
Excursion to Ballyboy Property — Glenmalure Forest

THERE was quite a sizeable turn out on Sunday the 28th May, though at the gathering point customers of the nearby hotel tended to confuse the numbers present. The promise of a sunny afternoon did not

materialise and the hill climb was welcomed to counteract the nip in the wind.

The leader for the day, Mr. J. O'Carroll, the District Inspector, was introduced to the gathering by Mr. McNamara as also were Mr. O'Keeffe and Mr. Joyce, the foresters for the area. Before setting out Mr. O'Carroll gave us some facts concerning the forest which is in a glen 8 miles long and 4 miles wide at its widest point near the hotel. The hills are very steep and contours are roughly 50 yards apart. Our starting point at the hotel was 444 ft. above sea level. The total area of the forest is 7,000 acres. First planting was carried out in 1922 with a Douglas fir/European larch mixture. Both failed and were later beaten up with Scots pine. Some Douglas fir along the road remains and is growing well, though this may be due to spoil from the road. An item of general interest was the series of foresters appointed to this forest, numbering 21 in all.

From the hotel the party proceeded in convoy towards Compt. 52. *En route* there was a brief halt to view some 1922 planting of European larch which had been beaten up with Scots pine. Some of the European larch remained. Figures from a sample plot showed that the volume was 1,830 cubic feet per acre consisting of 630 stems per acre with a volume of 2.78 cubic feet per tree.

The party then drove to the end of the forest road. From here on all had to rely on foot power, as modern modes of transport were of no avail. At 1,560 ft. the party entered Compartment 52, (P.24) and began to ascend the hill. This Compartment is reputed to contain Sitka spruce growing at the highest elevation in Ireland. On reaching 1,850 ft. a halt was called and Mr. J. O'Carroll gave figures from a one-tenth acre sample plot. The volume was 6,140 cubic feet per acre on 860 stems per acre; 7.14 cubic feet per tree. Over the whole 16 acres of the stand members who had worked on assessment gave a figure of 4,500 cubic feet. Mr. J. O'Carroll said that this compartment had not been thinned previously due to difficulty and cost of getting men to this point. A discussion arose, brought up by Mr. McGlynn of whether it was advantageous to thin such plantations, considering how this one had grown. He also pointed out that in similar situations the crowns had become thinner and the crop as a whole was not improved. A question from the gallery enquired about the advantages of high pruning to a stand of the sort. Mr. J. O'Carroll stated that as yet no decision had been reached, but he thought that it would be a waste of money. Mr. McEvoy pointed out that costs would be very high due to the nearness of the whorls. He also pointed out, in reply to a statement by Dr. Murray on the rapid taper, that this was probably due to loss of leaders as a result of storm damage. At this point a suggestion was made that this type of timber would be ideal for pulp wood. Mr. J. Stagg, however, was not long in dispelling this idea, as he pointed out that the stems were too large for the machinery in the mills. He also

pointed out that suppliers were tending at present to supply the larger sizes, and that certain factories had not been getting the optimum amount of suitable material for the last six months.

The ascent was continued when this discussion had concluded. On passing the highest point at which the trees were planted the altimeters were consulted and it was agreed that the height was 1,980 ft. At the summit the altimeters read 2,160 ft. Mr. McEvoy, on request, listed the mountains visible from the summit. They ranged from Kippure in the north to Slieve Buidhe in the south.

The descent from the top was hastened by the coolness in the breeze and refreshments were taken under the shade of some old beech. Mr. McNamara concluded the day's proceedings by proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. J. O'Carroll, Mr. O'Keeffe and Mr. E. Joyce.

J.O'D.
