

IRISH FORESTRY

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Editorial

THE BOOK

The cover photograph of this journal is not new, it has appeared in print before now, in fact just a few weeks back—in "the book". Those of our members who have already got their copy of "the book" know what we mean, those of our members who have not are still, no doubt, convinced that "the book" is none other than *THE FORESTS OF IRELAND*, succinctly described as *An Account of the Forests of Ireland from Early Times until the Present Day*. And how right they are.

And why *this* photograph? A photograph is a marvellous way of introducing a topic, and this photograph has precisely this merit, apart from its obvious suitability as a cover illustration. It synthesises, to a large degree, what forestry in Ireland is today. The same can be said for "the book". In fact, on examination of the photograph, we see (a) the type of ground coming more and more into the forestry scene, (b) how the problem of planting bogland is being tackled, (c) the impact of machines in forestry, (d) the product of our forest nurseries and (e) do we see the horizons of forestry?

These things "the book" also aims at and study of the text shows how really necessary it was for us to have, contained within the covers of a single, manageable book the pertinent facts of forestry in Ireland today. Not only is it a guide and ready reference but closer examination reveals, through the collation of all this information, some unsuspected facets, for example the placement and development of forests, which have gone unseen until now because that information has never before been gathered and presented in this way.

Even though we say so ourselves, a good day's work.

THE JOURNAL

With the introduction of editorial comment it became apparent that this column could well be used to try to activate latent literary talent. In support of this idea we felt that we should review earlier journals to see if any comment had been made previously about the supply of material for publication. It certainly did not take long to disclose the feelings of earlier editors and below are quoted relevant extracts :—

"Many members are, unfortunately, reluctant to put pen to paper . . . more contributors and more contributions will be required—a steady stream of material will be necessary so that new features can be introduced . . . It is the Editor's hope that a state of affairs will eventually occur where he will be in the happy position of being able to pick and choose . . ." (Vol. 2, No. 1, May, 1945).

"...at the moment, the main hindrance to what the Constitution terms the 'timeous appearance of the Journal' is the difficulty of obtaining in time sufficient material for the issue in hands, not to speak of building up a reserve for future numbers. The remedy is in the hands of the forester . . . If members are still diffident about authorship, may we at least hope for contributions couched in the more informal style of 'Notes' or even 'Letters to the Editor?'" (Vol. 4, No. 1, October, 1947).

"It is strange that while we foresters are well known for the cheerfulness with which we impart information on our work to others and while we may spend hours of our leisure together 'chopping wood' we are very much inclined to fight shy of going into print . . .

This journal, being the only periodical in the country devoted entirely to forestry, is the ideal vehicle by which the best ideas of to-day can be presented and by which objective observations can be passed on to the foresters of the future . . ." (Vol. 8, No. 2, Winter, 1956).

We were chastened. In fact our bright idea is not new at all and all that we wish to say has been said by these editors. It is rather poor comfort to think that at least we are not worse off than were the editors of the forties. This is a time of open expression of views, of comment and controversy, and yet the Editor of *Irish Forestry* is plagued by an acute shortage of material for the journal. Is there nothing to comment about in forestry? Have we no personal observations to make on what we see and experience in the forests, and in the world of forestry? Whatever else, it just cannot be said that there is nothing happening in forestry in Ireland.

The world is full of paradoxes. The bulk of material being published due to the ever widening horizons of forest science has got to the point where a variety of technical periodicals with but a tenuous association with forestry are taking the overflow of material which cannot find its way into the appropriate forestry journals due to lack of space—and here we are crying out for contributions when in fact we should be hardly able to stem the flood.

In reiteration of what has been said by other editors we would like to point out that long articles are not the only material acceptable. Short articles of a few pages, notes and observations of two pages, one page, or even less, interesting and instructive photographs for inclusion in the text, or as cover photographs and letters to the editor discussing matters of relevance to forestry can all be included. The format of the journal is such that all these matters can be included and yet we may maintain a publication worthy of its standing as a technical journal of repute. Also, it must be remembered that the function of the journal does not stop at the publication of new technical advances in forestry, though indeed this forms an important part of it, but it also acts as a platform for informed discussion and it serves as a link between the Society and its members by reporting Society activities, and it should serve as a link between the members of our Society which must obviously be forged by the members themselves actively contributing to the pages of this journal. Why not?