Society's Activities.

Illustrated Lecture—Strabane

FEBRUARY, 17th, 1966.

The organisers of this meeting, expecting an attendance of about 30 or 40 members, had booked a comparatively small room for the occasion and were consequently overwhelmed by the 75, or so, people who turned up.

They were not disappointed by our two speakers, Mr. W. G. Dallas and Mr. W. J. Wright, both of whom had toured North America as part of their year's Kellogg Foundation Fellowship.

Through the medium of memorable transparencies the speakers kept up a running commentary on their travels, holding the audience's undivided attention for 1½ hours.

Bill Wright started with the redwoods in California, took us through Arizona and Nevada to Las Vegas. Bill Dallas showed us Indian fire-fighters in Arizona and swept through New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. He then crossed into Canada to Calgary in Alberta to show us the festivities and the rodeo. We had a glimpse of Prince Rupert in British Columbia and did not forget to stop for a moment at the wayside grave of some early Irish pioneers and of Deadwood Dick who said that the sheriff would never take him alive—and was proved right! All were very envious of the Alaskan foresters' selection of beautiful launches with which to view their vast forests. Our footsteps were then turned south to the World Forestry Congress at Seattle where we met an old friend in Professor Clear marching in a sort of "Twelfth" procession under the flag of the Republic. One slide showing Bill in similar pose had to be censored! Bill Wright who had by then regained his breath, continued through Minnesota and the Lake States to the Southern States and the Mississipi.

Both speakers were warmly thanked and congratulated on the excellence of their photography.

C.S.K.

Lecture—Castlebar

MARCH 5th, 1966

This Lecture, "The Reforming Landlords in Eighteenth Century Ireland" was given by Dr. L. McCracken, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., Professor of History at McGee University College, Derry, who, with his wife, has done considerable research into the forestry history of this country.

In introducing his topic Dr. McCracken reviewed succinctly aspects of the political and economic history of Ireland and England during the eighteenth century to illustrate the political climate and its impact on agriculture. This period heralded great agrarian improvements in England. Agriculture was fostered, was supported by premiums and, most important, became fashionable. In Ireland agrarian reform was closely linked with social reform.

It was in this period, in 1731, that the Dublin Society was founded for the improvement of "husbandry, manufactures and other useful arts". Amongst the useful works of this Society was the paying of premiums for the planting of over 55 million trees between 1766 and 1806, those initially being fostered were oak and beech but with a change of emphasis to larch and Scots pine towards the end of the eighteenth century.

The Irish parliament was very active in matters of forestry interest and between 1698 and 1791 a number of acts were passed designed to preserve existing woods and encourage planting. Eleven acts, between 1731 and 1791 were passed to encourage planting by offering tenants a share in the trees they planted. These measures achieved only limited success.

Even though there was "detestable tyranny and oppression of landlords" there were many who did a great deal for the improvement of their lands and the lot of the Irish tenant farmers. Dr. McCracken illustrated this by describing in some detail the work of various landlords in Ireland, notably such people as Richard Lovell Edgeworth, John Foster, Thomas Mahon and Henry Boyle, Earl of Shannon. These people, and others like them, contributed to relieve the forestless wastes of Ireland, and did so with considerable energy. They also were very fair to their tenants, gave them credit for improvements, built houses for them, and payed them premiums (or passed on premiums granted to them) for planting trees.

Dr. McCracken concluded with some interesting extracts from letters written to Henry Boyle by his agent describing the forestry work being done on the estate.

After discussion the Vice-President, Mr. O. V. Mooney, thanked Dr. McCracken for his most intersting lecture.

L.U.G.

Illustrated Lecture—Dublin

APRIL 23rd, 1966

The topic of this lecture, given to a sizeable audience, was "Forest Safety", and the lecturerer, Mr. G. Skaaret, Head of the Forestry Section of the Workers Protection Board for all Sweden was introduced by the Vice-President, Mr. O. V. Mooney.

Mr. Skaaret, introduced his topic by defining what precisely "accidents" are, how they occur and where the causes lie.

Unsafe machinery is responsible for 80% of forestry accidents occurring in Sweden, and unsafe working conditions account for the other 20%. The large number of accidents in the forests has led Mr. Skaaret to do research into the causes of accidents with a view to introducing preventive measures.

In many cases there is the problem of maintaining safe tools and conditions. For instance, it frequently appears to the men that the safety guards on chain saws reduce their efficiency, therefore they tend to remove them. Another cause of accidents is the noise level associated with machinery, particularly chain saws; where the noise of a chain saw becomes unbearable the workers' efficiency and alertness drops, leading to carelessness. Vibrations, when intense, cause numbness and pains which may lead to accidents. Such factors are important in planning for safer working conditions.

Mr. Skaaret went on to describe various safety measures that should, and could, be employed—teaching workers how to use tools safely, how to tackle a job in a safe manner (workers should *never* be left to learn from their own mistakes, they should be trained), the use of ear-muffs against noise and helmets as protection against falling branches, etc., and of vital necessity, the need to always have a first-aid kit available (at least 20% of accidental fatalities could be prevented if people knew how to apply first-aid).

A salutory lesson was learned when Mr. Skaaret informed the meeting that 1,000 injuries occurred in southern Sweden in 1965 associated with felling operations.

Mr. Skaaret's lecture concluded with three extremely interesting films illustrating safety in (a) felling trees, (b) dropping lodged trees and (c) snedding branches. These films, in colour, showed firstly how the job should *not* be done, and followed up with detailed illustrations of the correst, and safe, way of performing these operation—again stressing the reasons for employing safety measures — 850 injuries and 10 fatalities in felling per annum in Sweden and 300 injuries and 7 fatalities in freeing lodged trees.

Mr. P. O'Grady proposed the vote of thanks with great appreciation of the points illustrated by Mr. Skaaret.

L.U.G.

Recent Papers

The following is an extract from a list of papers published by the Forest Products Research Laboratory which are available in limited quantities as reprints or Laboratory reports and which may be of interest to readers of this journal.

166PP —,TWO-STAGE WINDTHROW IN SITKA SPRUCE, E. W. J. Phillips and D. G. Patterson (reprinted from *Quarterly Journal of Forestry,* October, 1965).

Investigation of brittle windthrow fractures following an easterly gale in a stand of Sitka spruce growing on a Devonshire hillside showed that the stems had broken off at compression failures induced by a westerly gale two years earlier, following the cutting of a roadway which increased the exposure. The "first stage" damage had become protected by wound tissue and rapidly developed compression wood giving rise to well-marked stem swellings which presumably saved some stems from second and final damage when the rest were broken. The term "compression swelling" is suggested for this defect.

189B—IMPROVING BRITAIN'S SOFTWOODS, J. D. Brazier (reprinted from *The Timber Trades Journal* Supplement, April, 1965).

At a time when there is an increasing demand for basic materials to be produced to a standard specification, the inherent variability in wood adds to the difficulties of advancing timber utilisation. This paper describes work in progress by the Forestry Commission and the Forests Products Research Laboratory to reduce variability and improve the quality and quantity of home-grown softwoods.

1815PL—PREVENTION OF BLUE-STAIN IN UNPEELED SCOTS PINE LOGS, J. G. Savory, R. G. Pawsey and J. S. Lawrence (reprinted from *Forestry,* May, 1965).

Blue-stain causes degrade of saw logs during the inevitable delays between felling and conversion. Chemicals of potential value in blue-stain control have been tested in the laboratory and trials have been made of their use on unpeeled logs stored in the forest.

118—A COMPARISON OF READINGS OF A COMMERCIAL RESISTANCE-TYPE MOISTURE METER AND MOISTURE CONTENTS DETERMINED BY OVEN-DRYING, D. D. Johnston and R. H. Wynands (reprinted from *Wood,* November, 1958).

The electrical method of determining the moisture content of timber, based on the fact that the resistance of wood increases as it

becomes drier, has obvious advantages over the oven-drying method. There are, however, several possible sources of error in the electrical method and these are enumerated. There is appreciable variation in the resistance of timber at a given moisture content and this imposes a limit on the accuracy obtainable with a resistance-type moisture meter; test results are given to illustrate this point.

167c—THE EFFECT OF DRYING AND SUBSEQUENT RE-WETTING ON THE STRENGTH PROPERTIES OF WOOD, S. A. Covington (reprinted from the *Journal of The Institute of Wood Science,* October, 1965).

Strength values for timber in the green condition are sometimes derived from tests on over-dry material which is simply re-wetted until its moisture content is raised above the fibre-saturation point. It is assumed that this has no effect on the properties of the timber. Tests made on matched green and re-wetted material have shown, however, that re-wetting reduced most of the strength properties.

188c—RESEARCH IN SAWMILLING, W. T. Curry (reprinted from *The Timber Trades Journal* Supplement, April 1965).

The extensive softwood plantations that have been established by the Forestry Commission and private woodland owners since 1919 are now beginning to yield stems of sawlog size. The conversion of this substantial output of home-grown softwood will present problems to the sawmilling industry. Research work at present in hand at the Forest Products Research Laboratory which will provide information which should assist the industry in deciding what is the best type and size of mill for conditions in Britain and also in developing new techniques.

Copies can be obtained, so far as stocks permit, on application to The Director, Forest Products Research Laboroatory, Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, Bucks. It is sufficient to quote the reference number preceding each title.