

Report of the Minister for Lands on Forestry for the year ended 31st March, 1961

Published by the Stationery Office, Dublin. Price 3/-.

IN the general review which serves as an introduction to the report there is a very convenient summary of the main features of the work of the State Forestry Service during the year and it is tempting to reproduce much of the material as it appears in this summary.

Acquisition of Land.

The total productive area acquired for State Forestry purposes in the year was 25,504 acres, a record figure. The acquisition of this area involved 504 separate transactions and the average area acquired in each case was 51 acres. It is obvious from these figures that land acquisition for forestry purposes in Ireland is a tedious business. The figures for outlay on land purchase indicate that the average price paid per acre is only £6. In these days of soaring land values it is surprising that land for forestry purposes can still be bought at this price. The thought that comes to mind is that a better price for land might bring more land and better quality land and thus help to relieve an obvious bottle-neck in the planting programme.

The total area planted in the year was 26,069 acres, the highest area planted in any single year to date. The following counties accounted for the bulk of the planting :

					<i>Area planted 1960/61</i>
					<i>Acres</i>
Cork	...	...	...	...	5,495
Donegal	...	...	...	...	2,905
Wicklow	...	...	...	...	2,129
Tipperary	...	...	...	...	1,503
Mayo	...	...	...	...	1,352
Leitrim	...	...	...	...	1,267
Clare	...	...	...	...	1,123
Waterford	...	...	...	...	1,044
Sligo	...	...	...	...	814

These are the counties most afflicted by under employment and immigration and obviously forestry is making a very welcome contribution to the economy of the depressed areas of the country.

The area recorded as thinned in the year was 8,572 acres, yielding 2.6 million cubic feet (Hoppus) of produce; other fellings, principally of mature timber yielded 3.6 million cubic feet of material.

The report gives a general extract of data from the first full-scale

census of growing stock in the State Plantations, which was completed in November 1961. The tables given in this section of the report are most informative and give a general picture of the composition of the State Forest by area, volume and species. This is by far the most valuable and novel section of the report. It is the first accurate assessment of the timber capital of the State forests in the country and in this sense is the first concrete data of this nature ever to appear in print in Ireland. It is to be hoped that a full account of this unique census will appear as a special publication as, by all accounts, it represents a very fine achievement. Congratulations to all concerned.

The report is also notable for the statistical table on a county and forest basis showing the area and condition of State Forest lands as at the 31st March, 1961 and the map showing the distribution of the forest centres throughout the country which appear as an appendix at the end of the report.

T.C.
