

## Obituary

THE death of Seán O'Sullivan, on March 26th, 1964, sudden, untimely and tragic as it was in all its circumstances, brought a feeling of intense poignancy and loss to all those in the Forestry Service and others connected with forestry in Ireland, as well as to a wide circle of friends in various walks of life. Those who knew Seán O'Sullivan, and they were many both high and humble, will remember him as a man of modest personal charm, a man of great kindliness and consideration and high motive. Those who worked with him and under him in the Service appreciated in addition the solid basis of his knowledge of forestry, his unassuming and unassertive leadership, and his high integrity and capacity.



Seán O'Sullivan was a natural forester for, with most other careers as a possibility, he chose to do the Forestry degree course when he left school.

Born in 1912, he entered the forestry school at U.C.D. in 1930 and took his degree with honours in 1935 after which he went to Sweden for a period of study and joined the Forestry Division of the Department of Lands in January 1936. He served as Assistant and District Inspector at various centres including Dublin, Clonmel, Mallow, Portlaoise and Navan but promotion came rapidly and he was recalled to Dublin as a Divisional Inspector in 1944 and in 1948 was appointed Chief Forestry Inspector in succession to the late Mr. Barry. He served in this capacity until 1957 when he became Inspector General in charge of Acquisition of Land and Forest Research.

From his early days as an undergraduate Seán O'Sullivan had an indefatigable capacity for thoroughness and an untiring urge to get through superficialities to the core of all problems. This enabled him to acquire an exceptional knowledge and appreciation of forestry in all its aspects and to fill the highest technical posts with distinction.

His term as District Inspector at Navan 1938-44, a particularly arduous period due to war time conditions, is especially remembered and his work in the northern midland counties is bearing rich fruit now with some of the most valuable plantations in the country. He was particularly knowledgeable on the silviculture of Norway spruce and broadleaved trees, a knowledge which he acquired during his time at Navan and he also carried out the first Census of Woodlands, Eire in the counties attached to that district.

In his nine years as Chief Forestry Inspector he bore the ultimate technical responsibility during the great expansion period of forestry when planting rose from 3,850 acres per annum with an expenditure

of £320,621 to 17,407 acres and almost £2,000,000. This was the period not only of great expansion but of decisive technical changes and as Chief Technical Officer he guided the then new technique of the plough and artificial fertilization and the expansion of forestry into the peats of the West from Co. Kerry to Co. Donegal.

In recent years he was responsible for the development of Research from its establishment stage in 1957 and showed freshness of mind and breadth of outlook in directing its development along the most modern lines possible. Under his charge land acquisition also reached a peak during this period to cater for the enormous annual planting programme of 25,000 acres.

Mr. O'Sullivan represented the Forestry Division at meetings abroad, attending F.A.O. Conferences at Rome several times and the I.U.F.R.O. conference in Vienna in 1962, and as Chief Forest Officer took part in the important Ministerial visit to Scotland in 1950.

He was a foundation member of the Society of Irish Foresters and took part in its activities in the early years being a council member and treasurer and, although the onus of his official duties prevented him taking active part in committee of later years, he was always one of its most loyal and helpful supporters.

During his lifetime Seán O'Sullivan deliberately avoided the limelight but as senior forest officer he has left behind him a permanent monument for all to enjoy by his country wide influence in the raising of our young forests which are plain to see for all who move through Ireland today.

He leaves us respected and honoured by all—one whose memory will remain green and affectionate in all our minds. He was particularly devoted to his wife and family—a great family man, and to them we offer our warmest feelings of sympathy in their tragic loss.

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