species would be five shillings including cost of freight. Sample packets would contain from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. depending on the cost of collection, seed size, purity and viability. The number of seeds per ounce varies considerably according to species—from 500 to 50,000—but the average is given as 3,000.

Of the comparatively small number of species tried in this country the following, all of which are of commercial value, have proved generally hardy: *E. delegatensis* (*gigantea*), *E. dalrympleana*, *E. viminalis*, *E. radiata*, *E. globulus*, *E. johnstonii* (*muelleri*) and *E. urnigera*. Seeds of all but the last two mentioned are available from the Timber Bureau. *E. delegatensis* is probably the hardiest of all of those tried but it has the disadvantage of not being capable of throwing up coppice shoots.

Orders for eucalypt seeds should be sent to:

Mr. G. J. Rodgers,
Director General,
Forestry and Timber Bureau,
Canberra A.C.T.

Eucalypts need special nursery treatment owing to the fact that they are very frost tender during the first year or two and also that bare-rooted plants do not survive planting out very well. For the benefit of any interested readers a short note on this subject appears in this issue.

Visiting foresters envy us this climate of ours which makes possible the successful cultivation of so many exotic species. The cultivation of eucalypts could well be one of the most rewarding ways of turning this natural advantage to better account. In view of the gap that exists in this country between production and requirements of wood and its derivatives the project seems particularly desirable.