

# Day Excursion to Bansha Forest

JULY 11th, 1965

The Society's outing to Bansha Forest was fortunate in having fine weather. A good turn out of members was present when Mr. Munnelly, District Inspector, welcomed the party on behalf of the Minister for Lands, and introduced the Forester-in-Charge, Mr. Doyle.

Before the excursion proper started, Mr. Mooney called on all members present to vote on a proposal made by the Council of the Society that Mr. David Stewart be elected an Honorary Member of the Society. As Mr. Stewart was more familiar to those members living in Northern Ireland, Mr. Mooney gave a short account of what he had achieved in a long life devoted to forestry, both in the Republic, in his earlier years, and in the North up to his retirement. Afterwards, being put to a vote, the proposal was carried unanimously.

After Mr. Munnelly had outlined the history of the forest, we moved on to the first point of interest in a heavily thinned plot of *Pinus contorta*, which had been laid out by the Research Branch. Mr. Mooney explained the background.

This plot was related to correlated curve trend thinning/spacing experiments which had been established in P.C. to investigate growth trends at different stocking levels. The plot we were looking at had originally a P.C./S.P. mixture but the Scots pine developed poorly, or had died out leaving widely spaced P.C. in a condition approaching free growth. As a first step in preparing the plot all the S.P. was removed. The P.C. was then thinned heavily. In all 44% of the basal area was removed from the original crop to free the crowns from competition. On a stems-per-acre basis the

thinning intensity was E Grade, according to British Forestry Commission definition.

The objects of the experiment were twofold; firstly, to maintain the plot under open grown condition so as to relate its growth to experiments where a wide range of competition conditions was envisaged but in which some early competition had occurred; secondly, to maintain it as a permanent sample plot in addition to the other permanent sample plots laid down in the species to add to records of growth, height, girth, basal area and volume, and information on taper, crown and bark.

#### VOLUME OF PLOT

Basal area	Mean B/A	Mean ht.	Mean volume	No. of trees	Area (acres)
24.83 sq. ft.	0.282 sq. ft.		4.81 cu. ft.		
19.49 H. ft. <sup>2</sup>	0.221 H. ft. <sup>2</sup>	38 ft.	3.78 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>	88	0.2
Total volume :			423.28 cu. ft.		
			332.28 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>		
Vol. per acre :			2089 cu. ft.		
			1640 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>		

#### VOLUME OF PLOT AT FIRST MEASUREMENT

December 1963

	336.16 cu. ft.
	263.89 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>
Vol. per acre :	1681 cu. ft.
	1320 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>
Thinnings :	1087 cu. ft.
	853 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>
Total volume prior to thinning :	2768 cu. ft.
	2173 H. ft. <sup>3</sup>

The party then moved on to plots where various manurial treatments were being tried on retarded P.C. of Lulu Island origin, planted in 1941. Mr. Mooney explained that the trials were to test the response of the P.C. to applications of nitrogen, phosphate, potash and copper. It had been estimated, he told us, that some 60 to 80,000 acres of Lulu Island contorta pine had been planted and it had not been showing great promise. The object was to find out whether these crops could be brought into some kind of better production by fertilising. He told us that it was, as yet, too early to make positive statements but the indications were that the application of phosphate alone seemed to be giving the best result. Mr. N. O'Carroll went on to tell us how the experiments were designed in order to test all factors and combinations with the minimum number of plots.

After we had seen these trials Mr. Mooney explained and showed

examples of the different provenances of Interior, Coastal and Lulu Island contorta.

To complete the tour, Mr. Munnelly showed us a small block of 36 years old Sitka spruce that was marked for clear felling. He asked us did we consider that the crop should be felled at this stage. He gave, as the basis of their decision, that the crop had been suffering from severe defoliation by *Aphis* over a number of years and that growth had all but stopped. It was agreed that the site was too dry for Sitka spruce and that this probably contributed mostly to the trouble and, therefore, the only solution was to fell.

After the usual excellent tea a vote of thanks was given and the excursion was brought to a close.

M.J.S.