
Excursion to Clondalkin Paper Mills.

DO foresters ever wonder what becomes of the timber they grow? Many apparently do, for about forty members and friends of the Society travelled to Clondalkin on November 17th last on the occasion of the Society's excursion to Clondalkin Paper Mills.

Before setting out on a tour of the mills the excursionists separated into two parties, one of which was led by Dr. Sherry and the other by Mr. Enda Kelly, neither of whom spared any pains to explain what we saw and to point out what we did not see. As the day was rather cold

the party to which your reporter was attached was greatly encouraged by being led first to the boiler room, where we were allowed to bask luxuriously for a while before being taken to the extensive storage yard. Here, in the lee of a large pile of timber, the party heard an outline of the mills' timber requirements and consumption.

The annual consumption is 15,000 tons, sitka spruce mainly is used, but norway spruce has been found to be equally usable. Owing to the amount of resinous material which it contains not more than 10 per cent. of contorta pine can be used, and, because of human fallibility, it is hoped eventually to do this mixing mechanically. Three tons of green timber with bark yield 1 ton of pulp. Bearing in mind that the average thinning yields approximately 10 tons of timber per acre some interesting conclusions can be drawn from the above figures.

From the storage yard the bolts of timber are taken to the barking machine where each is treated separately and without the use of water. To a layman this seemed a simple and more elegant method of barking than that used in the German factory visited during the annual excursion. The question of quality arises at this stage: in barking a rough or crooked stick much of the wood may be lost; as when one tries to peel an oddly shaped potato and loses much of the eatable part.

It is from this point onwards that the timber begins to lose its "quiddity" as timber. The bolts, having been sawn in half, are loaded into the grinders. Grinding is effected by pressing the timber against a revolving carborundum "stone". The quality of the pulp is affected by the pressure in the grinder, which must be nicely regulated: this is done by electricity. It is interesting to note that a 1,000 h.p. motor is required to turn the stone.

The pulp which dribbles out at the bottom of the grinder is carried along by a stream of water to other machines where it is purified and partly dried.

The second stage begins in another building where the paper-making machines are housed. Essentially these are like the proverbial sausage machine—the pulp goes in at one end and the paper emerges, yards later, at the other. In fascinated awe our excursionists traced the course of the material from sloppy pulp right through to an ever-increasing roll of beautiful, shiny brown paper. Some 25% of imported chemical pulp is used in the process of making paper from native mechanical pulp.

In the next-door department we saw some of the finished products—paper bags of all shapes and sizes. The specifications to which some of these are made are very strict. One would never have suspected, for instance, that each roll of paper destined for the manufacture of cement bags must undergo twelve separate tests before being passed as fit for the job.

Writing paper is also produced here. This is made from imported

chemical pulp. The machine which was cutting it into sheets was almost frightening in its neatness and efficiency.

Back at the assembly point Mr. O. V. Mooney, President, extended the Society's gratitude to Mr. Cusack and the management, and in particular to our two guides, Dr. Sherry and Mr. Kelly, for taking such pains to make every detail of this important process clear to members.

N.O.C.
