

8th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

REPORT BY J. J. MAHER, B.AGR.SC.

The Eighth, and so far the most successful Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Jury's Hotel, at 8 p.m., on Wednesday, 8th March, 1950. Members travelled from all over the country and the spacious room at the disposal of the Society was filled to capacity.

At the suggestion of the outgoing President, Mr. O'Beirne, who was in the Chair, the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, which had appeared in the Journal were taken as read and were signed.

The President then called on the Secretary to read the report of the Council for the year ending the 31st December, 1949.

COUNCIL REPORT FOR 1949.

The first meeting of the Council was held on the 5th February. Nine members were present. The new Council appointed sub-committees to deal with arrangements for excursions and the publication of the journal. The Secretary was able to report that the arrangements for the Wales excursion were well advanced. The Council decided on an ambitious programme of day excursions including a visit to Messrs. T. & C. Martin's sawmills at the North Wall and to Birr Castle in the Spring.

The Council met again on the 7th May. Seven members were present and the final details of the Wales excursion were arranged.

An informal meeting of the Council was held in Bettws-y-coed in May. A further meeting was held in July and plans made for autumn excursions to Avondale, Urlingford and Glencree. The Council met on the 26th November. Eight members were present.

MEMBERSHIP

During the year 17 Associate, 15 Grade II and 3 Grade I members were enrolled. An analysis of the roll book shows that, with new enrollments and losses due to deaths, resignations and lapsed membership, there are now 93 Associate, 39 Grade I and 59 Grade II members. There is a very welcome increase in the number of technical members joining the Society. This is indeed most encouraging and with several lapsed members re-enrolled in recent months it would appear that the Society is now getting into flourishing conditions. Our total membership is still short of the 200 mark and as a result income is just sufficient to cover the bare essentials. We got many new enrolments as a result of members introducing friends to our day excursions.

FINANCE

The abstract of accounts for the year 1949 has been in the hands of members for some time. You will note that £34 was outstanding at the end of 1949. This gives some indication of the serious danger of wastage by lapsing of members in arrears. We are again indebted to Mrs A. H. Henry for a further donation of £25 to forward the work of the Society. The Council wishes to pay special tribute to our Honorary Auditor, Mr. D. M. Craig, for his capable assistance and advice on matters relating to the finances of the Society,

JOURNAL

Two issues of the journal appeared during the period under review. Our journal continues to be favourably commented on by readers at home and abroad. Mr. McEvoy, the retiring Editor, has earned our best thanks for the capable way in which he handled this onerous job. The Business Editor has been active and also very successful in securing reasonable rates for printing and also in obtaining considerable revenue from advertisers. The cost of producing the journal in recent years tended to become increasingly onerous and was causing considerable concern to the finance committee. The revenue from advertising and sales now covers 50% of the cost of production and every effort is being made to increase our sales and advertising revenue.

EXCURSIONS

1949 was the best year yet for excursions. The Society's outings were all favoured by good weather and big gatherings congregated at Avondale, Urlingford and Glencree. The Society is deeply indebted to the Minister for Lands and the officials of the Forestry Division for the facilities provided on the occasion of these visits. The visit to the estate of the Earl of Rosse was one of the big events of the year and the excursion to the mills of Messrs. T. & C. Martin was most enjoyable and instructive.

However, the high-light of the year's activities was the visit of the Society to North Wales, 50 members attended and no words can express our appreciation of the wonderful hospitality and the completeness of the arrangements made by our hosts of the Forestry Commission in Wales.

AUGUSTINE HENRY MEMORIAL

For some time our Society has been anxious to pay a tribute to the memory of that famous Irish forester, the late Professor Augustine Henry. The Council is now pleased to announce that, with the co-operation of the Minister for Lands, a Memorial Grove is to be planted at Avondale. Final arrangements have been left in the hands of the new Council.

On the motion of Mr. Langley, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the report was unanimously adopted. Both members paid tribute to the excellent work of the office bearers and councillors during the year, which had contributed in no small way to the present flourishing condition of the Society.

Abstract of Accounts.

The Abstracts of Accounts, which had been forwarded to all members, was then considered, and on the motion of Mr. Rynne, seconded by Mr. Sharkey, its adoption was unanimously agreed to.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

" The past year has been a memorable one from the Society's point of view. The most outstanding event was, of course, the Annual Excursion to Wales, which proved an unqualified success. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Forestry Commission for the facilities afforded us, and for placing at our disposal members of their technical and experimental staffs who spared no effort to make our visit a most pleasurable and instructive one. The caterpillar tractors, ploughing the hillsides and swamps, rendering waste ground fit for planting, made a profound impression on our members. I hope that before the end of next year we will have the pleasure of seeing our Forestry Division initiating this method, and thereby rendering less inhospitable to tree growth those vast tracts of impoverished mineral soil and peat which by the ordinary methods at present in vogue must be counted unplantable or extremely doubtful.

" The second item of note is the public interest aroused in the value of and urgent need for the 25,000 acres a year planting programme sanctioned by the Dail. The responsible Department is making great strides in the acquisition of land and extension of nurseries to implement this programme, and it is my earnest wish, as I know it is yours also, that by 1952 it will be a reality.

" During the year a number of local or one-day excursions were organised. They were well attended and not only provided interesting discussions on many aspects of the work, but also aroused local enthusiasm, and enabled many members who could not take part in the annual excursion to enjoy the benefits of the Society at home.

" In the remaining time available to me I take this opportunity of expressing, on my own behalf and yours, most grateful thanks to our honorary member, Mrs. Henry, for her generous contribution to the funds of the Society. All her life, both in collaboration with her husband, the late Professor Henry, and since his death, she has ever been to the forefront in the cause of Forestry, and no words of mine could adequately express our thanks. I am glad to be able to inform you that through the good graces of the Forestry Division, the Society is at present establishing a memorial plot to the late Professor Henry at Avondale, the State Forestry School.

" In conclusion I wish to thank you for the confidence you reposed in me by electing me President for two successive years and to thank the office bearers and councillors for their assistance and co-operation. I have now great pleasure in handing over to my youthful but distinguished successor and I wish him a successful period of office.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL

The meeting formally confirmed the election of the new Council as given on page 2. The incoming President, Mr. McEvoy, then took the Chair and paid a well-deserved tribute to his predecessor.

EXCURSION, 1950

The members approved of the Council's decision to hold the annual excursion in the Wicklow district, with Dublin as headquarters, on the 23rd, 24th and 25th May. Mr. Mooney would act as convener. The President when asking for approval of the Council's decision, informed the house that a large party of Welsh Foresters was expected and the Council was of the unanimous opinion, having regard to variability in plantations, amenities, etc., that the Wicklow district would be the most suitable venue. Mr. Mooney, the Convenor, then outlined the programme for the three days.

LOCAL EXCURSIONS

It was decided that the Council at its first meeting should draw up a programme of local excursions with, as far as possible, at least one local excursion in each Province.

This concluded the private business. The President then called on Mr. Morehead, O.B.E., B.Sc., I.F.S. (Burma) retd., a member of the Society, to read his paper on *The Necessity For A Forest Policy*, which is printed elsewhere in this issue.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING MR. MOREHEAD'S PAPER

At the conclusion of the paper, the President called on Mr. J. A. K. Meldrum, Director of Forestry, to propose the vote of thanks.

Mr. Meldrum, in proposing the vote of thanks, apologised for the Minister, who he said was most anxious to be present, but unfortunately was prevented from coming as the new Land Bill introduced by him was under discussion in the Dail at the moment. "It has been a pleasure for me," he said, "to listen to this paper, brimful of common sense, and I am sure that I am only voicing the opinion of all in heartily congratulating the lecturer. Continuing, Mr. Meldrum outlined the progress, the achievement in scientific state afforestation, despite the general apathy of the people, culminating in the expansion of policy to reach a target of 25 000 acres per year by 1952. Once that target was reached state afforestation here would bear favourable comparison with the achievements of our neighbours. He wished to assure the members that the Forestry Division was fully alive to its duties and responsibilities and had taken active steps to ensure as far as humanly possible that there would be no hitch in pushing forward with the expanded programme. The first step in this respect was a survey to show the potential forest land in the Republic. This work had been completed recently, and though final figures were not yet available, he had no hesitation in saying that the potential area would be just over one million acres. 1" maps, the smallest practicable scale, were used and therefore, owing to the size of map, the limit of error would be in the neighbourhood of 5 per cent.

"The next important step," he said "was Land Acquisition, and in this respect it was a pleasure to inform the members that the staff had been increased during the past year and was to be increased still

further in the very near future. The necessity of this was apparent to anyone conversant with the complex land tenure in this country, and the absence of consideration of a forest policy in the framing of the Land Acts. Land acquisition would continue to be tedious and slow. He did not expect a miracle, but was confident that the target aimed at would be reached and the large concentrations of potential forest land put to proper use through the co-operation of the Irish Land Commission and Department of Agriculture without a disturbance of agricultural economy.

In conclusion, he stressed the need for extending the scope of education in the National University and the State School at Avondale, and the need for propaganda to educate the people in the need and value of forestry, which should be co-equal with agriculture in national economy.

Mr. FitzPatrick, in seconding, complimented the lecturer for putting in such a clear and concise manner all the requisites for a detailed national policy, which well-informed foresters here had often talked about and know to be necessary. He heartily agreed with all the points made at the end of the address, and stressed the need for a detailed forest policy and the extension of the present educational system in the University and the State School at Avondale, to embrace research in economics, silviculture and utilisation. "Up to the present we are dependent," he said, "for the most part on results from other countries, but if we are to put the expanded programme into operation we will have to tackle scientifically the many problems peculiar to our own country."

He welcomed Mr. Meldrum's announcement in connection with the survey of potential forest land, which would now override the many forecasts in the past and serves as a basis on which to build a forest policy. There was a danger, however, he continued that this scheme and the Rehabilitation scheme would clash unless the scheduling of areas had been carried out in close co-operation between the two Departments, for what might be considered as forest land in the east may not appertain to the west where congestion and land hunger were so apparent.

Mr. Forbes, Colonel MacGan and Mr. Ussher were among the many members who contributed to the discussion. The President, in conveying the vote of thanks, stated that the lecturer had shown clearly the need of a full and formal declaration of forest policy. He stressed the need of keeping the public informed and in this matter the Society had a very important function. Each member could play his part by introducing at least one new member each year.
