

Excursion to Carton Estate

Report by A. M. S. HANNAN.

DESPITE heavy showers, over 60 members and friends gathered at Carton, Maynooth on 28th July, 1951, for the first summer excursion of the Society. Carton was, for over 200 years, the home of the Dukes of Leinster, who created one of the most beautiful estates in Ireland, in the middle of uninteresting, though fertile, countryside.

The party, which met in front of the Georgian mansion, was welcomed by Mr. Hanan, Forester, on behalf of Lord Brocket, who was unfortunately unable to be present. He then outlined, briefly, the history of the plantings that had taken place and their subsequent treatment.

The first planting took place almost 200 years ago, and were merely amenity belts of Oak, Cedar, Beech and Horse-Chestnut. After 100 years a Duke of Leinster, who was a keen sylviculturalist, did some Selection fellings, to produce monies for the extensive planting of woods of Beech, Sycamore, Lime, Elm, Norway Spruce and Douglas Fir. 20 years later, (about 1880), saw the laying down of the most interesting plantations in Carton, for, as well as all the common Hardwoods, we find at least 21 different Conifers, planted into the old wide-spaced Oak and Norway Spruce.

The party then moved off to inspect an area of this type. The wood chosen for inspection was Moygaddy Wood, a long and comparatively narrow strip, comprising 102 acres, which contains, as well as the tree crop, a wide range of flowering shrubs, originally planted for game cover.

The members soon noticed that every tree had been planted with its own individual ring of wire-netting. Mr. Clear suggested that this method might be suitable for use with a modified Selection system, either with single-tree or group fellings. It was also suggested that the wires could be removed and used for further planting. Mr. Hanan was in favour of wiring-in small areas, rather than individual trees, to allow for some natural regeneration. Mr. O'Beirne said that in Germany they had found that the true Selection System had proved to be uneconomical. It was agreed that the first treatment for Moygaddy Wood will be the clearing of the heavy undergrowth of shrubs, especially rhododendron, which have been sorely neglected, due to there not having been a forester in Carton for over 20 years.

Before departing, most of the party had a quick walk around the shrubbery and Pinetum, in which, though the range is not extensive, there are some remarkably fine specimens, notably *Abies grandis*, *Cedrus libani*, and *Tsuga heterophylla*.