

## President's Address

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow members of the Society, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this the fourth symposium on forestry topics organised by the Society. Those which have preceded today's have been an outstanding success and have without doubt been the highlight of the Society's indoor programme. The previous three symposia ranged over a wide field dealing with such varying aspects as the silviculture of Sitka spruce, the marketing and utilisation of forest products and the problems of the second rotation. This year's symposium follows this wide ranging pattern and aims at examining in depth one of the critical aspects of present day forest management that of stand escapement.

This can be tackled at two levels, at planting for new crops or by respacement in older crops. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages and it is up to the forest manager to use whichever method will suit his needs. These will be governed by prevailing market conditions or by the ecological conditions under which the crops he is managing are growing. He has to be somewhat of a prophet to predict what market demands will be 50 years hence. Equally he has to be a sage to know how to reduce to a minimum the likely dangers from the fickle Irish climate. Of the many options open to him only a very few or a combination of them will meet all the criteria which govern the growing of these crops. However, many of his problems may well be answered by research teams at home and abroad and by his own intuitive guesses. In this context we are indeed fortunate to have the services of five speakers who have spent a considerable amount of time working with the criteria which form the topic of this year's symposium — "Growing spruce in coniferous crops".

The papers to be presented cover every aspect from a wide ranging review of the topic by Dr. G. Gallagher through the various options of thinning and spacing for lodgepole pine by Mr. T. Lynch to two widely different management options, that of no thinning by Mr. J. Phillips and its diametrically opposed option for lodgepole pine — Silvicultural Alternatives by Mr. L. O'Flanagan.

Finally all of these options have been evaluated by Mr. D. O'Brien in his presentation on Economics of Spacing and Thinning. The success of this symposium will be assured by your involvement in the discussion periods.

John O'Driscoll, *President.*