

Society's Activities

Minutes of 23rd Annual General Meeting*

THE outgoing President, Mr. Swan, opening the proceedings asked that the Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting, the Council's Report and the Abstracts of Account be taken as read. This was proposed and seconded by Mr. E. Johnston and Mr. H. Kerr. These three items were then placed before the meeting for discussion. The Society's financial position was discussed at length and members put forward a variety of suggestions to ease the situation. These dealt mainly with the Journal and increased membership. At present the sale of the journal to non-members is being subsidised by 4/- by each member. As the Journal now costs 10/- per copy to produce, those members who pay £1 subscription receive the other benefits of the Society gratis and even so the Journal is showing a loss of £100 per annum. An increase in price will not solve the problem as only approximately 50 journals are sold to non-members. Reducing the cost per copy by increasing the number printed would be of little avail as our total membership does not exceed 400. A reduction in numbers printed would also have little benefit due to the size of our order. A number of lapsing members receive the 2 issues of any particular Journal free as they are not known until the end of the year. Any measure taken to combat this would be difficult to implement and might lead to a decrease in membership. In addition, the Constitution would be infringed by any such moves. A proposal that members be requested to subsidise the journal during this difficult period was rejected due to administrative costs. The seeking of competitive tenders for printing and increasing the income from advertising appeared the most effective method of reducing the deficit.

The Vice-President then raised the question of the proposed book on forestry in Ireland to be published by the Society. However, lengthy discussion on costs was rather pointless when its final form had not as yet been decided. Nevertheless the book must be worthy of the Society, no effort being spared to see this achieved even to the extent of having it subsidised by members or an outside body. An efficient sales drive would achieve much as there were many markets available. The question of the material being out of date was raised and here it was pointed out that Mr. FitzPatrick appeared to be making every effort to rectify this matter. The delay in publishing was in no way due to any slackness on the part of the Editor as he had not received the contributions until last September. When finally edited the draft would be placed before a committee. Contributors would not have powers of veto but could express their views on the final form. There being no further discussion the Minutes, Council's Report and Abstracts of Accounts were declared passed.

* Held at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, March 20, 1965.

Presentation of Certificates:

The President then called on Messrs. Crowley and Collins to come forward and be the first successful candidates to sign the examination roll book. Both were warmly applauded by the assembly.

President's Address:

The outgoing President, Mr. Swan, read his valedictory address, reported later in this issue.

Confirmation of Election Results:

As his final duty the outgoing President placed the results of the 1965 Council elections and the following were duly confirmed as elected :—

President: Cecil S. Kilpatrick.

Vice-President: Owen V. Mooney.

Secretary: John O'Driscoll.

Treasurer: Thomas Moloney.

Editor: Leonard U. Gallagher.

Business Editor: J. Desmond Robinson.

Hon. Auditor: D. M. Craig.

Councillors Grade I: Dermot Mangan.
Charles H. Kerr.

Grade II: Martin O Neachtain.

Associate: Seamus Galvin.

The incoming President then took the Chair. He thanked the members for the honour they had bestowed on him in electing him President. He hoped that this would strengthen the bond of friendship and co-operation between foresters from North and South.

Motion:

The President opening the discussion on the motion "that the Society be reorganised on a regional basis" stated that the opinion of all members was sought on this very important matter. Following the recommendations of the meeting, the Council would discuss all viewpoints raised and would not rush into any hasty decisions. He then called on Mr. MacNamara to propose the motion. Mr. MacNamara stated that at present many members join for a year or two and then leave. The usual reason being that they live in areas remote from Society activities and so see no point in remaining on as members. This could be overcome by setting up local sub-committees in certain areas and these could then organise Society activities within their own regions. Each of these sub-committees would be composed of three technical members on whose shoulders would rest the onus of arranging the meetings whether indoor or outdoor, depending on the season.

The five day week should greatly assist in the working of this plan. The boundaries of the region would be those of the four provinces.

Mr. McEvoy, seconding the motion, reviewed the various aspects of the Society's activities and in addition asked if reorganisation was really necessary. On the question of membership, statistics quoted showed in all grades figures well below the potential. Each year at least 45 people are entering the forestry profession but despite this fact our membership remains static. Should persons of higher positions show an active part in Society affairs, membership might be expected to show an increase. In fact no effort should be spared to attract new members. If, as was sometimes stated, the Society was being run by a Dublin clique it was through necessity rather than design. More active participation of others might dispel this notion. With regard to meetings held in the provinces response was generally poor, while Sunday excursions have tended to degenerate into family outings. Some form of revitalisation is required either by having a definite theme with an expert to point out details or by reducing the number and improving the quality. In conclusion, Mr. McEvoy stated that what was required was less change in the constitution but rather within the constitution and suggested the formation of regional groups in Belfast, Galway, Cork, Dublin and one other East coast centre. Each group could arrange two meetings per year, one indoor and the other outdoor, with added responsibility of organising recruitment of new members within their area.

Members present at the meeting were then asked for their views on this vexed problem. These ranged from complete agreement on the reorganisation proposal to disagreement. Should reorganisation come to pass it would be essential to have representatives of each region on the Council where they could report on their activities. This raised the question of travelling expenses for such members. The location of the regions would depend greatly on the availability of suitable persons in the areas to act as local convenors. Following from this it might not be possible to form regions on a geographical basis. It was agreed, however, that the centres chosen should be equidistant from all points within the region.

The President, in summarising, stated that from the views expressed it was clear that some form of reorganisation of the Society's activities was desirable. The size and form the regions should take was not clear but they should be equally accessible to all members within the area. He thanked the members for their views and stated that the council would take careful consideration of all that had been said before coming to any decision.

Programme for 1965:

The convenor, Miss Furlong, read the provisional excursion dates for 1965.

	LOCATION						LEADER
May	...	Shelton	...	...	...	...	Mr. Ua Cearbhail
June	...	Annual Study Tour to Cavan	...	...	...	...	Mr. F. Molloy.
		Emo	...	...	...	...	Mr. N. O. Carroll.
July	...	Bansha	...	...	...	...	Mr. O. V. Mooney.
Sept.	...	Omagh	...	...	...	...	Dr. W. Jack.
Oct.	...	Blessington	...	...	...	...	Mr. D. Mangan.

There being no further business the President brought the meeting to a close, thanking all present for supporting the new time of 3 p.m. for the members' meeting.

J.O'D.