

Annual General Meeting, 1943.

The first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Jury's Hotel, Dublin, on Tuesday, the 9th February, 1943 at 7 p.m. The attendance numbered about forty people.

After the minutes of the inaugural meeting had been read and signed, the President, Dr. M. L. Anderson, read the report of the Council for the year 1942, as follows:

COUNCIL'S REPORT.

My report falls into two parts, namely (1) a report of the Council's activities for the year 1942, and (2) an address dealing with forestry progress during the same period.

Patron.—The Council is very glad to be able to report that Mr. T. Derrig, now Minister for Lands, agreed to accept the Society's invitation to become its patron and I am sure that the Society appreciates very much the honour which Mr. Derrig has paid it and the interest which he has displayed in its formation. Mr. Derrig is in a position to appreciate, not only the need for forestry development, but also the difficulties attending it and the desirability for increasing the standard of technical forestry in this country and the knowledge of forestry generally. His support is, therefore, a great encouragement to the Society in its work.

Council's Report.—I need only refer to the inaugural meeting on the 21st September, 1942, which resulted in the appointment of the Council and has been dealt with in the minutes.

Council Meetings.—Two meetings of the Council were held in Dublin. The strength of the Council was 12 and the average attendance was 9.

Membership.—The members who enrolled themselves at the inaugural meeting in September amounted to 31. Since then there has been an increase of 105 duly elected, making a total membership of 136, consisting of 37 Grade I technical members, 78 Grade II technical members and 21 Associate members. This is considered to be satisfactory, but now that the Society has made a good start, an increase is hoped for, especially in the Associate Members, and your help is asked for in this connection.

Finance.—The audited abstract of accounts has been placed in the hands of members. The excess of assets over liabilities at the end of the year was £10 Os. 10d., of which £10 has been placed on deposit receipt. A current account has been opened with the Ulster Bank.

Journal.—The Council consider that in accordance with the avowed objects of the Society, it was important that an attempt should be made to publish at least one issue of a Journal in 1943. The preliminary investigation as to ways and means has been made and prospects seem hopeful. On the recommendation of the Editorial Committee, the Council approved the title of "Irish Forestry" for the Journal and also that it should, under existing circumstances, be published entirely in English. It is hoped to issue the first number in June and that members will contribute to the Editor not only articles for publication, but also suggestions on what form the journal should take.

Excursion.—The Council also decided that it would be in the interests of the Society to hold, if found possible, a forestry excursion on a modest scale and on lines which would not throw too much responsibility on the Council. An Excursion Committee was therefore formed to investigate the possibility of holding a three days' excursion with Clonmel as the centre in June, 1943, provided the necessary permission to visit the forests and woodlands in the district can be obtained. Members attending will have to make their own arrangements re accommodation, etc., and if the attendance justifies it, it is proposed to hold an ordinary general meeting during the period of the excursion. It is appreciated

that the present is a difficult time for this sort of activity, but it does seem important to make a start on these lines. Members will have full and timely information of the proposals when arrangements are completed so that they can take the necessary steps to enroll.

Kindred Bodies.—The Council have been in communication with the Royal Scottish Forestry Society, the Royal English Forestry Society and the Society for Foresters of Great Britain and have agreed to exchange publication with these Societies.

D. Anderson asked for observations on the following:—

1. Proposed Title of the Journal.
2. The proposal that it should be published solely in English, and
3. The proposal to hold an annual excursion.

There were no observations on the question of the name of the Journal. Mr. Chisholm asked why the Committee could not see its way to arrange for accommodation for members in Clonmel during the Summer Excursion. In reply, Dr. Anderson stated that the Council did not feel in a position to make such arrangements at the present time; but explained that Mr. Petrie, the Convener of the Excursion Committee, would be very glad to be of assistance to the excursionists in this matter.

Dr. Anderson put it to the house that the name of the Journal is acceptable to the Society. The motion was carried, as were also motions 2 and 3.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

According to Rule 5, it is either my duty or my privilege as President, to deliver an address which shall review, amongst other things, the advances in forestry or forestry knowledge during the year.

The present is not a good time for obtaining information on forestry progress abroad so that my review must be confined to this country.

The first important development which has taken place during the year is the commencing by the Government of a Census of standing woodlands in Eire. This census, if sufficiently detailed and comprehensive, could provide useful data regarding the distribution, composition and character of the woodlands throughout the country, the lack of which has been a serious disadvantage in the past.

The appointment, with the support of the Government, of a specialist in forest pathology by University College, Dublin, is also a new departure, which should prove of great use, especially at the present time when extensive fellings increase the risk of insect damage.

I wish to draw attention to the important part played by the woodlands of the country planted by private owners in the past and now in their hands or in the hands of the Government, in supplying materials essential for the life of the community. Timber for a variety of necessary purposes, such as building construction and repair, military needs, railway requirements, telegraph and transmission poles, box manufacture for packing and transport of agricultural produce, firewood for fuel, making of charcoal for use in producer gas units, pit props for Irish mines, and a number of less obvious but also important purposes, has been supplied from these woods. There are two aspects of this trade which cannot fail to impress members of this Society. The first of these is the debt which the country owes to former planters and forestry enthusiasts for the planting which they undertook, often at considerable outlay, in the past. The second is the emphasis which it puts upon the possibility of sound forestry, as a national asset, in this country and on the national utility of the existence of adequate stands of satisfactory growing timber within the country. The pity is that such stands are so inadequate at the present time. The home-grown timber trade deserve commendation, I think, for the way in which they have risen to the present emergency. Their relationship with the timber growers appears to be harmonious.

I might also refer to the various Emergency Powers (Control of

Timber) Orders issued by the Government and also to the Control of Prices Orders affecting firewood and timber, namely Orders Nos. 121 and 148. The latter Order gives the growers for the first time a suitable basis for securing a satisfactory price for their growing timber. The prices are adequate and growers should be securing a high enough return from timber sales to enable them to carry out satisfactory and ample replacements. They should also bring growers to realise more fully the value of their growing timber. There is no doubt that generally private forestry is at a very low ebb and that the standard of knowledge of forestry prevalent amongst land-owners is low. As a Society we may be able to render some assistance in remedying these defects.

The Society appreciates that there are difficulties in the way of undertaking satisfactory replanting at present, but it is to be hoped that a fair proportion of income from timber sales will be set aside for future replanting at a later date when these difficulties have disappeared. This is now the time for the nursery trade to be making every effort to increase its stocks of suitable plants for the extensive replantings to be expected and which we hope will be undertaken in the near future.

It is also hoped that during this difficult time the Government will find it possible to maintain its afforestation programme to the fullest extent possible and that steps will be taken to resume the process of expansion of the State forestry programme which was interrupted by the present emergency. It is also hoped that the problem of ensuring that young and middle-aged stands will receive the attention necessary for their proper development to maturity will have full consideration.

Mr. T. Donovan moved the adoption of the Statement of Accounts to 31st December, 1942, a copy of which had been sent to all members. Mr. O'Leary seconded the motion. It was carried unanimously by the house.

Mr. Gaynor proposed that the election of the following office-bearers and officials (for the year 1943) be confirmed:

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

Vice-President—Felix McMahon, Annagh Bay, Hazelwood, Sligo.

Secretary and Treasurer—Thomas Clear, Albert Agricultural College, Glasnevin, Dublin.

Editor—H. M. Fitzpatrick, Kendalstown, Delgany.

Business Editor—M. Swords, Cillaodain, Adelaide Road, Glengary.

Auditor—Duncan Craig, 102 Grafton Street, Dublin.

Councillors (1943-1944)—M. O'Beirne, Casino House, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow; S. M. O'Sullivan, Flower Hill, Navan, Co. Meath; P. Delaney, Crone, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.

Mr. McCarthy seconded and the motion was carried.

ELECTION OF MR. A. C. FORBES TO HONORARY MEMBERSHIP.

Dr. Anderson, in proposing the election of Mr. A. C. Forbes to Honorary Membership, said:

We have with us to-night Mr. A. C. Forbes, late Director of Forestry in the Government service of this country, and he needs no introduction to most of you here. Mr. Forbes has had a long and distinguished career in our profession and I am glad to say is still actively engaged in Forestry work.

His connection with this country dates officially from September, 1906, when he was appointed the first technical forestry expert to the Dept. of Agric. and Tech. Instruction. He continued to occupy the chief forestry appointment for a quarter of a century up to the time of his retirement in June, 1931, holding in succession the posts of Forestry Expert and Advisor, Inspector of Forestry, Asst.-Commissioner under the Forestry Commission and finally Director of Forestry, from 1920.

He also held the important post of Asst.-Controller of Timber Supply during the last war.

Prior to his appointment in 1906 he had already made a reputation for himself in Great Britain as a practical forester with considerable experience of estate forestry and as a writer on forestry subjects. He was selected as the first lecturer in Forestry at Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, which post he filled for some two years before coming to Dublin.

Mr. Forbes had to start off in this country from scratch and for some time was the solitary official representative of our profession, engaged in the usual struggle against the, perhaps, not altogether sympathetic powers that were. I believe he began his official career by sharing part of a table in the Department's office and with two forest areas, namely, Avondale and Ballyfad, now Coolgreany. He had not only to lay the foundation of the forest area which the State now owns, but to form the nucleus of the technical staff and the organisation required for future development. In fact, all of us who are now employed in the State Forest Service are in a sense heirs of Mr. Forbes and still work along lines initiated by him.

On his retiral in 1931, the area of land which had been acquired for Forestry purposes by the State had risen to over 50,000 acres. The two forests had increased to 42 forests and a total of over 30,500 acres had been planted.

During the early part of his career he was an essential witness before the Dept. Committee on Irish Forestry which sat in 1907 and which produced a comprehensive report which is still a mine of useful information. During the latter part of his career the Forestry Act (1928) was passed through the Dail and he had a high responsibility in the initial stages of its production and also during the first two years of its administration.

He had the satisfaction of knowing when he retired that the foundation of State Forestry in this country had been well and truly laid, that a technical staff had been considerably expanded to meet present needs and that all was set for further expansion.

To those ignorant of Forestry matters, and they are many, this may appear to have been a very modest beginning, but we, who realise how difficult and complicated Forestry work in this country is, know how to appreciate that initial creative effort. For that notable service to Irish forestry Mr. Forbes is fully deserving of recognition by this society and I think we would all deprecate the slighting reference to Mr. Forbes's work which has been made in other quarters.

In addition to his official duties, however, Mr. Forbes, whose energy and activity of both mind and body are bywords amongst us—and they do not appear to be seriously impaired even yet—has from time to time written numerous essays and papers on matters of importance to foresters, which have appeared in various publications and has also published two comprehensive books on Estate Forestry which had important influences at the time of their appearance. Mr. Forbes's writings have brought him recognition from the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, from the Royal Irish Academy and his work on Timber control also earned him distinction.

For his wider contributions to Forestry in the past 50 years, therefore, but more especially for his pioneer work in the establishment of the State Forest Service in this country, he is fully worthy of the highest honour which this Society can bestow upon him and I have the greatest pleasure in proposing his election as the first honorary member of the Society of Irish Foresters.

Mr. Fitzpatrick seconded the motion which was carried with acclamation.

Dr. Anderson then directed the Secretary to enrol Mr. Forbes as first Honorary Member of the Society.

Mr. Forbes, in thanking the Society for the honour conferred on

him, said that when coming to the meeting he had not expected to receive so many bouquets: rather had he expected to be confronted with a list of his misdeeds! He expressed the opinion that his was the first Forestry Society ever established in Ireland which showed promise of a long and successful life. He took part in the establishment of the first Forestry Society in 1906, and had the melancholy job of winding it up in 1916. Perhaps, the one big thing that that Society did was to influence the then Department of Agriculture in acquiring land for afforestation. He was sure that this Society would have a long and successful career.

Dr. Anderson then announced that, as Mr. Fitzpatrick had, owing to unforeseen circumstances, found it impossible to act as Editor of the Journal, Mr. Meldrum had, on the request of the Council, agreed to take over the duties of that office in 1943.

Mr. McCarthy then proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Council. He said that it had displayed great energy in getting the affairs of the Society under way, and that the best thanks of the Society were due to it. Mr. Crerand seconded. The motion was carried with acclamation.

Dr. Anderson then called on Mr. Forbes to read his paper which appears elsewhere in this issue.

Mr. Meldrum, in proposing the vote of thanks, said that forestry in Eire owed a great deal to Mr. Forbes. He was the father of the Forestry Act, which was now exercising a brake on indiscriminate tree felling, and they blessed him for it. Inspections under the Act had increased enormously in numbers and size during the present emergency and as these fell on the shoulders of the District Inspectors it was a matter for conjecture as to whether they blessed him quite so fervently as at Headquarters. Mr. Forbes had gone a long way back in time and had traced economic developments so thoroughly that it was easy to understand our present treeless condition to-day. Perhaps in a few years' time Mr. Forbes would repeat his address in an amplified form to cover the period of the present emergency. From his experience as Timber Controller in the last war he would be able to apportion the blame or possibly utter a modicum of praise for the way in which the timber situation had been handled.

Mr. Clear seconded.

Mr. Forbes, in a brief reply, expressed the hope that his paper had proved of some interest. The subject was one that the average forester had little time to consider during the pressing business of his everyday life.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO 31st DECEMBER, 1942.

RECEIPTS.		£	s	d	£	s	d	EXPENDITURE.		£	s	d	£	s	d
To Subscriptions for year								By Stationery					5	16	10
1942:								.. Printing					5	12	2
1st Grade-technical	21	0	0					.. Postage					1	19	2
2nd Grade-technical	5	0	0					.. Hire of Rooms for Meetings						18	0
					26	0	0	.. Secretary's Honorarium					5	5	0
.. Subscriptions for year								.. Balance on Hands			10				
1943:								.. Deposit Receipt		10	0	0			
1st Grade-technical	1	0	0										10	0	10
2nd Grade-technical		10	0												
						1	10	0							
.. Donation						2	2	0							
						£29	12	0					£29	12	0

I have examined the above account, have compared same with vouchers and certify it to be correct, the balance to credit of the Society being £10 0s. 10d. (ten pounds and ten pence), of which £10 (ten pounds) is on deposit receipt with the Ulster Bank, Ltd.

D. M. CRAIG.

Auditor and Accountant,

102/103 Grafton Street,

Dublin.

5th January 1943.