

IRISH FORESTRY

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"Irish Forestry"

With this issue of *Irish Forestry*, the third so far, the Society can only be said to be feeling its way forward. What the future form and nature of the Society's journal will be cannot as yet be determined, but it may not be out of place with the issue of this third number to review the whole position and to discuss possible lines of development. Varying views are held regarding the policy which should be adopted in respect of what is to be published in the Journal. There is no doubt, however, that any attempt to fix rigid standards, and to establish restrictions would at this stage be wrong. Apart from the all-important fact that the material available is much too limited for that, considerable latitude should be allowed to contributors so that the Journal may become, as its main function intends it to be, a satisfactory medium for the expression of views by the members of the Society and a source of information for their use.

The first point, which should perhaps be stressed, is that the main object of publishing a Journal is to benefit the individual members of the Society and through them the Society as a whole. Our Society is a professional Society and there should therefore be a considerable number of purely technical articles and discussions. There is an enormous scope in forestry for material of this kind, concerned both with pure silviculture or other forestry subjects and also with those other branches of science or of human activity which are closely related to forestry. Glancing through the material already published it would seem that, so far, this field has been inadequately represented. It would be a mistake to set too high a standard in respect of technical articles. There will always be room in the Journal for articles of the highest standard which will have an appeal outside this country, and, indeed, it is extremely desirable that that should be so. We must face up to the fact, however, that we shall never have, in this small country, more than a few specialists in the various branches of forestry, and that, therefore, we cannot expect to have more than occasional contributions of that advanced, intensive character. There is, however, unlimited scope for shorter articles and in particular, for brief notes on matters of general interest to foresters.

Many members are, unfortunately, reluctant to put pen to paper because of a feeling that their writing may not be up to the desired literary standard, or they may be under the impression that what they have found to be of interest may already be generally known. They do not wish to make themselves appear to be ignorant by writing about something that is not new. That is a mistaken attitude. Every item that is of personal interest to one member is likely to be of general interest to all and every carefully and fully recorded report of any occurrence or experience in relation to forestry is worth recording. It may not be of immediate value but in a long-term business like forestry it may ultimately prove of the greatest value, especially when combined with numerous other records. There must surely be a number of keen and accurate observers amongst our members and an increase in contributions and in the number of contributors of short forestry notes seems to be a possible line of development.

Several members have expressed the view that the Journal should contain matter of a more popular nature in propaganda form, and in connection therewith they express the view that the Journal is too highly priced. They feel that the Society should use its Journal more for the purpose of putting forestry over to the public. In this country the people, as a whole and in the mass, are strongly in favour of forestry and forestry development. This feeling finds its expression in the policy of the Government. Apart, therefore, from the fact that any popular

journal, to remain popular, must appear frequently and must be certain of a constant flow over a long period of suitable material that will appeal to a wide public, if it is not to be a financial failure, there does not seem to be any urgent call for our purely professional Society to undertake work which is more of a political character or of a sort best left to the public press. The Society, by its provision for recruitment of associate members, whose numbers should continue to increase, is catering for all persons who desire to take more than a general interest in forestry matters or to further the development of forestry in this country.

All this does not mean that there is no room in the Journal for papers and articles of a less technical and more popular nature. The proportion of such articles which have already appeared is, in fact, quite high, if we are to regard those papers of historical character as coming under that category. This issue contains the third of that type which definitely has an appeal outside forestry circles. Here again there is considerable scope for quite short articles or notes of interest which can be culled from a perusal of the literature and records of the past. One of the Society's tasks is to build up a forestry tradition in this country and these historical articles have a value in that connection. We should know more of the work of those who planted so extensively in the last three hundred years. We should draw our information from whatever old records are available, while at the same time we should be providing records for the interest and use of those who are to follow us.

Another feature of the Journal which should be developed has been the provision to members, in the form of reviews, of information of what is happening in forestry matters abroad, in so far as the present restrictive emergency conditions allow. To keep members in close touch with forestry developments abroad, especially in those countries where the climatic and edaphic conditions are analagous to those which prevail here, is of the utmost importance and the provision of well-informed professional comment on publications coming from abroad, is a proper function of the Society.

A new feature in this issue is an abstract in some detail of an important continental paper on a subject of great silvicultural interest and importance. There can be no doubt of the utility of abstracts of this nature which provide detailed practical information and stimulate interest along new lines, and more of the same character would be welcome to supplement information from home sources such as is contained in the original articles which appear in this issue.

The names of a number of new contributors appear in this issue to swell the list of active helpers and now that they have broken the ice, it is to be hoped that they will see their way to continue their support. If the Society, however, is to realise its ultimate highly-desirable objective of producing *Irish Forestry* quarterly, more contributors and more contributions will be required—a steady stream of material will be necessary so that new features can be introduced. The lack of any academic distinction or of a fine literary style need deter none from submitting his views and experience on any information, however brief, concerning any matter of forestry interest. It is the Editor's hope that a state of affairs will eventually occur where he will be in the happy position of being able to pick and choose—where he will have to exercise restraint lest the proceedings of the Society, the abstract of accounts, reports of meetings and occasional lists of members, for whose publication the Journal plays an essential role, be ousted altogether from its pages. In the meantime, however, he is anxiously wondering whence the material for the fourth issue is to be derived, for it is hoped to publish a second number to this volume if the necessary paper ration is duly granted.