
Society's Activities

Illustrated Lecture in Dublin.

A lecture was given in the Shelbourne Hotel in November 1960 by Professor Clear and Mr. W. Dallas (of the Northern Ireland Ministry of Agriculture—Forestry Division).

Professor Clear described with slides, the impressions gained during his attendance at the World Forestry Congress at Seattle, Washington, and his visits to various North West American forest areas. He had some very striking slides illustrating the redwood and Douglas fir regions.

Mr. Dallas gave the second part of the lecture, describing his stay in North West America, with particular reference to water conservation and control at high altitudes. He had some graphic illustrations of forest crown fires and the damage so caused. Among other points, he recounted his experiences concerning the various methods of fire fighting employed in the area.

The President, Mr. M. Swan, proposed the vote of thanks.

Illustrated Lecture in Galway.

An encouraging gathering was present at the Society meeting on Saturday, 11th February, held in the Greek Hall, University College,

Galway. The President, Professor Thomas Clear, opened the meeting and introduced the speaker, Mr. P. J. O'Hare, Officer-in-Charge of the Peatland Experimental Station, Glenamoy, who, with the help of excellent and illuminating slides, gave a very concise outline of the history of western peats, observations regarding the growing of tree and other crops on peat, and an outline of the work going on at the Glenamoy research farm.

Some of the points he broached, concerned the history of the formation of western blanket bog from its beginning with the culmination of the Ice Age about 10,000 years ago. From there he led on to the present peat condition in the west of Ireland and its relation to the various ways in which research was proceeding at Glenamoy.

With appropriate illustrations he reviewed work on drainage, seeding, water experiments, ploughing (introducing a new type peat plough evolved at the Glenamoy research farm), grazing and shelter belts.

From the forestry point of view the most interesting aspects of this lecture were the slides demonstrating treatments involved in shelter belts of *Pinus contorta* and Sitka spruce, the shelter gained by planting in the lee of the turned sod, and the devastating effect of the prevailing west wind.

Professor Clear, in proposing the vote of thanks, commended Mr. O'Hare's vital enthusiasm in his work. He said how important the research approach to such work was, and that we in forestry should attempt to follow the example given by the research workers at Glenamoy. He said that without a scientific approach great waste of time, energy and resources could occur. He then invited questions from the audience.

Some interesting questions arose concerning glaciation, phosphate fertilisation, the matters of nutrient reserve and the capability of plants to increase it. Also discussed was the desirability of fertilising forests, the possibility of aerial spraying, and anchorage problems with regard to ribbon planting.

More points raised were the limitations and the interpretation of the analysis of peat nutrient content, and the use of tissue analysis in the assessment of the availability of nutrients to the plant. The time of year in which analysis should take place was discussed. The question of the importance of the sun's energy and water relations also arose. Finally some discussion took place regarding the effect of peat depth on acidity, the importance of the subsoil, erosion caused by rainfall and other factors, and water movement in peats.

Professor Clear wound up the proceedings with a short resumé of what we can learn from the experiments in Glenamoy—especially from the evidence which is beginning to show regarding the wind factor and stability in relation to poor rooting media and high water tables.

He asked whether the trees will stay put even if they do grow. He finally discussed the possible importance and help forestry will be to agricultural schemes carried out on these areas. He again thanked Mr. O'Hare, the college authorities of U.C.G. and the Society organisers in Galway headed by Mr. McMeniman.

G. J.G.

Illustrated Lecture in Kilkenny.

Mr. T. A. Barry of the Bord na Móna Experimental Station, Droichead Nua, Co. Kildare, delivered an illustrated lecture entitled "Peat and Forestry: Two Aspects", in the Metropole Hotel, Kilkenny, on 18th February, 1961. The two aspects referred to in the title were (i) the production of tree seedlings using as a seedbed a compost based on peat moss, and (ii) the establishment of forest plantations on cutaway bog.

In dealing with the first of these subjects, Mr. Barry described the product known as "UCEE mix". This consisted of a 3 to 1 mixture (by volume) of peat moss and granitic sand with small additions of ground limestone, hydrated lime, dolomite limestone, single superphosphate, potassium nitrate and potassium sulphate. This was the standard mix but, by omitting the ground limestone and hydrated lime, a low-lime mix was also produced. These were tested against an organic mix (60% peat moss, 20% sand, 20% stable manure, lawn mowings, spent hops and garden soil) using five species: Douglas fir, Norway spruce, Sitka spruce, *Abies grandis* and *Abies nobilis*. The seed cover used was UCEE on the UCEE beds and a 1:1 peat moss: granitic sand mixture on the compost. Mr. Barry used slides to illustrate how, during the growing season, a degree of chlorosis developed in some species and responded to a late July application of nitrogen to one half of each plot. The amount of weeding required was negligible, and 3,000 seedlings, fit for lining out in September, were produced from each bed of 3.3 square yards. There was little or no disease. The bed of material used was 7 inches deep. Less may be sufficient where the local soils are not highly calcareous as here (pH 7.9—pH8), and it is also possible that the same material might be usable over several years, with a small addition annually.

In dealing with the second aspect Mr. Barry described the cutaway strip in Clonsast bog known as Trench 14, part of which was planted by the Forestry Division in 1955, and pointed out that this was perhaps one of the first systematic efforts towards the afforestation of machine-cutaway in western Europe. In his talk Mr. Barry brought out strongly the point that to speak of "peat" to a person concerned in its study was analogous to speaking of "rock" to a geologist: there are as many peat types as rock types and the differences are as important for practical purposes. In a series of slides Mr. Barry showed the present condition

of most of the 17 tree species planted. Each plot was half an acre in size and one half of each plot was treated with ground mineral phosphate. The most striking feature was the clear necessity for phosphate on those areas where any considerable depth of peat, say four feet or more, had been left.

N. O'C.

NOTE: It is understood that since the trials described were carried out, minor adjustments have been made to the Calcium level of UCEE mix, and a number of trace elements have been added. Further trials of conifer seed production are now in progress.—Ed.

Miscellaneous

Meeting of "Trees for Ireland" in Sligo.

"Trees for Ireland", to which this Society is affiliated, held their Annual General Meeting on the 28th January in Sligo this year. The Address of the outgoing President, Mr. McElligott, who unfortunately was unable to be present, was read by Mr. Harbourne, Vice-President. This Society was represented by Mr. Finnerty.

Arbor Day.

"Trees for Ireland" held an Arbor Day on 7th March, 1961 at Palmerston, Co. Dublin. The Society of Irish Foresters was represented by its President, Professor Clear, and Secretary, Mr. M. Swan. Also present were the Minister for Education, Dr. Hillery, the President of "Trees for Ireland", Mr. H. Harbourne and other public dignitaries.

Visit of Forestry Students.

A group of Forestry Students from Bangor University, led by Professor Mobbs, paid a brief visit to a number of Wicklow Forests and the Forestry Division School at Shelton Abbey. They arrived on the morning of Saturday, 18th March, 1961. They were met by Professor Clear and technical officers of the Department of Lands who accompanied them on their tour. They returned to Wales the same night.

Visit of Canadian Minister.

On the 10th and 11th April, 1961 the Minister for Lands, Ontario, Mr. Spooner, paid a two-day visit to some Irish forests—Gort, Loughrea, Mountrath, Clonaslee, Ossory, Kinnitty, Glenealy, Shelton, Aughrim, Glenmalur and Glendalough. The party included Mr. O'Morain, Minister for Lands, His Excellency Mr. Rive, Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, and technical and administrative officials from the Department of Lands. When visiting Shelton School and Forest Mr. Spooner planted a tree—fittingly enough—a *Tsuga canadensis*.

Report on Hydrological Activity in the U.K.

The Report on Hydrological Activity in the U.K. 1960 was prepared for the Hydrology Sub-committee of the British National Committee for Geodesy and Geophysics and will appear in the Bulletin of the International Association of Scientific Hydrology (Secretary—Mr. L. J. Tison, 61 rue des Ronces, Gentbrugge, Belgium).

A limited number of copies are available and can be obtained from Mr. D. C. Martin, Assistant Secretary, The Royal Society, Burlington House, London, W.1.

A selected bibliography of hydrological publications for years 1955-59 in the U.K. is in the course of preparation and can also be obtained on request from the Assistant Secretary.