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That which is Constant is Dead

THIS applies as much to human organisations as it does to biotic organisms. The organisation, whether it be a business, a bureaucracy, or an association such as ours, if it is not changing for the better, then it is as dead as the organism which no longer metabolizes.

The Society of Irish Foresters still retains the same objective as it adopted when it was founded in 1942: "To advance and spread in Ireland a knowledge of forestry in all its aspects". Fair enough. But how often and how strenuously has this objective been examined in relation to the changing times? It may still be apt, but we need to be constantly checking on it. Is it good and is it necessary and is it really what we want to do?

Equally important is the need to examine the means by which we set about achieving our objective. Here we can apply more concrete standards. The forest walks, for example, begun in 1970, have been an obvious success, but even now we must be on our guard against complacency. The Sunday field meetings, in the early life of the Society served a definite need for education among foresters, but now that such opportunities are freely available through employers, they seem, in recent years, to have degenerated into family picnics, or polite discussion groups in which hobby-horses are aired but little real exchange of information takes place. The days are gone when going to see the horse chestnuts in flower in one's leisure time was regarded as living it up.

The newly developed concept of midweek whole-day field meetings seems a very promising development; but what changes have taken place in the annual study tour within living memory?

The pitiful attendances at many of the indoor meetings, and particularly at the Annual General Meeting, call for deep thought and investigation, as does the heroic reluctance among members to take on the offices of the Society.

We must examine ourselves constantly, and when the day comes in which we can no longer justify our existence we should, like Lewis Carroll's Baker faced with a boojum snark, "softly and suddenly vanish away,/ And never be met with again." Tours and meetings and journal and all.