

Notes and News

FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, ZVOLEN, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In the course of a recent stay in Czechoslovakia I visited the Forest Research Institute at Zvolen, in Slovakia, where I met the Director, Professor Ing. Dušan Zachar and many of his staff. The Institute is responsible for a wide range of forestry research. The research unit of the Institute comprises four departments—each consisting of several divisions. One division is concerned with the cultivation of fast-growing species and is at present testing selected cultivars of black, balsam and white poplars. The Technical Department has produced a forest site classification system on the basis of accessibility and the suitability of the site to various logging and extraction techniques. While in Ireland an ecological basis for site classification might seem more appropriate, the incorporation of factors such as the ease of extraction or suitability for roading would have advantages for management. The Division of Silviculture, one of the oldest in the Institute, has recently devised a system for the regeneration of oak stands and has made recommendations for management of high quality stands.

The Institute has a total of 253 staff (54 scientists). During the period 1968–1972 a total of 123 research projects were completed and about 1,200 research, information and extension papers were published. Outlets for scientific research are well organized by the Institute which publishes a series of periodicals and bulletins. Perhaps of most interest to Irish readers is *Acta Instituti Forestalis* of which four volumes have been published to date (1968, 1971, 1972, 1973). Papers are published in English or German and all carry English summaries. The most recent volume includes a paper on the development of new yield tables for Czechoslovakian forests and an interesting discussion on the co-ordination of multiple use objectives in forest management. Volume 3 (1972) included papers on the effect of root desiccation on the performance of spruce transplants, the effect of spacing on height and diameter growth of spruce stands and the use of fertilizers in forest nurseries. *Vedecké Práce VULH vo Zvolene* (Scientific Works of the Forest Research Institute in Zvolen) is published in Slovak but carries English summaries of all papers. The monograph series *Lesnícke Štúdie* and *Lesnícke Informácie* are published in Slovak or other languages, again with English summaries. Since 1971, game and wildlife research papers have been published in *Pol'ovnický Zborník* (Game Management Almanac). This is in Slovak with summaries in several

languages including German. An English summary is included in another game management publication (*Pol' ovnicke Štúdie*) which appeared for the first time in 1973.

The application of research findings to management operations is considered an important part of the Institute's activities. This is organized systematically and involves the organization of symposia, conferences and training courses as well as direct consultation and advice. Certain research projects are conducted with the collaboration and involvement of management personnel and a series of publications is issued giving recommendations and guidelines based on research experience.

E. P. FARRELL

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

An advertisement in an English Sunday newspaper last November offered for sale the freehold title to land and trees of 5-acre blocks of 15-year old plantations in Scotland, priced at "from £380 an acre". Further enquiry elicited the name and location of the plantation (Cobairdy Wood Plantation in Aberdeenshire) and the information that they had been planted in 1959 with Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, hybrid larch and mixed Sitka spruce, Scots pine, European larch and Corsican pine. Photographs of some of the plantations were included in the brochure. Prices "from £380 an acre" were confirmed but with the qualification that "obviously availability at this price is strictly limited". Arrangement of mortgages up to 75 per cent over five years was also offered. The plantations would be managed by the Company under the direction of Dr. Cyril Hart, Senior Verderer of the Forest of Dean.

This is an interesting indication of the increasing attractiveness of forests as an investment opportunity under present inflation and taxation conditions.

SO NOW WE KNOW

The appropriate discount rate in calculating present values of forest costs and revenues for comparison with agriculture continues to be controversial. But why not use the same rate as that claimed by those involved in agriculture? In rejecting the Government's proposals for a wealth tax in April 1974 the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association stated that it was "entirely out of proportion, in that capital invested in agriculture normally yields a return of less than 3 per cent". (*Irish Times*, 2/4/74).

COMMENDABLE SOLICITUDE

In an impressively glossy publication giving details of their

proposals on the environmental aspects of the development of the Navan zinc lead mine, the largest base metal deposit of its kind in Europe, Tara Mines Limited, the operating company, state:

"Policy has been to beautify the landscape both for the internal and external viewer. Pleasing surroundings provide a valuable visual therapy for the employee and contribute substantially to company spirit and job satisfaction. Special care will be taken with the design and layout of car parks and pedestrian ways on the site.

"This aesthetic impact will be created more by the use of trees, shrubs, grass and earth mounds than with flower beds of blazing colour, although these will also have their place in the total design. Specific areas will be illuminated at night to add to the total effect and to *ensure an attractive aspect for night shift workers.*" (Italics ours.)

JOB QUALIFICATION

The following advertisement appeared in a recent issue of a British forestry journal.

Near Oxford

Experienced single handed woodman required for interesting woodland estate. Excellent house in village. Applications up to the age of 55, please send details of age, experience to:

(Name, Address and telephone number.)

This is not so strange as it reads. Obviously the advertiser had a "bellyful" of two handed woodsmen who told him that on the one hand he could do this and that on the other hand he could do that. Tired of ambivalent, ambidextrous woodsmen, he looked for a single handed woodman that might get things done.

J. D. ROBINSON and G. de BRIT

HARVESTING DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration of timber harvesting equipment was arranged by National Forestry Ltd., Portlaoise, in Rathdrum state forest on 13th March 1974. The equipment demonstrated consisted of a processor, a forwarder and road trailers. The processor, manufactured by Kockum Soderhamn, Sweden, was the most revolutionary and impressive item. Following clear felling, it picks up a whole tree, de-limbs it, saws it into selected lengths, and separates out the pulpwood, which it collects in an underslung

basket, all under the control of one operator. (See photograph.) This is understood to be the biggest machine of its kind in these islands, and certainly points the way to the future in the field of timber harvesting. The equipment is available through Cahir House Garages Ltd.

