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# Excursion to Dundrum Sawmill and Forest

Report by F. G. MORIARTY.

THE Society concluded its year's outings with a very successful excursion to Dundrum Forest and Sawmills on 22nd October, 1950, the attendance exceeding 100. Mr. Haas, District Officer, welcomed the guests on behalf of the Minister for Lands and gave a résumé of the improvements carried out at the Sawmills which were now completely modernized.

Mr. Meldrum explained that, heretofore, the absence of suitable machinery prevented us from utilizing our timber produce to the best advantage, but that now, the new electrically-driven machines and the drying kilns recently installed, would enable Irish timber to compete favourably with the best imported stock.

Mr. Meldrum then conducted the party through the mill where they saw these new machines in operation. A large log of Oak was broken down on the electrically-driven Band Mill and then re-sawn into cross-arm sizes and bored to E.S.B. specification. The members next inspected the two Drying Kilns. One of these was then charged with a bogey load of Scots Pine planks and the members were shown how the process of drying was initiated. Subsequent to this the machining of kiln-dried stock into tongued and grooved flooring boards on the "five cutter" was demonstrated. The finished product was greatly

admired and all were convinced that Mr. Meldrum's statement, made at the outset "that Irish timber when subjected to proper treatment was second to none" was well and truly substantiated.

At the request of some of the members a short run was made through the Forest. We visited Gurtussa Property, a block some ninety acres in extent, comprising in the main Sitka-Spruce with some Scots Pine and European Larch and planted during the years 1911 to 1914. The members could observe here what judicious thinning and proper silvicultural methods can achieve. Some truly magnificent Sitka Spruce stems were seen in the older 1911 plantations. Of an average breast height quarter girth O.B. of 13" and standing 68 feet in height they gave promise of a high timber yield on maturity.

Mr. Haas outlined the history of the block and traced its life through the initial weeding and pruning operations and the various thinning stages, down the years, to the present date. Mr. Mooney started an interesting discussion with Mr. Clear on the Silvicultural characteristics of the stand.

We next traversed various Spruce woods more recently planted and saw how the work now being carried out was gradually bringing them into line with the one previously visited. An E. Larch stand in C. 30 aroused much interest. It was planted in 1919 and was bounded on the north north-west and south by Spruce blocks of the same age, and it was observed that considerable natural regeneration of Sitka Spruce had come in under the Larch. Wherever the Larch canopy was thin the young Spruce were doing very well. Mr. Grant, the forester, explained that a heavy thinning of Larch was intended and that then, by scarifying the ground, it was hoped to reseed the area with Sitka Spruce.

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