

Annual General Meeting, 1947

The fifth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held in Jury's Hotel, Dublin, on Tuesday, 4th February, 1947, at 7.45 p.m. There were about 35 members present when Mr. FitzPatrick, the outgoing President, took the chair and called the meeting to order. The minutes of the fourth Annual General Meeting having appeared in *Irish Forestry*, Vol. III, No. 1, were taken as read and signed by the President. The Secretary then read the report of the Council for 1946.

COUNCIL REPORT FOR 1946.

Meetings.

There was a satisfactory attendance at the four meetings of the Council. Ten and nine respectively attended the first and the fourth meetings which were held in Dublin, nine came to the second meeting which took place in Delgany and six to the third meeting in Killarney during the Annual Excursion.

Membership.

The number of enrolled members now stands at 176: 30 Grade I, 66 Grade II and 80 Associate Members. During the year there were elected 26 Associate, 4 Grade II and 2 Grade I which is a welcome increase in our number. Unfortunately there have been losses too through deaths, resignations and lapsed membership. It is a regrettable fact that many who made application for membership and were elected to the Society never paid the initial subscription and that others ceased payments after the first year or two.

Finance.

The Abstract of Accounts for 1946 has been sent out to all members. Our income for the year from all sources amounted to £135 15s. 0d. and our expenditure to £114 13s. 2d. In addition to the small credit balance between these two sums there is a favourable carry-over from 1945 of £90 12s. 11d., leaving the Society with £111 14s. 9d. on hands on the 31st December, 1946.

It should be pointed out that this amount would have been greatly reduced had the second issue of the *Journal* been published and paid for during the year.

Journal.

No. 1 of Volume III of *Irish Forestry* was published. It runs to 68 pages and contains five original articles by members, one abstract and four reviews of books and articles of forestry interest. The Council failed to obtain a suitable cover design embodying an official crest, as foreshadowed in the last Council report, and instead decided to give a trial to a cover consisting of a plain printed title

and a photograph of a handsome tree growing in Ireland. The result seems to have met with general approval and it is likely that the idea will be followed in subsequent Journals.

It is regretted that the second part did not appear during the year as intended. It has been long prepared and in the printer's hands but he has been unable owing to a rush of other work to get it out in time.

Excursions.

Thirty-one members attended the Annual Excursion which was held in Killarney district from the 3rd to the 7th June. Visits were paid to the State forest lands, the Bourne Vincent Memorial Park and to two private demesnes. A meeting of the Society was held at which a paper entitled "The Vegetation of Irish Woodlands" was read by Mr. McEvoy and discussed by many of the members present. An account of the excursion and a copy of the paper is included in the second part of the Journal.

A "local" excursion was held on the 28th September and the afternoon was spent visiting the nursery and experimental plots attached to the Forestry School at Avondale, Co. Wicklow; 26 members attended. An account of the outing appears in the second part of the Journal.

The Council wish to express their appreciation of the kindness of the Minister for Lands and of private owners for permitting the Society to inspect their woodlands and to acknowledge the co-operation of the officials of the Forestry Division in making the excursion a success.

Library.

The arrangements made for the loan of books from the Central Students' Library continue in operation and forty requests by members for forestry books were forwarded by the Secretary during the year.

Tree Registration.

A beginning has been made in compiling the Society's register of notable trees. Members of the Council undertook the collection of data in neighbourhoods to which they had access and some particulars were furnished by Society members. It is hoped to make headway with this work in 1947 and the assistance of all members is sought.

Mr. Barry in proposing the adoption of the Council's Report, thanked the Council on behalf of the Society for its work during the year. He expressed disappointment at the poor attendance of members, and said that this must be attributed to the arctic conditions which must have discouraged many of the country people

from attending. He suggested that the meeting might be held at a later date in the year, when travel conditions might be more agreeable. Mr. T. Manning seconded and the motion was adopted.

Abstract of Accounts for 1946.

The Abstract of Accounts for 1946 had been circulated amongst members. The adoption of the Abstract was proposed by Mr. S. O'Sullivan and seconded by Mr. D. Mangan. In putting the motion to the house the President pointed out that had the second issue of the Journal appeared as planned in December, 1946 and been paid for, the Society's finances would not have appeared so favourable as the statement indicated. A number of members had had to be written off owing to non-payment of subscriptions and quite a number were in arrears for 1946. He made a special appeal to members to pay up their subscriptions punctually. The motion was then adopted.

Election of Mrs. A. H. Henry to Honorary Membership.

The President then called on Mr. O. V. Mooney to propose Mrs. Augustine Henry's election to honorary membership.

Mr. Mooney said that the bestowal of honorary membership—the greatest tribute we foresters could offer anyone—was in a very special way due to Mrs. Henry as a mark of the esteem and respect which she richly merited by years of talented dedication to trees. Her activities in our field were so ubiquitous and so modestly undertaken that it was not at all possible to do justice to them.

She had always been a great giver of that deep fund of knowledge which was hers with her husband's, the late Professor Henry—the greatest of tree botanists. As his faithful companion and true friend she accompanied him and helped him in his never-ending search for unknown tree species and races.

We, and all tree lovers, he said, are deeply indebted to her for her presentation of her husband's collection of herbarium specimens to the State, to form the Augustine Henry Herbarium in the Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin. It contains 9,000 specimens of leafy branches, twigs, cones, and seeds collected by them in their widespread travellings. It was on these that the specific descriptions of trees in that monumental work *Trees of Great Britain and Ireland* by Henry and Elwes were based.

Mrs. Henry spent some eight years of really hard work at the Botanic Gardens arranging and cataloguing the specimens, so that now we foresters and botanists have an unequalled reference for any dendrological work. This work alone must place Mrs. Henry high in the ranks of tree botanists.

In Dublin she has been well known as an organiser and member of many societies for the promotion of tree consciousness. As a

staunch supporter and active organiser of the Irish Roadside Tree Association, her work had practical and self-evident fruition in our many suburbs and roads which have been so greatly enhanced in beauty by the planting of wayside trees in recent years. Less known is the fact that many years ago Mrs. Henry translated from the German, *The Structure and Life of Forest Trees*, by Büsgen and Münch. This work would, no doubt, have brought her into the forefront of every forestry student's career, but unfortunately was never published. Years later a similar work by Professor Thompson appeared—one which is well known to-day.

He would be sorry to conclude without mentioning Mrs. Henry's personal kindness and hospitality to all who happened to pass her way. In formally moving the proposal he wished her many happy years to enjoy her membership and the great work she would always continue to do for trees and their lovers.

Mr. Forbes in seconding, said that he had always thought it extraordinary that Mrs. Henry was not mentioned in *Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*, a work which owed more to her than to any of those to whom acknowledgment was made in the postscript. He suggested that the only explanation was that the knowledge and work of Mrs. Henry and the late Professor were so interlocked and inseparable that no exact distinction could be drawn between their contributions. Her gift for languages was most extraordinary, extending even to remote dialects. It was only equalled by her faculty for getting on intimate terms with peoples of all races and classes, a faculty which served them well in their search after rare species and peculiar local information.

Before putting the proposal to the assembly, the President wished to be associated with the tributes to Mrs. Henry's work. He felt that in accepting the honorary membership, Mrs. Henry had added lustre and dignity to our young Society.

Mrs. Henry, visibly touched, thanked from her heart, the Society for the honour conferred on her. To find that her slight efforts were so highly thought of was most gratifying, and she wished to assure the members that whatever she had done in the past, she would do as gladly for forestry in the future.

The retiring President, Mr. FitzPatrick, then read his valedictory address.

President's Address.

The year which has just ended witnessed a number of happenings in the forestry world which are worth retailing here. In Ireland the new Forestry Act was of outstanding interest. This Act repeals the two previous Acts of 1919 and 1928 on which our forest policy rested but re-enacts most of their provisions, modified in the light of experience gained over the years, as well as adding new ones.

Extended powers are given to the Government for the compulsory acquisition of land needed for afforestation and for rights of way and sawmill sites considered essential for the exploitation of woodlands. In speaking of these powers the Minister said that it was not proposed that they would be used generally. The normal method of acquisition would be by agreement as heretofore and compulsion would be employed only when other means had failed. The Act deals with the three major obstacles to success in afforestation: the prevalence of hares, the criminal carelessness of fire lighters in the vicinity of plantations and the neglect to replant properly on the part of those who fell trees. It is made legal to destroy hares in a plantation, the scope of the heather burning section of the 1928 Act is enlarged and the Minister may enter on neighbouring lands to take steps to ensure the safety of State forests, and those who obtain a felling licence with a replanting condition are bound to care and protect the trees so planted until they are 10 years of age.

The Dail provides £287,000 for the work of the State Forestry Department in 1946. In introducing the estimate the Minister said that the annual planting target was 10,000 acres and that this figure would be reached as soon as the supply of tree seed and fencing material permitted. Shortages of these items had greatly hindered work during the years of the emergency and supplies continued short. He urged private people to plant as far as lay in their power to do so and mentioned that his Department had a scheme of assisting planters by the payment of a free grant of £10 per acre.

In Great Britain the stage is being set for a big forestry drive. For the first time the forest authority is to be provided with all the money they can usefully spend and the work of recruiting and training staffs is in hand. The necessity for large scale afforestation cannot be denied. The fellings of the war years and the virtual stoppage of re-planting for a period of six years has left the woodlands of England, Scotland and Wales in a sorry state with scarcely a sizeable tree remaining. In an important statement on the future of British forestry the responsible Minister declared, "The Forestry Commission recommended in 1943 that we ought to aim at planting 5,000,000 acres in 50 years, an area capable of producing one-third of our annual consumption and to enable us to stand any international emergency." I think they were right. There are hundreds of thousands of acres crying out for afforestation. One of the Forestry Commissioners said that this great national work can only be accomplished if the private owners play their part. To enable them to do this fully the Commission will provide money grants and technical advice and have appointed officers whose special duty will be the advancement of private forestry. Closer co-operation between woodland owners and the State service is provided in what is known as the "Dedication Scheme." Owners electing to dedicate their woods are paid a subsidy on the condition that they make timber

production the principal purpose of the land, that they adhere to an approved working plan, that they employ skilled supervision and that they keep woodland accounts. This scheme has no counterpart in Ireland and we will watch its development with interest.

The shortage of timber of all sorts continued to be felt. The scarcity is world-wide, due to the heavy consumption of the war years coupled with the disorganised state of many wood producing countries and the unprecedented demand for reconstruction. Our own stocks of mature trees are fast running out and, although we were able to augment our meagre supplies with purchases in Canada and the Baltic the shortage is acute and is the greatest single obstacle to the provision of houses and other construction work.

No review of Irish Forestry in 1946 would be complete without mention of the departure from this country of Dr. M. L. Anderson. Dr. Anderson was the principal founder of this Society. He occupied successively the posts of President, Editor of the Journal and Excursion Convener. In his official capacity as Director of Forestry he was responsible for many developments in the past six difficult years when the activities of the Department were switched from afforestation to mainly utilization in order to meet the urgent demands for timber. I am sure I speak for the whole Society when I say we wish him every success in his new work in Oxford University.

Venue for Excursion.

In the absence, owing to illness, of Mr. Meldrum, the incoming President, Mr. M. O'Beirne, the Vice-President, took the chair. Mr. O'Beirne said that the meeting had before it the proposal to hold an Annual Excursion. The Council had considered the matter at its meeting earlier and had decided that Portlaoighise would be a very suitable venue and suggested the dates to be 3rd, 4th and 5th June. He asked if any of the members present had any suggestions to make. Mr. J. Maher thought Portlaoighise a very suitable venue and proposed that the excursion be held there. He mentioned the many areas of interest in the locality. Mr. Clarke seconded the proposal and the meeting unanimously adopted Portlaoighise as the venue.

As Dr. Anderson, one of the trustees, had left, Mr. O'Beirne invited proposals for a trustee to replace him. Mr. FitzPatrick, who was proposed by Mr. Mangan and seconded by Mr. Mooney, agreed to act. This concluded the private business and Mr. O'Beirne called on Mr. H. Beresford Barrett, M.A., late Indian Forestry Service to give his address on "The Natural and Artificial Regeneration of Teak in Burma," which appears in this issue.

Discussion on Mr. Barrett's Paper.

Mr. Forbes proposed the vote of thanks to the lecturer. He drew a comparison between the regeneration of teak and oak, allowing for the difference in climatic conditions within the range of each species. As with oak, teak regenerated better under natural conditions. In our case grazing was the great enemy of forest and our mild climate favoured the out-wintering of stock. He drew attention to fire as an important factor of the habitat in determining the survival of certain species especially of broad-leaf trees which were fire-resistant as compared with conifers. This applied particularly to the native Podocarps of New Zealand. He thanked Mr. Beresford Barrett for a most interesting lecture.

Mr. McEvoy seconded the vote of thanks. The study which we have listened to, he said, of the forester's efforts in Burma has many lessons for us here. The Indian Forestry Service was the first organised service in the British Empire and had a very creditable record of achievement. The subject of Burma Forestry, tropical and sub-tropical, seemed far removed from our conditions but the fundamental natural forest laws are identical the world over; only their application differs and the very variety of their application emphasises their identity. In these large countries forests are seen in best perspective—especially with regard to varieties of soil and climate. These are just as important here but their effects are less obvious; consequently there is a tendency to discount local differences, a tendency we should learn to avoid.

One thing that struck him was the novelty of the methods employed, e.g., controlled burning as a preliminary to natural regeneration. They showed that foresters in Burma had not been conservative or hide-bound in the application of preconceived ideas. Their success in attaining natural regeneration of teak outside its natural range should encourage us in our attempts at regeneration of species which are neither climax nor native in our country.

Again in the matter of maintaining harmonious relations between the Forestry Department and the public we have a lesson to learn. If in Burma a forester can live and work in harmony with a rather primitive people, we should be able here to carry through our forest policy with the goodwill of all land users. In this connection the suggestion to establish forest villages had much to recommend it here.

Mr. FitzPatrick associated himself with the vote of thanks.

The lecturer, replying, thanked the members for their kind reception and answered various questions raised. He emphasised that fire was a natural condition of Burma forests, being due to spontaneous combustion in the tropical heat by rubbing of twigs, etc.