

Annual General Meeting, 1960

THE Eighteenth Annual General Meeting of the Society of Irish Foresters was held in the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, on Saturday, 19th March, 1960.

1. Minutes.

The Minutes of the Seventeenth Annual General Meeting, having been published in the Journal, were taken as read and were adopted and signed.

2. Report of the Council for 1959.

The new Council met at 85 Harcourt Street, on Tuesday, 13th January, 1959, Thirteen members attended.

The meeting made preliminary arrangements for the Annual General Meeting. Sub-Committees were appointed as follows: Editorial, Finance, Meetings, Forestry Course and Diploma.

A proposal to hold a machinery Field Day was considered and a sub-committee appointed to consider the matter.

The Council met again at 85 Harcourt Street on the 17th February. Eleven members attended.

Final arrangements were completed for the Annual General Meeting. The Annual Study Tour in Denmark was considered and the date for the Machinery Field Day was fixed for the 16th May, 1959, at Kilruddery, Co. Wicklow. A programme of local excursions was arranged.

The third Council Meeting was held on Monday, 20th April, 1959, at 85 Harcourt Street. Eleven members attended.

Matters attended to included, Field Day arrangements, Local Excursion, Annual Study Tour, Forestry Diploma and the publication of the Journal.

The fourth meeting was held on Monday, 28th September, 1959, at 85 Harcourt Street. Ten members attended. Arrangements were made for the holding of a meeting in November at which a paper on "Soil Survey in relation to Irish Forestry" was read. The Society's Badge was considered. A large volume of routine business was dealt with.

The fifth meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday, 11th November, 1959, at 85 Harcourt Street. Arrangements were made for the election of the Council for 1960. Preliminary arrangements for the Annual General Meeting were put in train.

The sixth meeting of the Council was held on the 8th December at the offices of Kevans & Sons, 31 Fitzwilliam Place. The Committee considered the question of securing the services of a secretarial firm. The arrangements for the Annual General Meeting were further considered. The convenor of the Diploma Committee reported that a draft report had been prepared and would be submitted in due course.

The Council can point to many notable achievements in 1959. The Machinery Field Day was a new venture and was an outstanding event. The most successful Study Tour to Denmark has been fully recorded in the Journal.

While the number of enrolments to membership was well up to that of recent years a number of resignations and the considerable arrears in payments of subscriptions has resulted in a drop in income. This fall in income at a time of rising costs is a matter of some concern and members in arrears are asked to pay up in good time.

Two issues of the Journal appeared during the year. **The Council takes this opportunity to appeal to members to contribute material to the Journal.**

The Financial Statement which has been circulated to members has been prepared as usual by our Hon. Auditor, Mr. D. M. Craig, who has been an unfailing source of help to the Council during the year.

There was a very full programme of meetings during the year and attendances were excellent. The Council wishes to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the local officers whose co-operation has been so valuable in making the day excursions a success.

3. *Abstract of Accounts for 1959.*

The statement of accounts, as published herewith, was adopted.

4. *Outgoing President's Valedictory Address.*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conforming with the requirements that the outgoing President of the Society delivers an address on this occasion annually, I intend to take up less of your time to-night than I did twelve months ago.

World Forestry.

Firstly, in regard to the world forestry picture, I have again referred to the latest F.A.O. Report, which covers the period up to the end of 1958. The following are the main facts which emerged:—

- (a) The harvest of timber from the forests of the world increased from 1,663 million m³ in 1957 to 1,664 million m³ in 1958. Fellings of saw and veneer logs increased, while those of pulpwood, pitprops and fuel wood declined.
- (b) The largest volume felled was in North America, followed by the U.S.S.R. and Europe.
- (c) World output of sawnwood increased by about 2% from the previous year.
- (d) Production of wooden railway sleepers in Europe decreased. Broad-leaved species slightly exceed conifers for this purpose.
- (e) Plywood production reached a new record level of almost 13 million m³ (an increase of 1.2 million m³ on 1957).
- (f) Pulpwood production of 50.22 million tons declined slightly from the 1957 figure. There was a decrease in North America and Europe and an increase in the U.S.S.R. and Asia.
- (g) Newsprint production declined for the first time in 10 years, the fall being about 1½% to a figure of 12.14 million tons.
- (h) Fibre-board, paper-board, particle-board and paper, other than newsprint, all increased their production.

Forestry in Ireland.

Coming now to forestry at home, I have some figures relating to the State Forest Service:—

The number of forests being administered by the Department of Lands in March, 1960 was 178, occupying a total area of 413,043 acres (at 31/12/59). Total productive area was 354,927 acres and the total planted up to the 31st March, 1959 was 280,231 acres. The planting programme for 1959/60 is 25,000 acres, a target which has been aimed at for many years, and which, it is now expected, will at last be achieved.

The proportions of the different species used in the Department's plantations in recent years were:

| | 1958/'59 | 1957/'58 | 1956/'57 |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sitka spruce ... | 47.5 | 43.2 | 40.0 |
| <i>Pinus contorta</i> ... | 26.4 | 30.2 | 31.2 |
| Norway spruce ... | 9.4 | 9.0 | 9.5 |
| Other conifers ... | 13.1 | 14.6 | 13.9 |
| Broadleaved trees ... | 3.6 | 3.0 | 5.4 |

As will be seen, there is a steady rise in the proportion of Sitka spruce as compared with contorta pine, arising out of mixtures of these two species.

The area of land acquired in the first nine months of 1959/60 was 19,595 acres. The average area acquired during the previous 5 years was roughly 21,700 acres annually.

The Department maintain 60 forest nurseries with a total area of 609 acres. The nurseries at Clonegal, Shelton and Camolin are larger than the average and have been mechanised considerably.

Gross expenditure in the Department has been climbing steadily in the last 6 years and while income has also regularly advanced, the net expenditure curve is still upward.

In the estimated gross expenditure for 1959/60 of £2,460,200, the estimated cost of labour is £1,400,000. This covers the wages of approximately 4,870 men and working these figures down to a weekly wage basis we get £5 10s. 0d. per man per week (approximately).

During 1958/59, thinning operations were carried out in 102 of the Department's forests, over an area of 7,776 acres. The number of stems removed was 1,041,986 and the volume was 2,332,137 cub. ft.

Sales of material less than 8" quarter-girth at breast-height amounted to 2,578,398 cub. ft. This was a drop on each of the 3 previous years.

Material sold in the category 8" Q.G. and over, came to 1,091,454 cub. ft. The total volume under these two headings, that is 3,669,852 cub. ft., does not include a figure of 38,701 tons of firewood.

The number of Christmas trees sold last year declined considerably from the '57/'58 figure and, at 35,160 was little more than half the '55/'56 figure.

Road-making in the Department's forests continued generally last year and in several forests I witnessed the changing landscape as the bulldozers ground their way forward, scooping, clearing, levelling and grading. When completed, these road-systems will have one important not-so-obvious advantage, and that is, to enable the forester to reach the scene of activities far more quickly and easily than hitherto. It is a common observation that far too much of the forester's time nowadays is taken up with office work, so that any innovation which saves him time is a definite asset.

Mention of the office-work brings up the question of the Incentive Bonus Scheme. This scheme has now extended to 100 of the Department's forests and is a subject for discussion both inside and outside the State Service. I am not sufficiently acquainted with all the facts to give an opinion on the success of the scheme or otherwise. I know that it has many critics, but I feel it should be allowed to operate for, say, 4 or 5 years, before final judgment is passed on it. At any rate, it is significant that approximately 2,793 men are at present working the scheme, this being well over half of the Department's total labour staff in the country.

The following summarises the fire damage in recent years:—

| Year | Fires Reported | Causing Damage | Acreage | Damage |
|----------|----------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| 1958/'59 | 305 | 15 | 8 | £251 |
| 1957/'58 | 294 | 22 | 111½ | £5,226 |
| 1956/'57 | 309 | 34 | 188 | £4,190 |

Chair of Forestry.

On this occasion last year, I referred to the fact that the Chair of Forestry in University College, Dublin, was being re-established, having been vacant (or lapsed) since the time of the late Professor Henry. As you are all aware, the post has now been filled by the appointment of Mr. Clear as Professor of Forestry. I feel that everyone here will join with me in congratulating a man who has been a corner-stone of the Society since its foundation and who, to my personal knowledge, has never left undone anything which could be done to assist the cause of Forestry in this country.

I think we all appreciate the fundamental importance of this appointment, quite apart from the question of the personality involved. It means that Forestry education at the top level, instead of being treated as a sort of Cinderella, is now getting due recognition in the light of its present importance and its future potential for this country.

I am sure, however, that you will agree with me when I say that the long-overdue honour which has been paid to Professor Clear was about the most popular appointment we can think of in 1959. Personally, one of the forestry highlights of the last year for me was when, at a pleasantly informal function sometime before Christmas, I listened to Professor Clear as he "called the roll" of those who had graduated in Forestry from his own time onwards to the present. The very large proportion of his former colleagues and students who turned up at Newman House was a tribute to the man and the occasion.

The Society.

No review of the year's events would be complete without a reference to the Society's Study Tour to Denmark. I think all the members who travelled were delighted with the trip. At any rate, I certainly was. The Danes were obviously very, very keen and knew their forestry inside out. We saw many things that were strange to us, but everything was interesting and stimulating for Irish foresters. As the trip has been very fully written up in the last number of the Journal, I will not go into details, but I feel I must again express our indebtedness to our Danish friends in general for their princely hospitality and kindness. We are especially grateful to Dr. Sabroe, who was the one who really made the trip possible. From the home side of the expedition, it is an understatement to say that a substantial part of the success of the Tour was due to the untiring zeal of Mr. Mooney and the able assistants who helped him with the general arrangements and organization.

In regard to the question of membership of our Society, one of the things I find difficulty in understanding is the fact that by no means all of the State Foresters are members. Sometimes, when I put the question to a forester as to why he doesn't enrol, he says (facetiously, I imagine!)—"Ah, sure I couldn't afford it." What puzzles me is how any forester can afford not to be a member. The advantages are, to my mind, overwhelming to any forestry man of normal, sane outlook. I would, in fact, regard membership of our Society as one of the touch-stones of a forester's real interest in his job. If a forester is *not* interested in Forestry, he should be at something else, such as the Stock Exchange or raising greyhounds.

When I find some "expert" writing fluently in the public press or periodicals and advocating this or that approach to forestry and if I find he or she is not really sufficiently interested in the subject to join our Society, then I have very grave doubts as to the sincerity of the writer.

In conclusion, I have to refer to the fact that, as I was unable to be present at the last meeting of the Council in 1959, I had no opportunity of congratulating the new Committee and of expressing my thanks to the Council members and the members of the various Sub-Committees for their loyal co-operation in keeping both the Society and our Journal in a flourishing state during the year.

In congratulating Mr. Maurice Swan on his election as President, I am happy to assure him that if he gets the same generous help from his Committee as I had from mine, then his task will be comparatively easy.

Members of the Society are well aware that in Maurice Swan they have a President who brings to the position many qualities and some obvious advantages, which were lacking in my case and which will ensure that our Society will flourish during his term of office. While it is by no means essential that the President of the Society be an official of the Forestry Division, there are considerable arguments in favour of having a man who is a full-time technical forester and who is in a position to be in almost constant touch with other foresters and with the members of his Council.

In relinquishing the office of President, I want to thank you again for the great honour you paid me and the patience you showed in putting up with me over the past two years. My hope and indeed, my confidence is, that the best years of this Society still lie ahead.

5. Confirmation of Election of 1960 Council.

The names of the Council are given at the beginning of this issue.

6. Programme for 1960.

A full programme of excursions for 1960 was announced.

7. There being no other business to transact the private business then concluded.

Public Business

After a short interval the meeting reassembled to hear Mr. R. P. Woods of the Timber Development Association, Ltd., deliver an address entitled "The Potentialities of Homegrown Timber," which is published in full elsewhere in this issue. Speakers to Mr. Woods's paper were Mr. W. J. Cusack (Clondalkin Paper Mills, Ltd.), Mr. D. A. Bell (Bowaters Irish Wallboard Mills, Ltd.), and Mr. W. P. Crowe (Irish Timber Industries, Ltd.).

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A full publications list (No. 31) will, on request, be sent free by the Secretary, Forestry Commission, 25 Savile Row, London, W.1.
