



Obituary

David Stuart, I.S.O.

It was with deep regret we learned of the death, on 22nd August, 1970 of Mr. David Stewart, who was head of the Forestry Service in Northern Ireland for thirty years.

David Stewart was born at Argyle in 1885, where his father was forester on the Stonefield Estate. He received his early training at Edinburgh Botanic Gardens and the East of Scotland Agricultural College. In 1908 he came to work at the Lisduff Estate in Ireland as Head Forester. He left in 1911 to join the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction at Baunreagh, now Mountrath Forest, as Forester-in-Charge. He remained there until 1920 and trained many foresters. In 1920 he was appointed District Officer by the British Forestry Commission at Baronscourt, and transferred as Inspector to the Ministry of Agriculture in Northern Ireland in 1922.

David Stewart, starting with a small squad of men, virtually built up the Northern Ireland Forestry Service as it exists today. In his early years at Baronscourt he used to cycle to Ballykelly, do a day's work in the nursery, and cycle back at the end of the day. During the war he was responsible for timber control by the British Board of Trade, a task he performed along with his normal forestry duties.

He was a tough task master and expected everyone under him to give his best. In fairness to him let it be said he never asked anyone to carry out a task he could not do himself, and although his tongue was harsh at times to people under him it was for their own good or the good of the Service. Truly it can be said he made a greater contribution to forestry in Northern Ireland than any man of his time. The older forests are a fitting memorial to "ould Davy," as he was called, the father of forestry in Northern Ireland.

After his retirement in 1950 he was honoured by the Royal Scottish Forestry Society by honorary membership. The Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland awarded him their Gold Medal in 1963 at a ceremony in Hillsborough Forest near his home. At a similar ceremony in Gortin Glen Forest he was made an honorary member of the Society of Irish Foresters in 1965.

Typical of the man, up to the day before he died he was hard at work tending the trees and shrubs in the large garden at his home, which he had designed and developed into a masterpiece. Few men can leave behind such a wealth of creative work for the benefit of their fellow men.

S. RAPHAEL