

Society's Activities

Talk at Strabane on Landscape Planning

About 60 members met at the Commercial Hotel, Strabane, on Wednesday evening 16th November, 1966, to hear a talk on Landscape and Recreation Planning in Forestry by Mr. Jim Busby, B.Sc. (For.) M.F.

Mr. Busby, formerly of the Forestry Division, has recently spent a year studying his subject at Berkeley, California, and has just taken up an appointment with the New City (Craigavon) planning staff.

Mr. Busby outlined the tremendous build-up of urban pressures and the need for outdoor recreation. Foresters find this difficult to understand as their work concerns natural and basic things, yet they manage the large areas of the countryside which can play a vital part in maintaining the mental health of the population.

We need not forego our harvest of timber which we need so badly but can easily kill two or three birds with the one stone.

Landscaping

Large areas of one species are not out of place in areas which were rather monotonous before, but in broken country, the reverse is the case.

We had a beautiful country before state forestry began, and we have a responsibility to treat it with respect.

Artificial planting boundaries between P years and species should be avoided especially if up and down a hillside. Generally, a good road line follows physical land features, but often compartment boundaries run off at right angles, thereby cutting across the lie of the land.

Narrow belts of hardwood for amenity or firebreaks, unless integrated into the landscape by following streams, can lead to artificial fringes, which in no way enhance the landscape.

The economics of growing hardwoods are questionable, so the compromise of growing hardwoods in groups through a matrix of conifers is welcomed. The groups however should not be regular in size and spacing. Line planting of hardwood conifer mixtures is bad from the landscaping point of view.

For landscape planning, the forest as seen by most visitors, may be zoned into the foreground middle distance and background. In the first of these, only carefully selective felling should be allowed, and the ground vegetation should be protected.

In the middle area, clear felling is permissible, but the shape and size of the felling coup is important, except on flat ground.

In the background, large scale normal cutting practices may be followed.

Recreation

It is difficult for foresters to appreciate the real needs of the masses as regards outdoor recreation. We tend to provide what we think is good for people rather than what is really necessary.

The task is one for specially trained sociologists.

A big question is who pays for the capital investment and maintenance of forest recreation. If there is a real demand, people will be willing to pay, and the cost to the consumer should be related to the cost of providing the service.

However, landscaping can have no direct return in £ s. d. so it seems that at least part of the development must be in terms of a social service.

In conclusion, forestry has the means to provide for this growing demand, and we should have no hesitation about meeting our responsibility to the community.

C.S.K.

Lecture on B.F.C. Management Tables

A meeting of the Society of Irish Foresters was convened in Arklow on the 10th of December, 1966. It was held under the Chairmanship of the Vice-President of the Society—Mr. O. V. Mooney.

The Subject—Forest Management Tables—their development and use.

The speakers were Mr. P. M. Joyce, Mr. G. Gallagher, Mr. M. Cassidy and Mr. N. O Muirgheasa.

Mr. Joyce gave an historical account of Yield Tables with particular reference to German contributions. He dealt with their theoretical concept, leading up to the Master Table.

Mr. Gallagher gave a synopsis of the Management Tables. He defined and explained the more recent innovations and terminology. He pointed out the background to the tables while emphasising the fact that they were not a revolutionary departure from those of the revised Yield Tables, but a further expansion of the same basic material. This was set out in a more refined way to perform a greater range of functions. The term Quality Class was subject to misinterpretation, this resulted in its replacement by the term Yield Class.

The maximum M.A.I. is the basis of the Yield Class Classification. This is the point where C.A.I. and M.A.I. curves cross and is the point at which the maximum average annual production is reached.

Mr. Cassidy detailed his experience in the application of the Tables in Kinnitty Forest in relation to the Working Plan for that area. He recalled that the concept of marginal thinning intensity was adopted in this pilot project. Comparing the figures found in the Forest Management Tables with his findings, he found Norway spruce compared favourably while those of Sitka spruce showed a divergence. The Tables for *Pinus contora* were of little relevance since they were constructed for the inland variety.

Mr. O Muirgheasa said Forestry was a primary industry. He gave a break-down of the costs under various headings of bringing this industry to fruition. One of the factors affecting costs was the choice of species or provenance of a species best suited for the site. Oak, may be the natural tree of the country, yet at eighty cu. ft. M.A.I. as against over three times that for *Abies grandis* and Sitka spruce, he felt we would have to make a compromise between the tree best adapted and that which will outstrip the other in production.

How are we to find this out? Perhaps through the Management Tables. In practice in the past we were influenced consciously or unconsciously by the Revised Yield Tables in our thinnings.

Tables have been produced in Finland based on vegetation. Here with present practice of manurial treatment, such tables would be of limited use.

Finally Mr. O Murgheasa felt that thinnings were a very critical issue in making Forestry as a primary industry a more lucrative enterprise.

A short discussion followed and as time was running out Mr. Mooney called on Mr. F. Watson to propose a vote of thanks to the speakers.

F.A.W.