

Empire Forests and the War. His Majesty's Stationery
Office. 1/-.

Statistics prepared for the fifth British Empire Forestry
Conference, Great Britain. June 1947.

This publication is a summary of the statistics supplied to the Empire Forestry Conference by the participating forest authorities. It presents in broad outline the forestry position before and during the war. Countries presenting statements include South Africa, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Burma, India, Australia, New Zealand.

We are particularly interested in the figures supplied by the Irish forest authority since these are the first figures published which tell in some detail the effects of the recent war on the forestry situation in the country. They are :

TABLE 1.

FOREST AREA (square miles)

	Total	Softwood	Hardwood	Mixed	Forest as percentage of total area
Eire	345	88	90	167	1
N. Ireland	94	14	36	44	2

TABLE 2.

Gives the Volume and Increment of Standing Timber in 1938
in millions of cubic feet.

	Volume of Standing Timber			Annual Gross Increment		
	Total	Softwood	Hardwood	Total	Softwood	Hardwood
Eire	119.8	71.4	48.4	4.1	2.4	1.7
N. Ireland	43.0	14.0	29.0	3.5	0.9	2.6

TABLE 3.

OUTPUT OF TIMBER. Million cubic feet.

Eire	Average	1934-38	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
		1.9	1.9	4.1	8.4	8.8	8.6	6.2	6.6

The estimated total volume of timber felled from 1938 to 1945 is thus 46.5 million cubic feet out of a total volume of 119.8 million given as standing in 1938. This figure does not include the exceptionally heavy fellings for fuel in 1946 and 1947 and it thus seems likely that more than half the country's timber capital was felled in the 10 years 1938 to 1948.

The next table of general interest is No. 8 which gives Annual Imports and Exports of wood and wood products.

	Average 1934-38		1945	
	Gross Imports		Gross Imports	
	Million cu. ft.	£000	Million cu. ft.	£000
Eire	28.0	2,704.7	2.7	1,715

This table shows that while the average cubic foot of wood products imported cost the country less than 2/- in the years 1934-38 the cost was nearly 13/- in 1945. There were say, some 50 million cu. ft. felled in Ireland during the war years. This timber if it could have been imported would have cost the country at 1945 rates over £30,000,000. As things were it was impossible to get it at any price. This then gives, in some measure this generation's indebtedness to its forests.

It has often been said with regard to the financing of reafforestation schemes that the present generation should not be called on to pay the cost of growing of timber for the next generation. The figures quoted above show that this generation has had more than its share of the forest wealth of the country and is morally bound to replace this

borrowed capital. Foresters in particular should see that these obligations to posterity are fully met and the authorities should spare no effort in making good the devastation of the past decade.

T.C.