

Annual General Meeting, 1944

The second Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Jury's Hotel, Dublin, on Tuesday, the 8th February, 1944, at 7 p.m. The attendance numbered 50 people.

The minutes of the First General Meeting, 1943, having been read and signed, the President said he proposed to leave the address until the business had been disposed of and proceeded to read the report of the Council.

COUNCIL'S REPORT

Council Meetings.—Four meetings of the Council were held—three in Dublin and one in Clonmel. The strength of the Council was 12 and the average attendance was 8. I should like to pay a tribute to the enthusiasm of those members who have attended in these difficult times, often at great inconvenience.

Membership.—At the beginning of the year the membership was 136 in all, consisting of 37 Grade I technical, 78 Grade II technical and 21 Associate members. The membership at the end of the year had risen to 156, of which 39 were Grade I technical, 83 Grade II technical and 34 Associate members. There was one loss by death, so that new members elected amounted to 21, 14 of which were Associates. I think that there could and should be a considerable increase in membership in spite of difficult times, especially in Associate membership, and I hope everyone will do his or her best to help in this matter.

The Treasurer wishes me to say that there has been delay over the payment of subscriptions. Sixteen members elected cannot be enrolled until they have paid their subscriptions. If they fail to do so before the expiry of 1944 they will cease to be eligible for enrolment. In addition nine subscriptions are due for the year 1943 from members already enrolled, and the Secretary is being asked to send reminders in future, as such omissions are usually due to forgetfulness. May I remind all members that fees are due for payment on the first of January.

Finance.—This will be dealt with in more detail later. The audited abstract of accounts has been distributed to you. The credit balance has risen from £10 0s. 10d. to £54 8s. 7d. Our position is, therefore, financially sound.

Journal.—After a certain amount of delay and difficulty over supplies, etc., the Editor succeeded in producing the first issue of the Journal, somewhat later than expected. An opportunity is being given later for a discussion on the Journal, and I need not say more now except that I believe it has had a very favourable reception generally.

Excursion.—The first excursion of the Society, held in June, 1943, in the Suir valley, was, on the whole, very successful, being attended by 30 members. A very able and full report of the Excursion has appeared in the Journal, from which members who did not attend obtain an idea of what such an excursion is like. If we are to continue this activity, as is expected, it is hoped that the attendance will be at least maintained.

Mr. Ryan proposed the adoption of the report.

Mr. Petrie seconded.

The President said that the Council would like to have the views of the meeting on (a) whether we should hold an excursion this summer and (b) on where it should be held. The meeting was unanimous that an excursion should be held.

Dr. Anderson proposed that Wicklow would be a suitable venue in these times for an excursion.

Mr. Swords seconded.

The proposal was passed unanimously.

Mr. Donovan proposed the adoption of the abstract of accounts for the year ending 31st December, 1943.

Mr. Cleary seconded.

The abstract of accounts was adopted.

The meeting approved of the election of the following Office-bearers and officials (for the year 1944):

President: M. L. Anderson, 16 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

Vice-President: H. M. Fitzpatrick, Kendalstown Hill, Delgany, Wicklow.

Secretary and Treasurer: Thomas Clear, Albert Agricultural College, Glasnevin.

Editor: J. A. K. Meldrum, Ben Wyvis, Lakelands Park, Terenure.

Business Editor: T. McEvoy, Avondale House, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow.

Auditor: Duncan Craig, 102/103 Grafton Street, Dublin.

Councillors (1944-'45): P. Barry, 94 Malahide Road, Dublin; S. M. Petrie, 1 Glandore Road, Griffith Avenue, Dublin; Felix McMahan, Annagh Bay, Hazelwood, Co. Sligo.

ELECTION OF MR. J. CROZIER TO HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Mr. H. M. Fitzpatrick, the proposer, referred to Mr. Crozier's long experience in Scottish forestry, particularly at Durris in Kincardineshire. For many years he had made an extensive study of the adaptability of North American species of commercial timber trees to conditions in Scotland. Plantations which he formed at Durris of Douglas fir and Sitka spruce were an outstanding success and served as an example to be followed in establishing similar plantations elsewhere.

His accumulation of knowledge and experience became available to Ireland when Mr. Crozier came to this country in 1910. His innate Scottish caution would not permit him to embark on any planting operations which did not hold promise of complete success, and the results of his work were to be seen to-day. Many of our most promising plantations were due to Mr. Crozier's care and foresight in selecting species most suitable to the sites. The present returns from thinnings were an augury of profitable final crops.

Irish forestry owed much to Mr. Crozier and some mark of appreciation and acknowledgment should be accorded to him. The Society of Irish Foresters could do a little in that direction by electing him to Honorary Membership. It was, therefore, with very great pleasure that he submitted the proposal for adoption by the meeting.

Mr. Forbes seconded this proposal and said when, in 1910, he was asked to find someone to give a hand he looked around and one man stood out—John Crozier. He went to Durris and brought him back, and he never regretted it. Mr. Crozier was a very straightforward man and always said what he thought. He had a fondness for North American conifers and had a wider knowledge of these trees than any other man. Douglas fir and Sitka spruce were his special favourites

and he showed a keen appreciation of their good and bad points. He had a fine sense of justice and was always a man with whom one could deal.

Mr. Forbes said he had much pleasure in seconding the resolution and was sorry that Mr. Crozier's state of health had prevented him from attending the meeting.

Dr. Anderson put it to the meeting that Mr. Crozier was worthy to become an honorary member of the Society. The motion was carried with acclamation. The Secretary was instructed to duly enrol Mr. Crozier as an Honorary Member of the Society.

APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

The President having read the article (Article XII of the Constitution) dealing with the appointment of trustees, Mr. O'Beirne proposed that Dr. Anderson, Mr. Meldrum and Mr. Donovan be appointed as trustees to the Society.

Mr. Fitzpatrick seconded and the proposal was passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ON JOURNAL

During a discussion on the subject matter and format of the Journal, Mr. McEvoy pointed out that some printing errors were not corrected and said that proofs should go out to the various writers for correction before going to print.

Mr. O'Beirne said that he thought the subject matter met with general approval, but the appearance of the cover was cheap and the paper of poor quality. He suggested that these might be improved in the next issue.

Mr. Meldrum, in replying to these points, said that he agreed with Mr. O'Beirne with regard to the quality of the paper, but that he had to take what was available. The Department of Industry and Commerce limited strictly the amount of paper to be used. The type was rather small, larger type could have been used only by sacrificing space.

With regard to the policy of publishing entirely in English, Mr. Meldrum said that Gaelic script is much more expensive and takes up more room. He would welcome suggestions the members might care to make and asked that these suggestions be sent in in writing.

The President then read his address.

SPECIAL MEETING, JUNE 7, 1944

Owing to transport difficulties the proposed Annual Excursion had to be abandoned and it was decided to hold a meeting at Jury's Hotel, Dublin, in order to hear an address by Mr. G. F. Mitchell, M.A., F.T.C.D., on The influence of the Ice Age on Irish Forests.

About seventy members were in attendance, and the proceedings were opened by the President, Dr. M. L. Anderson, reading a letter of congratulation on the establishment of the Society from the Secretary of the Society of American Foresters. He also read the context of a letter in reply, which was cordially approved by the meeting. This correspondence appears elsewhere in this issue.

Dr. Anderson apologised for the disappointment occasioned by the abandonment of the Annual Excursion and said this was the fourth meeting of the Society at which papers had been read. He introduced Mr. Mitchell, Lecturer in Geology at Trinity College, Dublin, since 1940, and in the course of his remarks stressed the important bearing of geology, particularly glacial geology, on Forestry problems in this country.

Mr. Mitchell, in the course of his address, said that one of the most remarkable features of the Irish flora is the small number of timber-bearing trees that are native in the country. This poverty is the result of the climatic changes that took place in north-west Europe during the later part of geological time. At the beginning of the Tertiary Era, in the Eocene period (perhaps seventy million years ago), the area we now know as Great Britain and Ireland enjoyed a sub-tropical climate and was covered by forests in which the Redwood, the Plane and the Magnolia were prominent. Throughout the Tertiary the climate grew cooler and most of the warmth-loving trees disappeared, while more modern species of temperate trees increased in importance. Continued cooling caused large ice-sheets to develop and these invaded north-west Europe, driving the trees before them. In England at Cromer a deposit containing plant remains which is thought to have been formed just before the first advance of the ice has been studied. It shows that by this time (the end of the Pliocene, perhaps half a million years ago) most of the warmth-loving plants had gone, and of the trees present only the Spruce is not found in England to-day.

Ice was the most spectacular feature of the ensuing Pleistocene period and during the advances of the ice tree-growth was probably impossible within the limits of the Ireland of to-day. But the advances (or glacial periods) alternated with retreats (or inter-glacial periods) when the temperature was as warm as it is at the present day. During at least one of these inter-glacial periods trees, including species not found in Ireland to-day, grew freely for in deposits in Clare and Waterford remains of Fir and Spruce have been found.

When the ice finally disappeared (about ten thousand years ago) Ireland was joined to Great Britain, which was itself joined to Europe. Into this complex peninsula the returning plants gradually found their way. Open grasslands with patches of Birch, Pine and Willow developed first, then Hazel, Elm and Oak appeared and the Irish forests were re-established. Alder entered later, but only just in time, for shortly afterwards Ireland was severed from Britain. Immigration continued into England, and the Lime, Hornbeam and Beech had all entered that country before it was cut off from the Continent.

The Pleistocene ice-sheets, which marked the maximum of the refrigeration experienced by north-west Europe in recent geological time, had a double effect on the trees of Ireland. The ice drove out the warmth-loving trees, many of which are to-day only to be found

in refuges in China and North America. And the later changes of sea-level and coast-line that followed the disappearance of the ice only allowed a very limited number of trees to enter post-glacial Ireland. Successful plantations of many foreign trees have shown that it was limited conditions of post-glacial entry rather than factors of soil or climate that restricted the variety of native Irish trees.

Mr. H. M. Fitzpatrick proposed the vote of thanks and was seconded by Mr. A. C. Forbes. Captain Hamilton, Mr. McEvoy and Mr. Clear also spoke.
