

**Replanting Ireland:  
Parliamentary debate and expert literature  
on Irish state forestry 1922 to 1939**

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## Declaration

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## Abstract

This research is focused on forest-related discourse in the Irish Parliament and in expert literature around the time of the foundation of the Irish state in 1922, in order to illuminate public and expert perceptions on state forestry development in Ireland.

In contrast to most European Countries, but in tandem with the British Isles, Ireland committed its twentieth century tree planting program to North American conifer plantation development, recorded in Irish state forest histories. In the field of environmental history, this research queries the origins and assumptions of this successful program that has dominated Irish state forestry, while excluding native woodland development and public input. It addresses the challenges of locating and analysing sources that record views other than those of the institution.

The research is based on analysis of forest-related parliamentary debates and questions from 1922 to 1939 using an innovative approach with the assistance of text coding MaxQDA software. The complexity of participants' perceptions on trees, woods and their uses, on forest administrations, on the public, the state and on future forests is reflected in the extensive topics of interest identified in the analyses. These results guided the review of expert literature to illuminate topics less well recorded in the historiography of the period, such as trees and woods in the landscape, the traditional uses of woods and timber, inherited institutional legacies, the heritage of woods, and industrial wood opportunities, as well as conifer tree planting schemes and forest-related employment.

The findings record a more complex course of Irish forestry history in Ireland, revealed as a matter of political authority of certain forestry practices rather than best practice or national imperatives. It identified a wealth of experience and concern about future forests amongst participants that included public representatives, Ministers, expert landowners and foresters. The research shows the legacy of inherited deforested landscapes and its effect on all participants, an environmental catastrophe that influenced the 1919 First Dáil Arbor Day objective of state-sponsored re-forestation for nation-building and for local wood industries and industrial manufacturers. This was in contrast to the military goals of British state forestry to produce softwood timber for mines and construction. Arbor Day objectives inspired subsequent unsuccessful representation in the Irish parliament and in government. The research suggests that the dominant institutional view of the superiority of the non-native conifer plantation approach to state forestry was favoured by the effects of war and civil disturbance, the critical socio-economic conditions, and government dependency on its British experts. The neglect of native woodland development by the state was compounded by the absence of an agreed national forestry policy, fostering national amnesia about woodlands and their heritage in Ireland. Although this research does not address the latter half of the twentieth century, the findings imply that these dominant perceptions continued to influence state forestry.

In reconsidering different values and assumptions around future state forests, the research approach provides a more inclusive contextual narrative of the foundations of Irish state forestry. This can contribute to broadening the present-day discourse on future development of state forestry at this time of rapidly changing climate.

## Foreword and acknowledgements

This research has been a journey of discovery, both personally, as an Irish citizen who accepted non-native conifer afforestation without question, and professionally, in the exploration of the fields of history and natural resource management. My initial proposal to study the environmental history of Irish natural resources included fisheries as well as forestry, a plan which rapidly came up against personal preconceived assumptions about the sector and its history. It was this search for a more structured approach to resource management history which could contextualise perceived values that led me to the study of the foundations of state forestry in Ireland. The environmental history field has been key to the framing of this research in its facility of integration of the scientific and humanities aspects of this inquiry. It is hoped that this research will contribute to further discussion on the essential contribution of the historical perspective in natural resource management.

This thesis would not have existed without the initial support for a cross-Departmental proposal from my supervisor, Professor Poul Holm who also was a patient guide through the thickets that grew up around the structuring of this research. My co-supervisor, Professor Eunan O’Halpin challenged my pre-conceived notions, assisted their translation into historical research practice, archives and sources. I am deeply grateful for their thoughtful consideration of ways and means of clarifying ideas, and their many reviews of thesis drafts. As my mid-term reviewer, Professor David Dickson contributed perceptive comments at a critical juncture of the research, for which I am very grateful. It is also important to acknowledge with appreciation, the major contribution of the examiners, Professor Paul Warde and Assistant Professor Katja Buisch for their insightful comments that were a catalyst for a more accurate conceptualisation of the research.

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## Abbreviations

BNA	British National Archives, Kew
CIRII	Coimisiúin Fhiafruighthe Maoin is Tionnscál Éireann / Commission of Inquiry into the Resources and Industries of Ireland
CnG	Cumann na nGaedhael, (pl. Cumainn)
DA	Department of Agriculture
DATI	Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction
DE	Dáil Éireann, Lower House, Irish Parliament
DF	Department of Finance
DIB	Dictionary of Irish Biography
DL	Department of Lands
DT	Department of An Taoiseach
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FF	Fianna Fáil
FG	Fine Gael
IFC	Irish Folklore Commission
MA	Military Archives, Dublin
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland,
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
SÉ	Seanad Éireann
SF	Sinn Féin
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TD	Teachta Dála, Member of Parliament.
UCD	University College Dublin

## Chapter One: Introduction

Irish state forestry became a national issue in 2012 when the Irish government considered a proposal<sup>1</sup> to sell almost the entire area of commercial state forestry resources of non-native conifer plantations,<sup>2</sup> and the use of the land for forestry for up to eighty years.<sup>3</sup> In June 2013, the proposed auction was rescinded by the incoming Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney,<sup>4</sup> due to widespread national, public and forestry sector rejection of the proposal.<sup>5</sup> Committee hearings in the Irish Parliament identified the potential negative environmental, social and economic effects of the sale.<sup>6</sup> As over 90% of the state forestry land was in non-native conifers, mostly Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, managed by Coillte, the Society of Irish Foresters unusually published a statement saying that it 'deplores the lack of consultation with stakeholders in reaching this decision'.<sup>7</sup> Considering the diverse tree-related or arboreal environment in Ireland and the rich arboreal heritage, it is notable that the state maintained almost complete reliance on non-native conifer plantations for timber

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<sup>1</sup> The government agency, New Era, was responsible for the disposal of state assets on behalf of the Department of Finance and was a sale advisor to the State Forestry Board Coillte. 'Annual Report 2012', *National Treasury Management Agency* (Department of Finance, 2013), pp 24-5. Coillte, the Irish Forestry Board is a state-owned company operating in forestry, land-based business and added-value processing operations, established as a public/private limited company under the Forestry Act 1988. The company's shareholders are the Ministers for Finance and Agriculture who jointly own 93% of public forestry lands. [https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/search?q=State+Bodies&client=agriculture\\_frontend&output=xml\\_no\\_dtd&proxystylesheet=agriculture\\_frontend&sort=date%3AD%3A1%3Ad1&oe=UTF-8&ie=UTF-8&ud=1&exclude\\_apps=1&site=agriculture\\_collection](https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/search?q=State+Bodies&client=agriculture_frontend&output=xml_no_dtd&proxystylesheet=agriculture_frontend&sort=date%3AD%3A1%3Ad1&oe=UTF-8&ie=UTF-8&ud=1&exclude_apps=1&site=agriculture_collection). Accessed June 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The glossary of forestry terms used in the thesis in Appendix V is adapted from *John Cross and Kevin Collins, 'Management guidelines for Ireland's native woodlands', National Parks and Wildlife & Forest Service, Department of Agriculture (Dublin, 2017)*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sunday Times*, 24 June 2012. This proposal was inaccurately attributed to the IMF agreement with the Irish government. The Irish state forest area was an estimated 400,000 ha in 2010 in *Forestry in the European Union and the World* (2011).

<sup>4</sup> 'Statement by Minister Simon Coveney on the Cabinet decision on Coillte', *Press Release, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine* (Dublin, 19 June 2013). <http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/press/pressreleases/2013/june/title,70781,en.html>. (Accessed 05/06/2017).

<sup>5</sup> 'Save Our Forests: The social, economic and environmental case against selling Coillte assets', *Impact, Coillte Branch* (Dublin, November 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Committee Hearings 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Agriculture, Food and The Marine Committee, Oireachtas Éireann.

<sup>7</sup> Society of Irish Foresters, 'Public Forestry in Ireland', *Policy Position Papers* (2013), p. 6.

production since the establishment of state forestry in 1922, with little input from the public on the future of Irish state forests until recently. Although there is evidence of considerable public interest (some of it could be considered passionate) in state forestry development, the historical record of state forestry has been generally focused on the challenges and achievements of establishing non-native conifer plantations for industrial use, over much of the twentieth century.

It took nearly seventy years for the first overview of Irish state forestry history to be published in *A History of Irish Forestry* by Eoin Neeson in 1991.<sup>8</sup> Informative and detailed, it introduced the possibility of other views on state forestry in its full account of the establishment of non-native plantations in Ireland. However, since then, there has been no analysis of the foundations of this singular focus on a particular approach to forestry which although successful in its objective of rapid timber production, has contributed to the decline in native woodlands and the exclusion of the public.

Thus the central question of the thesis is on the foundations of this approach to state forestry at the expense of native woodlands and public input. This thesis argues that these foundations can be illuminated through the study of differing historical discourses on the future of state forestry which includes both the institutional and public perspectives, by recognising differing values around trees, woods forests and their uses, and by considering inherited legacies and the historical context. This research is based on the analysis of discourse in parliamentary debate on forest-related issues, and in expert literature, which identifies some of the perceptions, assumptions, and influences on future state forests and the influence of historical legacies. The period of analysis is from the time of the establishment of the Irish Free State and the Forestry Division in 1922 to 1939 when state forestry was organised for the impact of war.

In order to clarify present-day assumptions about state forestry which could be applied to the interpretation of the historical records, this introduction asks four questions that illustrate perceptions: Is Irish state forestry unique? What is the nature of the arboreal environment in Ireland? What are public perceptions around forestry? And what are the perceptions of state forest historians?

Historically, Ireland was only catching up in regard to plantation forestry in the early twentieth century, when compared to European nations which had already made the transition to scientific plantation timber production forestry. This transition occurred

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<sup>8</sup> Eoin Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry* (Dublin, 1991).

during the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century, when deforested native woodlands and wood shortages, generally associated with population increases,<sup>9</sup> were replanted with plantation forests of single age and single species for timber production. This transition to scientific forestry was implemented with varied national perspectives and approaches,<sup>10</sup> such as in response to the widespread deforestation and wood shortages in German states, France and Denmark, or as a means for erosion control along the North West European coasts.<sup>11</sup> Scientific forestry was associated with increasing governmental control of lands, forest resources, and people, as well as nation-building.<sup>12</sup> These state 'structures of control' were defined by a dominant objective of timber production and characterised by minimal environmental variability or public intervention, where costs to the soil through depletion, water quality loss, and biodiversity reduction were all passed on to the community, as well as loss of multi-functional uses.<sup>13</sup> The scientific plantation approach resulted in the commodification of single tree species through radical simplification and the increased production of timber.<sup>14</sup> Scientific foresters' role in mapping natural forests was key to the centralisation of management and the control of the resource, in contrast to the holistic management approach of the local community.

Community response to plantation forestry development varied according to participation in wood industries and maintenance. Where plantation forestry was planned around local communities and their wood industries, as in Les Landes marshland in South West France, it became an international inspiration for state

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Hölzl and K. Jan Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology* (New York, Oxford, 2018), p. 363; Tamara L. Whited, Jens I. Engels, Richard C. Hoffmann, Hilde Ibsen and Wybren Versteegen, *Northern Europe: An environmental history* (Santa Barbara, Denver & Oxford, 2005), p. 155. Bernd-Stefan Grewe and Richard Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000', in Jan-Willem Oosthoek and Richard Hölzl (eds), *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology* (New York, Oxford, 2018), pp 22-8.

<sup>10</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 363-8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* (New Haven and London, 1998); Grewe and Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000', p. 32; Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, p. 374.

<sup>13</sup> Scott, *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, p. 362., Footnote.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp 11-24, 19.

forestry development from the late nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> By contrast, in some regions in Europe such as Germany and France, where the role of communities in forests had been an essential component of forestry management for over three centuries,<sup>16</sup> plantation forestry replaced native woodlands and excluded local people. Over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, community exclusions from forests was often accompanied by popular local resistance, in defence of livelihoods and an ancient way of life.<sup>17</sup>

The transition from multi-functional native woodlands to plantation forestry in Ireland is different to the European experience in that considerable deforestation of multi-use native woods had already taken place due to war and changes in land ownership, rather than due to increases in population, between the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Thus the second period of deforestation in Ireland during the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, of estate woodlands, again due to changes in landownership, initiated the transition to conifer plantation forestry within an already deforested landscape. There was little protection of native woods, or wood users during each period of rapid consumption and deforestation. As the local community's connection to native woods had been extinguished with historic land ownership changes, popular resistance to forest transition was dealt with in the courts. The legacies of these transitions were the reference points for succeeding generations' perspectives on trees, woods, forests and their uses. The near-complete absence in Ireland of large forests characteristic of many parts of Europe was recorded by British forester Arthur Forbes who attributed it to the prevalence of grazing on hill land.<sup>19</sup> This land was traditionally held in common to supplement tillage land at lower levels.

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<sup>15</sup> A.S. Mather, J. Fairbairn and C. L. Needle, 'The course and drivers of the forest transition: the case of France', in *Journal of Rural Studies*, xv, no. 1 (1999).

<sup>16</sup> Joachim Radkau, 'Wood and forestry in German history: In quest of an environmental approach', in *Environment and History*, ii, no. 1 (1996); Sally Jeanrenaud, 'Community and forest management in Europe', *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests Working Group Report* (United Nations, New York & Geneva, 2001), 2001-061.

<sup>17</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 374-7, 363-5, 375.

<sup>18</sup> This narrative of forest clearance still disputed in the historiography. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; Nigel Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800* (Dublin, 2014); Eileen McCracken, *The Irish woods since Tudor times: Distribution and exploitation* (Newton Abbot, Devon, 1971); Michael Carey, *If trees could talk: Wicklow's trees and woodlands for over four centuries* (Dublin, 2009); Robert Kane, *The industrial resources of Ireland* (Dublin & London, 1844).

<sup>19</sup> Niall O Carroll, 'Letter to the Editor', in *Irish Forester*, lxxviii, no. 1 & 2 (2011), pp 109 - 10. O Carroll referred to a report from the Department of Agriculture, in the Proceedings of the



In the early twentieth century, the forest transition of Irish state land from estate woodlands and unplanted lands to plantation forestry fulfilled both post-war timber production imperatives of the British Empire, and the need to address the effects of near-complete deforestation in Ireland.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, although post-war timber production was the goal of many state forests in Europe, some European nations were already moving towards a post-plantation culture of multi-functional, more natural forestry.<sup>21</sup> However, after Irish Independence, scientific, plantation forestry was considered to be morally beneficial as well as economic,<sup>22</sup> and was seen as 'the turning of the tide of clearance, destruction and neglect' and the introduction of a new awareness of the place of forestry in Irish society.<sup>23</sup> Foresters had to overcome many environmental, scientific and economic challenges to introduce scientific forestry and there was little scientific knowledge on the impact of introduction of exotic species.<sup>24</sup> Despite queries on the level of risk evident in the concentration of assets and effort in Irish single species conifer monocultures,<sup>25</sup> the evolution of the plantation approach to forestry over the last century can be seen to have contributed to the particular characteristics of modern Irish state forestry.

## I. Characteristics of Irish state forestry

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First International Congress on Sylviculture in Rome in 1926, which he attributed to Arthur Forbes.

<sup>20</sup> K. Jan Oosthoek, 'Origins and development of state forestry in the United Kingdom', in K. Jan Oosthoek and Richard Hölzl (eds), *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology* (New York and Oxford, 2018), p. 138.

<sup>21</sup> Grewe and Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000', p. 36; Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, p. 365; Brett Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2015), pp 106-9; Mauro Agnoletti, 'Man, forestry, and forest landscapes. Trends and perspectives in the evolution of forestry and woodland history research', in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Forstwesen*, 157, no. 9 (2006).

<sup>22</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, 'Some factors affecting a forest policy', in *Empire Forestry Journal*, iii, , no. 2 (1924).

<sup>23</sup> C.S. Kilpatrick, 'Introduction', in H. M. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early time* (Bray, 1965).

<sup>24</sup> Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management*, pp 70-6.

<sup>25</sup> Axel S. Sabroe, 'Danish and Irish forestry compared', in *Irish Forestry*, xv, no. 1 & 2 (1958), pp 7-17.

As plantation forestry of non-native conifers<sup>26</sup> became institutionalised in Ireland over the twentieth century, its dominant culture gradually shaped the nature of the state forestry landscape, as well as forming the relationship between the public and the forest administration of today. This approach to state forestry has created unique characteristics when compared to European state forestry, summarised in five attributes.

The first distinctive feature of Irish state forestry is its legacy of deforestation. Forested land in Ireland grew from less than 1% of all land in 1922<sup>27</sup> to 11.5% in 2010, funded by state and European aid.<sup>28</sup> In Europe, forested land is about 42.4% of all land, with around 76% in Sweden.<sup>29</sup> The second feature of Irish state forestry is the extent of its choice of non-native conifer tree species, now grown in almost 70% of forested land in Ireland. This trend is the reverse prevailing in mainland Europe, representing the highest level of non-native species planted there, where non-native trees are found on an average of 7% of all forested land.<sup>30</sup> (See figure 1). These maps show the overlap of state forests and the distribution of Sitka spruce forests in Ireland, from Coillte Forest Survey data 2015. The third characteristic of Irish state forestry is the extent of production dedicated to industrial grade timber. North American conifers grow particularly rapidly in Ireland, producing a lower-grade timber more suited to particle processing.<sup>31</sup> Around 80 to 90% of state forest output is processed by state-

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<sup>26</sup> Non-native conifers planted in early twentieth century state planting schemes were the North American Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, European and Japanese Larch, Lodgepole pine, and Scots pine.

<sup>27</sup> *Dáil Éireann Deb.*, xxxiii, 841 (3 May 1938), Minister Patrick Hogan estimated Ireland's remaining forested acres at 220,000 or 1.4% of total land area, while in comparison Denmark had 9%, and Holland 5 to 6%.

<sup>28</sup> *Forestry in the European Union and the World*, p. 13. Conifers are planted on around 73% of forested land in private ownership, which now makes up 46% of all forested land in Ireland.

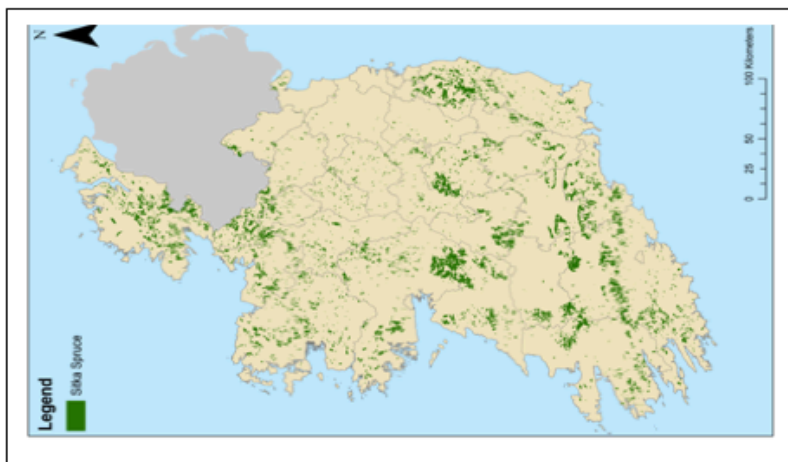
<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Austria has 2% in comparison. *European forest types: Categories and types for sustainable forest management reporting and policy* (European Environmental Agency, 2007), p. 33; 'State of Europe Forests Report 2015', *Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe* (2015), pp 138, 144.

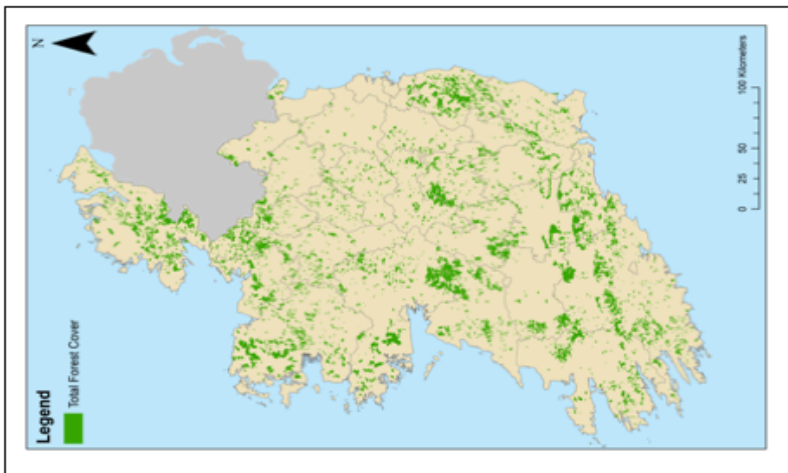
<sup>31</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 255.



Distribution of State High Broadleaf Forests



Distribution of State Sitka Spruce Forests



Distribution of State Forests  
From ~~Coillte~~ Coillte Forest Survey data, 2015.

Figure 1: Maps of distribution of state forests (Coillte Forest Survey Data, 2015)

aided chip and pulp mills,<sup>32</sup> one third of which provides fuel for the manufacturing processes.<sup>33</sup> Both public and private sawmills developed in response to maturing conifer (softwood) timber from the 1970s, and the sector is and competitive.<sup>34</sup> The drying of softwood timber for the home market of construction, fencing and other uses was not standardized until the 1980s.<sup>35</sup>

A fourth characteristic of Irish state forestry is the low level of the multifunctional forestry, that has been a feature of European forestry management.<sup>36</sup> As industrial timber production excludes community use except for recreation in selected forests,<sup>37</sup> the international movement toward multifunctional forestry based on ecological restoration, and the revival of traditional forestry with its respect for the 'household of nature'<sup>38</sup> is in its infancy in Ireland.<sup>39</sup> This movement is to be found across many different sectors of energy, manufacturing, food, biodiversity, culture and health, since the 1970s.<sup>40</sup> As this sector has not been part of state forestry in Ireland, there are no

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<sup>32</sup>'An overview of Irish forest and forest sector 2016', *IFFPA* (IBEC, 2016), pp 9, 16, 19. An estimated 78% of Irish forest products such as wood-based panels, sawn timber and paper products produced in Ireland are exported, valued at £355 million.

<sup>33</sup> Dennis Glennon, *Céad Bliain ag Fás, One hundred years a growing 1913-2013* (Longford, 2013), p. 122; 'Annual forest sector statistics 2016', *Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine* (2016), p. 30.

<sup>34</sup> John Kerrigan, 'Forestry and industrial development', in *Irish Forester*, lii, no. 2 (1995).

<sup>35</sup> H. M. Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day* (Bray, 1965), p. 125; Frank Convery, *Forestry and Irish economic and social development* (National Economic and Social Council, 1979), p. 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Forestry in the European Union and the World*, p. 21; K. Jan Oosthoek, 'State forestry in the Netherlands', in K. Jan Oosthoek and Richard Hölzl (eds), *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology* (New York, Oxford, 2018), p. 86; Jurgen Huss, Padraic M. Joyce, Richard McCarthy and John Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland* (Dublin, 2016), pp 82-3.

<sup>37</sup> Frank Convery, *Forestry and Irish economic and social development* (National Economic and Social Council, 1979), p. 74. Through the efforts of state foresters and interested members of the public to promote amenity forestry for walkers and wildlife enthusiasts, the state has been funding the construction of forest recreational facilities for walkers and wildlife since 1973, under the National Wildlife Service.

<sup>38</sup> Grewe and Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000'; in Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 337-8.

<sup>39</sup> United Nations Forum on Forests, 'Draft Ministerial Declaration: International Arrangement on 'The forests we want: beyond 2015'', (New York, May, 2015). <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/news/2015/05/the-forests-we-want-beyond-2015/index.html> (Accessed 7 February 2017).

<sup>40</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 377-81; Constance L. McDermott, Benjamin Cashore and

national policies on harvesting ancillary forest, plant or animal products on Irish state forested land, although there is a tradition of local wood craft in rural areas. Around 7% of the total state production is used for firewood,<sup>41</sup> but there is no national wood biomass production program for energy production.<sup>42</sup> In comparison, the use of forest-based biomass for energy production in Europe accounts for around 42% of the share of total roundwood production,<sup>43</sup> with 24% of the total used by the sawmill sector, and 29% by the panel and pulpwood sectors.<sup>44</sup>

This summary of the present-day characteristics establishes the uniqueness of Irish state forestry and raises the question of how this particular approach to state forestry continued to be so dominant in contrast to forestry practice in Europe which tended towards the multifunctional, ecosystem-based approach. Thus as the type of tree that is planted will create a particular arboreal environment that grows up around it,<sup>45</sup> the monoculture of conifers as a crop has shaped the landscape over almost a century of scientific forestry, accompanied by its mosaic of cultural and political structures of forest management. This approach has contributed to assumptions around trees, woods, forests, their uses and the state, which are explored in the context of the wider arboreal environment in Ireland.

### *Arboreal environment*

As the arboreal environment in Ireland is dominated by conifer plantations, the term 'forest' is generally applied to these single-aged conifer stands. There is a widespread belief that only conifers will grow in poor land that is available for planting, in order to yield any commercial return. A closer look at the conifers of choice shows

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Peter Kanowski, *Global environmental forest policy: International comparison* (London and Washington, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> 'An overview of Irish forest and forest sector 2016', p. 16.

<sup>42</sup> Gordon Knaggs and Eoin O'Driscoll, *Woodflow and forest-based biomass energy use on the island of Ireland (2013)* (COFORD 2014), 34, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> 'A new EU forest strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector', *Communication from the Commission* (Brussels, COM(2013) 659, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> *Forestry in the European Union and the World*, p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> Definition of 'arboreal environment' as '... relating to the surroundings and complex circumstances and conditions in which trees live', in Robin Chazdon, Pedro Brancalion, Laestadius Lars, Aoife Bennett-Curry, Kathleen Buckingham, Chetan Kumar, Julian Moll-Rocek, Guimarães Vieira, Ima Célia and Sara Jane Wilson, 'When is a forest a forest? Forest concepts and definitions in the era of forest and landscape restoration', in *Ambio*, xlv, no. 5 (2016).

that the most popular are North American Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine. Sitka spruce is native on coastal land from Alaska to Oregon where it grows to 100m, and is valued by indigenous peoples and the construction industry.<sup>46</sup> In Ireland, it is known as 'the miracle tree',<sup>47</sup> and is planted as a crop, felled after 20 to 40 years and generally does not reproduce naturally. These non-native conifers were selected in a search for alternatives to Irish pine trees, which have been extinct from Ireland since the seventeenth century, although recently rediscovered.<sup>48</sup> Since the early twentieth century, American, Asian and European conifers have been grown successfully in different habitats after much trial and error, selected due to the 'windiness of the climate', the agricultural policies of land use, and the belief that broadleaves would only grow on good land, and below 200m.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, Northern Europe plantations were generally made up of native conifer trees which were the engines of industrial growth in the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> These European native conifer forests were an important factor in nation building and many of them are now under natural sustainable management.<sup>51</sup>

Although the afforestation<sup>52</sup> of monoculture tree plantations can contribute to the biodiversity of an eroded region,<sup>53</sup> environmental concerns around major long-term impacts of these plantations on habitats such as peatland and water bodies, and their plant and animal communities have only begun to be addressed from the end of the

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/documents/treebook/sitkaspruce.htm>

(Accessed 20 July 2017).

<sup>47</sup> Convery, *Forestry and Irish economic and social development*, p. 8. Convery was a forester and University College Dublin professor in environmental matters. Niall O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history* (Dublin, 2004), p. 64.

<sup>48</sup> Native pine trees have recently been rediscovered in Clare. Alwynne H. McGeever and Fraser J Mitchell, 'Re-defining the natural range of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.): a newly discovered microrefugium in western Ireland', in *Journal of Biogeography*, xliii, no. 11 (2016). Scots pine was reintroduced in Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and will colonise margins of bogs and dry hill slopes in Thomas McEvoy, 'Irish native woodlands: Their present condition', in *Irish Forestry*, xi, no. 1 (1954), pp 27-35.

<sup>49</sup> Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*, p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> Grewe and Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000', pp 28-36.

<sup>51</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, p. 360.

<sup>52</sup> Afforestation: The creation of new woodland or forest on open land, in Glossary, Cross and Collins, 'Management guidelines for Ireland's native woodlands'.

<sup>53</sup> J.W. Humphries, R Ferris, M. R. Jukes and A.J. Peace, 'The potential contribution of conifer plantations to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan', in *Botanical Journal of Scotland*, liv, no. 1 (2002).

twentieth century.<sup>54</sup> The difficulties of establishing common understanding in environmental impacts of plantation forestry, or even common forestry terms is illustrated in the study of species numbers and ecosystem complexity in forests by Chazdon *et al.*<sup>55</sup>

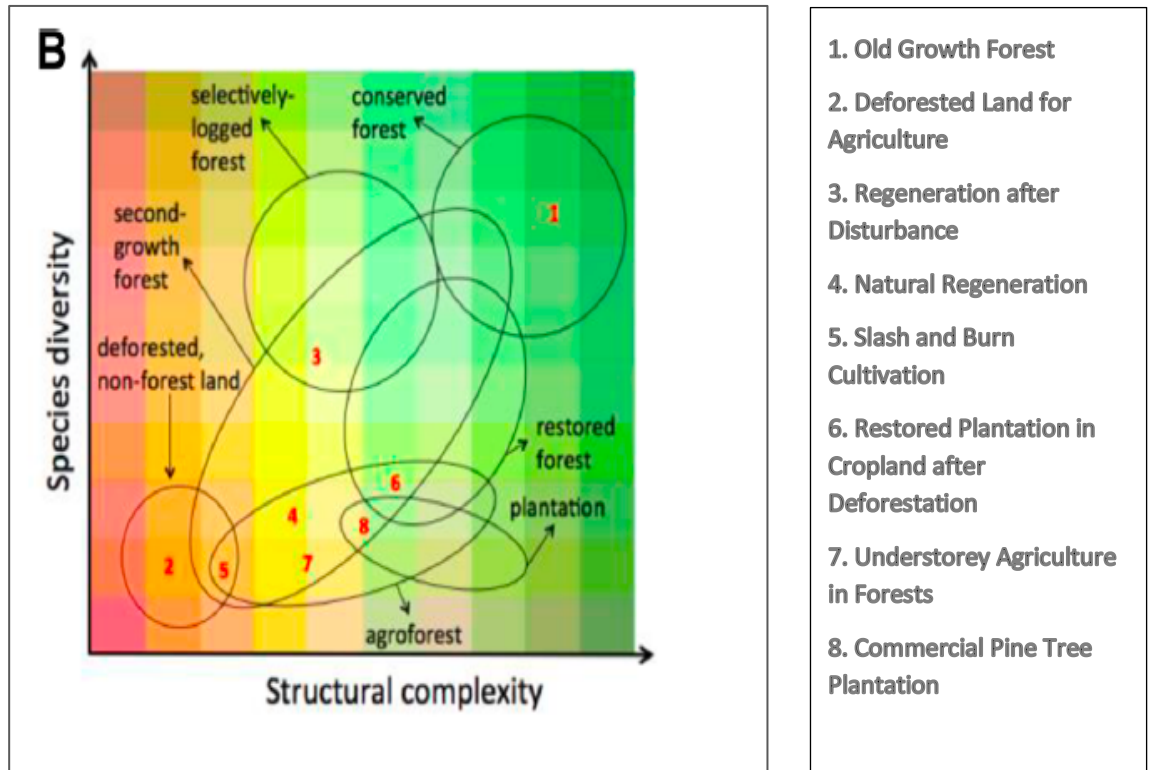


Figure 2: Forest evolution and structural complexity

The figure shows the nature of plantation forestry according to species diversity and structural complexity, compared to regeneration forests, and the potential for

<sup>54</sup> Mary Kelly-Quinn, 'The evolution of forestry in County Wicklow from prehistory to the present', in Ken Hannigan and Professor William Nolan (eds), *Wicklow: History and society* (Dublin, 1994), p. 849; Mark W. Wilson, Tom Gittings, Thomas C. Kelly and John O'Halloran, 'The importance of non-crop vegetation for bird diversity in Sitka spruce plantations in Ireland.', in *Bird Study*, lvii, no. 1 (2010), pp 116-120; T. J. Drinan, C. T. Graham, J. O'Halloran and S. S. C. Harrison, 'The impact of catchment conifer plantation forestry on the hydrochemistry of peatland lakes', in *Science of The Total Environment*, cdxliii (2013/01/15/ 2013), pp 608-620; Leah L. Bremer and Kathleen A. Farley, 'Does plantation forestry restore biodiversity or create green deserts?', in *Biodiversity and Conservation*, xix, no. 14 (2010), pp 3893-3915; Mary Kelly-Quinn, Michael Bruen, Simon Harrison, Mark Healy, John Clarke, Tom Drinan, Hugh B. Feeley, Joanne Finnegan, Graham. Conor, John Regan and Sean Blacklocke, *HYDROFOR: Assessment of the impacts of forest operations on the ecological quality of water* (Dublin, 2016).

<sup>55</sup> Chazdon, Brancalion, Lars, Bennett-Curry, Buckingham, Kumar, Moll-Rocek, Guimarães Vieira, Céilia and Willson, 'When is a forest a forest? Forest concepts and definitions in the era of forest and landscape restoration'.

restoration of forest ecosystems through human and natural action. (From Chazdon *et al.*, 2016).

Chazdon *et al.* show that where there is greater species diversity and greater ecosystem complexity due to less human impact, the forests are more sustainable.<sup>56</sup> This is shown in selectively logged forests or in restored forests, based on natural regeneration. Where there is maximum human impact, as in the plantation forests, the forest is considered as a temporary, less sustainable forest with lower species diversity and ecosystem complexity over a period of time. This is illustrated in the figure below. Thus, while the establishment of the non-native conifer plantations by the state has been a great technical and economic achievement, the unusual concentration of state forest assets in monocultures of non-native conifers for industrial processing has been accompanied by attendant environmental vulnerabilities, public exclusion and the desertion of native woodland and its industries. Huss and Joyce observe that this emphasis on conifers left a vacuum in the knowledge of broadleaf silviculture and management.<sup>57</sup> This approach to state forestry has reflected a low emphasis on environmental sustainability, timber values, markets and community use in state forestry management<sup>58</sup> when compared to the broader multifunctional use of European forests.<sup>59</sup>

This raises the question of why Irish state forests have not included restored or selectively logged forests made up of native tree species in broadleaf, deciduous or mixed woodlands capable of regeneration?<sup>60</sup> These are forests that are sustainable and biologically diverse, their soils naturally enriched which can still be found in

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<sup>56</sup> 'Sustainable Development Goals', *United Nations Development Program* (2016). <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> (Accessed 18 June 17).

Sustainable forest management is defined as an evolving concept which aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests for the benefit of present and future generations. *UNF I, para 4*, United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-20, p. 545.

[www.un.org/esa/forests/wp.../2016/.../WGCoChairsProposal\\_-UNSPF\\_-20Dec2016.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/wp.../2016/.../WGCoChairsProposal_-UNSPF_-20Dec2016.pdf)

Accessed (20/12/2016).

<sup>57</sup> Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*.

<sup>58</sup> Niall O Carroll and Pdraic M. Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', in *Irish Forestry*, lxi, no. 2 (2004). p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*.

<sup>60</sup> Oliver Rackham, *Trees and woodland in the British landscape* (London & New York, 1976), pp 4-6. Rackham defined woodland as 'a stand of naturally produced trees for successive produce, maintained by woodmanship'.



Ireland, mostly in small pockets, often around old estates. Although the first Irish state foresters considered that broadleaf trees were not natural to lowland grasslands and that they required good soil to thrive, and forester historian T. McEvoy, countered this assumption in 1954, saying that 'Most of our grassland must now be regarded as a ... more or less stable plant community whose continued existence is dependent on the activity of man and his domesticated herbivores.'<sup>61</sup> In 1995, Oliver Rackham said that 'Ireland had always had relatively little woodland',<sup>62</sup> but recent national tree survey work has identified the nature of the regenerated arboreal environment in Ireland.

The favourable potential for regenerated woodland in Ireland was succinctly expressed by forester and botanist, John Cross, one of the architects of the National Survey of Native Woodlands from 2003 to 2007,<sup>63</sup> who said that:

Under present day climatic conditions and without human interference, much of Ireland, except for the peatlands, mountain tops and exposed coastal fringes would be covered naturally in deciduous forest.<sup>64</sup>

The Irish state forestry research agency, COFORD<sup>65</sup> also noted that (referring to non-native conifer production).<sup>66</sup> Ireland's potential for arboreal productivity is shown in its undervalued temperate Atlantic oak rainforest which can still be found in parts of the southwest and coastal regions.<sup>67</sup> Internationally significant remnants of these woods still survive as part of a small chain of outlying regions in France, Wales and Scotland.<sup>68</sup> An example of an Atlantic oak forest remnant that survived centuries of

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<sup>61</sup> McEvoy, 'Irish native woodlands: Their present condition', p. 27.

<sup>62</sup> Oliver Rackham, 'Looking for ancient woodland in Ireland', in J. R. Pilcher and S.S. Mac an tSaoir (eds), *Woods, trees and forests* (Dublin, 1995), p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Philip Perrin, James Martin, Simon Barry, Fionnuala O'Neill, McNutt Kate, Aoife Delaney and BEC Consultants, *National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003 – 2008* (Dublin, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> John R. Cross, 'The potential natural vegetation of Ireland.', in *Biology and Environment: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, cviB, no. 2 (2006). Deciduous forest is made up of trees that lose their leaves in winter.

<sup>65</sup> Since the mid-1990s, COFORD has also been instrumental in promoting environmentally sustainable state forestry under EU direction and certification.

<sup>66</sup> *Forestry 2030* (2014). Formerly National Council for Forest Research and Development based in the Research Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, advises the Minister on research and development issues. <http://www.coford.ie/publications/forestry2030/> (Accessed 9 September 2016).

<sup>67</sup> Dominick A. DellaSala, 'Temperate and boreal rainforest relicts of Europe', *Temperate and boreal rainforests of the world: Ecology and conservation* (Washington, DC, 2011), pp 160-1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

destruction is Brackloon Wood in Co. Mayo<sup>69</sup> that was part of a larger forest area that was cleared and replanted with conifers by the state which drastically altered the ecosystem of the wood.

From the national survey, Cross has shown that native oak, birch, hazel and semi-native beech woods grow rapidly on different soils and locations up to 1,700 feet in most regions of Ireland. He refers to their natural and cultural heritage, their significance for biodiversity, and their potential for enhancement by forestry management for the production of timber and other products without destruction of the woodland.<sup>70</sup> An approach also considered by foresters Mullloy, Huss and Gallagher<sup>71</sup> for the economic and ecological benefits of broadleaves in state planting, which is common in European nations less affected by deforestation.<sup>72</sup> Environmentalist Dick Warner looked to foresters to lead this movement.<sup>73</sup> However, in Ireland, broadleaf woodlands have been a marginal addition to the state tree planting program up to the 1990s,<sup>74</sup> and there was little state assistance for the hardwood industry, or any other sectors using the produce of the native wood. The Irish state forestry estate holds broadleaf or mixed woodlands on only 27,700 ha of woodlands planted before 1830, and 23,000 ha planted on a later date.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, although the land and climate of Ireland are particularly favourable for native trees and woodlands, non-native conifer trees were selected for timber production on the state forest estate. How did native broadleaf woods of Ireland come

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<sup>69</sup> Dierdre Cunningham, *Brackloon: The story of an Irish oak wood* (Dublin, 2005), p. 51. The removal of conifers began in the 1990s by Coillte to restore the native woodland.

<sup>70</sup> John Cross, 'Ireland's native woodlands: A summary based on the National Survey of native woodlands', in *Irish Forestry*, lxi, no. 1 & 2 (2012), p. 88-9. Native trees include oak, ash, holly, birch, alder, willow, cherry. Oliver Rackham remarked that 'historians forget that trees are living things and have lives of their own independent of what men do to them' in Rackham, *Trees and woodland in the British landscape*, p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> Fergal Mulloy, 'Forestry and the environment: a sustainable prospect', in *Irish Forestry*, liv, no. 2 (1997). Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*. Leonard Gallagher, 'The market for Irish hardwood timbers', in *Irish Forestry*, xlv, no. 2 (1987), pp 135-145; Jurgen Huss, 'Broadleaves - An alternative to conifers in Ireland?', in *Irish Forester*, xii, no. 1 & 2 (1995).

<sup>72</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 377-9.

<sup>73</sup> Dick Warner, 'Conflicts in forestry: A changing culture', in *Irish Forestry*, liv, no. 1 (1997), pp 20-3.

<sup>74</sup> Fergal Mulloy, 'Doneraile Park: Recollections and reflections', in *Irish Forestry*, lxxii (2015).

<sup>75</sup> Dr. Aileen O'Sullivan, 'Coillte's woodland history survey', *Ireland's Native Woodland Conference* (Galway 2004).

to be perceived as unsuitable for state forestry? and why was the state so disconnected from its arboreal heritage even for its preservation?<sup>76</sup>

### *Public perception of state forestry*

The fifth particular characteristic of Irish state forests is the persistent institutional perception that the public are hostile to forestry and trees in general. This has been a recurring theme in the historiography of Irish state forestry and represents unresolved conflicts of interests.<sup>77</sup> An example of this can be found in a recent report in 2008 by former Secretary General, John Malone on factors affecting afforestation targets in Ireland.<sup>78</sup> He found that there was a long-standing negative attitude held by the public towards forestry in Ireland and 'a lack of forest culture' due to the fact that 'much of the activity has been grant driven', with 'little emphasis (by the institution) on timber markets or values.' He said that 'rightly or wrongly, a perception has been created that wildlife and environmental considerations are hostile to afforestation'. Although popular interest in the state's 'pine' or conifer forests has been growing since the 1960s when some forests were opened to walkers, the negative public perception of state forestry in some regions in Ireland persists.<sup>79</sup> In recent research on local perceptions about monoculture conifer plantations by Kearney,<sup>80</sup> Ní Dhubháin *et al.*,<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Archeologist Gabriel Cooney raised the significance of arboreal heritage, particularly in relation to archaeological sites in 1993 in Gabriel Cooney, 'Forestry and the cultural landscape: Understanding the past in the the present', in *Irish Forestry*, I, no. 1 (1993), pp 13-20.

<sup>77</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, 'Land acquisition problems in relation to afforestation', in *Journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction*, xxvii, , no. 1 (1927), pp 1-11.

<sup>78</sup> John Malone, *Factors Affecting Afforestation in Ireland in Recent Years* (Dublin, 2008), pp 8-16. Former Secretary General of the Department in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, responsible for Forestry. Malone recommended that the Forest Service expand their ecology expertise, proposing that the establishment of a Forestry Council would generate a stronger forest culture and would direct research initiatives.

<sup>79</sup> Also recorded by Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 242.

<sup>80</sup> Brendan Kearney, *A review of relevant studies concerning farm forestry trends and farmer's attitudes to forestry* (COFORD, 2001), p. 12.

<sup>81</sup> Áine Ní Dhubháin, Marie-Christine Fléchar, Richard Moloney and Deirdre O'Connor, 'Stakeholder's perceptions of forestry in rural areas: Two case studies in Ireland', in *Land Use Policy*, xxvi (2009), pp 695-703.

Flécharde *et al.*,<sup>82</sup> Bonsu *et al.*,<sup>83</sup> and Howley,<sup>84</sup> resistance to afforestation was attributed to:

... the institutional means by which afforestation has been conducted, the history of land tenure in Ireland, the species planted and the aesthetics of the stands once they have been planted.<sup>85</sup>

They found that the lack of consultation, the absence of consideration of local history, or the traditional wood culture, or biodiversity and amenity issues, were raised as important factors by local farmers in their consideration of state tree planting. Flécharde *et al.*, concludes that non-material benefits, local participation, and land tenure are more important to local communities. These factors have not been recognized by state forestry which is based on timber production,<sup>86</sup> and their research indicates an alienation of state forestry from the interests and needs of adjacent communities.

Thus, the indications of the uniqueness of Irish state forestry in the primary choice of non-native conifer species, the richness of the arboreal environment in Ireland, and the complexity of institutional and public relationships with forestry have contributed to illuminating some of the assumptions on state forestry, as well as establishing a cautionary approach to the study, particularly in the review of Irish state forest history. This review takes into account the views of state forest historians and the public.

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<sup>82</sup> Marie-Christine Flécharde, Mathew Carroll and Áine Ní Dhubháin, 'The changing relationships between forestry and the local community in rural Northwest Ireland', in *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*, xxxvii (2007), pp 1999-2009.

<sup>83</sup> Nana O. Bonsu, Áine Ní Dhubháin and Deirdre O'Connor, 'Understanding forest resource conflicts in Ireland: A case study approach; article in press', in *Land Use Policy* (2015).

<sup>84</sup> Peter Howley, Cathal Buckley, Cathal O' Donoghue and Mary Ryan, 'Explaining the economic 'irrationality' of farmers' land use behaviour: the role of productivist attitudes and non-pecuniary benefits', in *Ecological Economics*, cix (2015).

<sup>85</sup> Marie-Christin Flécharde, Áine Ní Dhubháin, Mathew Carroll and Patricia Cohn, 'Forestry and the local community in Ireland: A case study in Arigna', *Small scale forestry and rural development* (Galway, 18-23 June 2006.), p. 81.

<sup>86</sup> Flécharde, Carroll and Ní Dhubháin, 'The changing relationships between forestry and the local community in rural Northwest Ireland', p. 90.

## II. State forest historians

Twentieth century Irish state forest historiography has been generally written by professional foresters or by civil servants with foresters' advice about state forestry, where foresters' experience was often limited by political, social, economic and environmental constraints.<sup>87</sup> The authorship of state forest histories by foresters was also the tradition in European forest histories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,<sup>88</sup> which emphasized the institutional and legal aspects of forestry, with little analysis of human-nature relationships.<sup>89</sup> This approach was also seen in later European imperial forestry schools and conferences which fostered the exchange of knowledge on scientific forestry techniques, mostly based on plantation forestry for timber production.<sup>90</sup>

Both the government administrations of the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland exhibited a similar emphasis on conifer timber production at the time of their respective foundations, reflecting their common origins in British forestry culture, exemplified in the objectives of the Forestry Commission. This appreciation for the plantation approach to forestry for timber production, which originated in Germany and France, was to be found across the British empire from the late nineteenth century, and introduced into Ireland by British and Scottish foresters. In the twentieth century, the imperial forester's focus on experimental timber production and social control was further developed in Ireland but without the early interest in conservation in British imperial forestry in India.<sup>91</sup> The acceptance of the scientific forestry approach as a national forestry development program in Ireland after Independence, could have been an example of what Rajan identified as the contested legacy of colonial economic, technical and social structures of administration which were enthusiastically embraced

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<sup>87</sup> Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management*, pp 42-56.

<sup>88</sup> Agnoletti, 'Man, forestry, and forest landscapes. Trends and perspectives in the evolution of forestry and woodland history research'.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>90</sup> Grewe and Hölzl, 'Forestry in Germany, c.1550-2000', p. 37; Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 369-72.

<sup>91</sup> S. Ravi Rajan, *Modernizing nature: Forestry and Imperial eco-development 1800-1950* (Oxford, 2006), p. 200; William Beinart and Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (Oxford, 2009), pp 111-129; Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management*, pp 16-56.

by the nationalist movements, noticeable in the return of the former imperial experts as consultants, the continuation of coercion and the exclusion of alternative approaches.<sup>92</sup>

However, this approach did not favour traditional tree, wood and forest knowledge and value systems, which had gradually become disconnected from their historical context, as local woods people became disenfranchised and less well recorded.<sup>93</sup> The language recording this approach to state forestry did not include the legacies of conflicts or alternative approaches which is characteristic of forest histories of developing countries, of which Ireland was one in the early twentieth century.<sup>94</sup> According to botanist Augustine Henry, in Ireland, there were no woods left to conserve,<sup>95</sup> and what broadleaf woods that did remain were for the landowners to preserve.<sup>96</sup>

In Irish state forest history, the challenges and achievements of the creation of non-native conifer plantations under difficult environmental and working conditions by foresters and forest workers, initially under the direction of British foresters are narrated, and the institutional history of non-native conifer plantation development for industrial use is recorded.<sup>97</sup> The history of deforestation,<sup>98</sup> the experiences of new

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<sup>92</sup> Rajan, *Modernizing nature: Forestry and Imperial eco-development 1800-1950*, pp 197-205.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>94</sup> George Winkel, 'Foucault in the forests: A review of 'Foucauldian' concepts in forest policy analysis', in *Forest Policy and Economics*, xvi (2012), pp 81-92.

<sup>95</sup> Augustine Henry, 'Witness statements', *Agriculture Commission, June 1923* (Department of Agriculture, 1923), NA 2005/68/278.

<sup>96</sup> The Parks and Wildlife Service manages an estimated 6,000 ha or 0.7% in Special Areas of Conservation or Nature Reserves of protected isolated stands of native oak, ash, hazel, yew and birch woodland. This compares with an European average of 13% of forest area under protective management. John Cross, *Ireland's Woodland Heritage* (Dublin 2012), p. 42; 'Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries Statistics 2016', *Eurostat Pocketbooks* (European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organisation and United Nations Economic Commission, 2016), p. 22.

<sup>97</sup> John F. Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University College Dublin, 1969); Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*.

<sup>98</sup> William F. Bailey, 'Forestry in Ireland', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, ix, no. 49 ( 1889); Arthur C. Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', in *Irish Forestry*, lxi, no. 2 (2004); Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800*; Valerie Hall, 'The history of Irish forests since the Ice Age', in *Irish Forestry*, liv, no. 1 (1997); Eileen McCracken, 'The woodlands of Ireland circa 1600', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xi, no. 44 (1959), pp 271-296; Kelly-Quinn, 'The evolution of forestry in County Wicklow from prehistory to the present'.

species planting techniques<sup>99</sup>, and the political complexities of implementing these challenges, particularly in acquiring land are addressed.<sup>100</sup> Foresters of this period viewed the bare treeless land which was mostly offered for sale for state tree planting<sup>101</sup> as suitable for experimental non-native conifer and plantations.<sup>102</sup> The dominant view recorded in early state forestry history in regard to the value of non-native conifer forestry was in the rendering of 'bare', 'waste' or non-agricultural land to be commercially productive, to produce timber, to provide employment,<sup>103</sup> and to contribute to knowledge on scientific forestry.<sup>104</sup>

By the 1960s, Irish state forester and historian, H. M. Fitzpatrick expressed the commonly held view amongst foresters that preference for conifers was supported by 'hard economic realities', and that 'conifers are the only trees which will grow profitably in the poor land available for afforestation.'<sup>105</sup> These assumptions had become beliefs in the absence of alternatives. The foresters' perspective was evident in the manifesto of the all-Ireland Society of Irish Forestry representing professional foresters,<sup>106</sup> which was for 'promoting technical forestry and inculcating in our people at large the important bearing on the national well-being of adequate reserves of timber'.<sup>107</sup> In his inquiry on the role of the forester, John Black refers to the forester's tendency to value

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<sup>99</sup> Forbes, 'Some factors affecting a forest policy'; Forbes, 'Land acquisition problems in relation to afforestation'; Arthur C. Forbes, 'Witness statements', *Agriculture Commission, June 1923* (Department of Agriculture, 1923), NA 2005/68/264, 278. O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary'; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; H. M. Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day* (Bray, 1965).

<sup>100</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'; Arthur C. Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', in *Forestry Society Journal*, i, no. 1 (1943); Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*.

<sup>101</sup> Bare land is not seen in moist climates and is generally a result of damage to soil composition caused by overgrazing and erosion. Neeson discusses the foresters' dilemma in planting land that was too poor for agriculture, with trees. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 159-160.

<sup>102</sup> Forbes, 'Land acquisition problems in relation to afforestation'.

<sup>103</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 79.

<sup>104</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary'. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; *ibid.*; Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions'; Forbes, 'Land acquisition problems in relation to afforestation'.

<sup>105</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, pp 49-53.

<sup>106</sup> C.S. Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history* (1987).

<sup>107</sup> Founded in 1943, its Journal *Irish Forestry* was edited by J. A. K. Meldrum, 'Editorial comment', in *Irish Forestry*, i, no. 1 (1943).

the forest for itself alone.<sup>108</sup> The assumptions about land use and suitable tree species for planting, and tree planting as inimical to farming were evident up to the end of the twenty-first century in the 'clear and consistent policy to keep state forests off agricultural land' and in state grant-driven conifer development programs. These issues of forestry approach, species selection and state forester's perceptions are examined in greater detail in the overview of the early twentieth century literature on Irish forest history in Chapter two.

### *Public perceptions on forestry and its uses*

But what of the non-institutional perceptions of the public about state forestry, for whom the state developed and manages the forests? Where are the views of the less-well recorded participants in state forestry history and why are they still perceived as negative? Or even who is to be considered as 'the public'? There is the public of the British government who were subjects of the king, and the citizen public of the Irish Free State. The 'public' includes children who participated in schools' Arbor Day, or young people who were involved in the vandalism of trees. The voices of women are heard as keepers of folklore around trees and wood in the records of oral heritage,<sup>109</sup> in stories of the challenges of setting up home in distant plantations in foresters' memoirs,<sup>110</sup> and in the Anglo-Irish literature as female landowners in charge of estate woods, such as Lady Gregory.<sup>111</sup>

While community woodland was not included in state forestry in Ireland at the time of its foundation, the voiceless public did exist, including the users of woods, the owners of woods, those who appreciated woods. And what of people's attachment to native trees and woods and their uses, their place in the landscape, their history and their connection to the identity of the nation? Landscape geographer Stephen Daniels referred to the deeply subconscious cultural attachment of people to trees. He observed that trees may have a significance both material and cultural: 'trees, woods and forests are among the most valued features in the landscape, and people respond

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<sup>108</sup> John N. Black, 'The role of the forester in a changing world', in *Irish Forestry*, xxiv, no. 2 (1967), P 68.

<sup>109</sup> 'Dúchas', (University College Dublin, 2010), <https://www.duchas.ie>. (Accessed 10 October 2018).

<sup>110</sup> M. Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century* (Kilkenny, 2000).

<sup>111</sup> Lennox Robinson (ed.), *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916-1930* (London, 1946).



to them with an emotional intensity that surpasses any other aspect of the natural world.<sup>112</sup> This attachment is in contrast to the rational approach to forest management and history,<sup>113</sup> and its historical exclusion of the aesthetic value of trees, woods and forests in the landscape, their mythological and spiritual heritage and association with national identity. Forests and state-building were closely connected to the development of Northern European states, such as Germany and Finland in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries,<sup>114</sup> based on historical, cultural and environmental realities around place and the continuity of trees, woods and forests.<sup>115</sup> In Ireland, although the foresters' sense of pride in the new forests being planted was recorded in the historiography of state forestry development,<sup>116</sup> the symbolic role of trees, woods and forests in the landscape in nation-building was not evident, despite its significance to the nationalists of the early twentieth century.<sup>117</sup>

The absence of the public voice from the Irish historical record does not reflect a lack of interest but rather represents a challenge to find records of different perspectives on the appreciation of trees, woods and forests, their uses and the state, during different periods of history. In 1921, as a member of 'the inarticulate taxpaying public',<sup>118</sup> Thomas Ponsonby, former Chairman of the Forestry Commission Advisory Council for Ireland, questioned Forbes' plantation approach in a debate conducted in the *Scottish Forestry Journal*.<sup>119</sup> This debate represented the concerns of the people who were funding the 'great speculative venture' of state forestry,<sup>120</sup> but who were not to be found in the state forest historiography. This thesis asks whether there was a

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<sup>112</sup> Stephen Daniels, Ben Cowell and Lucy Veale, *Landscapes of the National Trust* (London, 2015), pp 12, 165. Appreciation of landscape in the British Lake District created the first public discourse on state forestry, conifer and broadleaf woods and landscape, in Oosthoek, 'Origins and development of state forestry in the United Kingdom'.

<sup>113</sup> Joachim Radkau, *Wood: A history* (2nd ed., 2012), p. 10.

<sup>114</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, pp 374-7.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>116</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary'.

<sup>117</sup> Bulmer Hobson, *Irish Forest Policy* (Dublin, 1931).

<sup>118</sup> Thomas B. Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles', in *Scottish Forestry Journal*, xlvii, no. 1 & 2 (1932), pp 1-7, 99-108.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas B. Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles', in *Scottish Forestry Journal*, xlv, no. 1 & 2 (1931), pp 1-28, 126-130; Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles'.

<sup>120</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 245.

forum for their views and visions for future forests of Ireland, and why were they not considered?

## I. Thesis approach

In order to address the central question of the thesis on the foundations of the conifer plantation approach to Irish state forestry and its attendant queries on the choice of tree species for replanting, the rejection of both native woodland and of people's attachment to trees and woods have to be taken into consideration. In view of the dominant twentieth century perspective of the superiority of the non-native conifer plantation forestry approach for afforestation rather than re-afforestation<sup>121</sup> in Irish forest history, there is also the challenge of finding sources in the archives and literature that record other perceptions on the future of state forestry in Ireland. Methodological analysis of this material would have to address many different perceptions, including the emotional attachment to particular types of trees and forests by foresters, historians and by the interested public, as well as the well-recorded rational approach to forest management.<sup>122</sup>

To facilitate the consideration of the central research question, the research is situated in the field of environmental history, where nature is considered to be a political construct made up of several conflicting views, as well as the source of life for the planet and its inhabitants.<sup>123</sup> This field addresses the historical interrelationship between the environment and people, and the legacies of conflicted narratives in this relationship. As has been shown in forestry history, where there is such a legacy of conflict, the historical legacy tends to construct a perception of the environment which is 'inescapably subjective and driven by interests.'<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Re-afforestation: The restocking by planting, natural regeneration or coppicing of an area from which trees have been felled or otherwise removed, in Cross and Collins, 'Management guidelines for Ireland's native woodlands'.

<sup>122</sup> Radkau, *Wood: A history*, p. 10.

<sup>123</sup> Sverker Sörlin and Paul Warde (eds), *Nature's end: History and the environment* (Hampshire and NYC, 2011); Paul Warde and Sörlin Sverker, 'The problem of the problem of environmental history: A re-reading of the field ', in *Environmental History*, xii, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>124</sup> Verena Winiwarter, 'The emerging long-term view: Challenges and opportunities of writing environmental histories in Central Europe', in Peter Sith and Ziga Zwitter (eds), *Man, nature and the environment between the Northern Adriatic and the Eastern Alps in Premodern Times* (Ljubljani, 2014), p. 19.

This many-sided and often conflicted complex historical relationship between the state, the arboreal environment, and society perceptions' of trees, woods and forests and their uses, can be studied by analysing the discourse between participants of the period in question,<sup>125</sup> where the broadest meaning of discourse can be considered as an exchange through communication.<sup>126</sup> Examination of this discourse can also illuminate society's course of change in this relationship.<sup>127</sup> Extensively used in the study and practice of present-day environmental and forest governance,<sup>128</sup> the analysis of discourse assumes the existence of multiple socially constructed realities instead of a single reality, governed by immutable natural laws.<sup>129</sup> This research approach applies discourse analysis to the historical record of parliamentary debates in the Irish Parliament, the Oireachtas archive, on forest-related issues. It also provides a contextual framework for review of public and expert discourses in the literature, the newspapers and other archives, which have been less-well recorded in the history of Irish state forestry.

The examination of forest-related discourse is structured around three questions.

i. Who participated in the public discourse on forest-related issues, and where did this discourse take place? This question considers participants in parliamentary and other forest-related debates between foresters, public representatives, and Ministers. Nature is also included as a participant, as perceived by those involved in the discourse.

ii. What were the issues of interest to the participants? The second question addresses the issues of interest and importance raised in debates that have been identified by this analysis, as perceived by participants. It can provide a wealth of information on themes and topics relating to land, choice of tree species, wood

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<sup>125</sup> Maarten Hajer and Wytse Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', in *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, vii, no. 3 (2005); Daniela Kleinschmit, Michael Böcher and Lukas Giessen, 'Discourse and expertise in forest and environmental governance: An overview', in *Forest Policy and Economics*, xi (2009).

<sup>126</sup> Keith R. Sawyer, 'A discourse on discourse: An archeological history of an intellectual concept', in *Cultural Studies*, xvi, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>127</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 182.

<sup>128</sup> Maarten Hajer and Frank Fischer (eds), *Living with nature: Environmental politics as cultural discourse* (Oxford, 2005). Fischer and Hajer argue that cultural critique is necessary for the future of environmental politics, facilitated by discourse analysis.

<sup>129</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 5.

industries, and perceptions of arboreal landscape, amongst others. This analysis contributes to a closer scrutiny of published material on forest-related issues by expert and public authors for their perceptions on issues raised.

ii. What was the contribution of public discourse to the development of state forestry development? The third question considers the implications of these issues and analyses, in relation to the participants perceptions on trees, woods, forests, their uses and the state, and their interrelationships. It forms the basis of the discussion on the contributions of the participants to the development of state forestry during this period and into the twentieth century.

These questions are viewed in the context of the centuries-old legacy of British administration in Ireland which has governed land ownership and land use, and the legacy of the first provisional national government, the First Dáil.

## II. Sources

This thesis builds on the published works of foresters and interested members of the public of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, particularly those of British and Irish forest historians, C. Litton Falkiner, Arthur C. Forbes, Augustine Henry, Eoin Neeson, H. M. Fitzpatrick, John Durand, Niall O Carroll, and Michael Carey, and their views on the central theme and questions of this thesis.

For this research, the most extensive primary source of material came from the parliamentary debates of the Irish Parliament, the Oireachtas and its two Houses, the Dáil and Seanad, from 1919.<sup>130</sup> Recently digitised, this archive records committee and house debates, and parliamentary questions on forest-related issues. Analysis of the debates identified the perceptions of the participants, both parliamentarians and Ministers, their concerns and their interests.

As there is no longer a state forestry library, archival sources were found in the National Archives, with records from several Departments, Agriculture, Finance, Foreign Affairs, the Taoiseach's Office and the Quit Rent Office. General Forestry files from 1965 were also consulted. It is possible that Forestry Files before this date have been stored in Department of Lands Archives which are not open to the public. References to 'Forestry Files' in John Durand's institutional history of Irish forestry

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<http://debatesarchive.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/yearlist?readform&chamber=dail>.

were not possible to follow up, making corroboration of Ministerial views or expert perceptions difficult outside of parliamentary and published material. The state forestry library inherited by Coillte from the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1922 and maintained by successive Forest Divisions and Services has been dispersed recently, making records and references from the early years of state forestry difficult to access. Archives in the National Library, the Military Archive and the Papers of Robert Barton, Augustine Henry, the de Vesci family and Horace Plunkett were consulted.

Other primary sources consulted were the University College Dublin Folklore Commission Dúchas records, and forestry pamphlets which were the means of publishing for public opinion in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and political party documents. The annual and other reports and journals of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI), the Department of Agriculture and Lands, and the Department of Lands and Forestry, all of which housed the Forestry Division or Forestry Service, were extensively reviewed for their institutional perspective. Originally prepared for scrutiny by Westminster, the format of Departmental Annual Forestry Reports was carried over under Irish Free State forestry administration, with little change until the early 1930s, indicating a continuity of institutional culture and forestry programme. Other libraries consulted were the former Agriculture Department library, the former COFORD library in Avondale, the Trinity College library and University College Dublin library.

Records from the Northern Ireland Forestry Division (NIFD) in the Department of Agriculture held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland were reviewed. The establishment of the NIFD under the auspices of the British Forestry Commission in 1921 with the help of the Arthur C. Forbes, Director of the Forestry Branch of the DATI, provided the basis for comparison. A systematic review of NIFD institutional records was outside the scope of this thesis, given the focus of the thesis on public discourse. However, comparative perspectives of neighbouring state forest administrations in Northern Ireland and in Britain, under the administration of the Forestry Commission, were referred to in the study, from sources in the literature. The British National Archives in Kew were also visited to consult on state forestry records.

Other primary sources revealed some of the perceptions of the architects and professionals of the Irish Forestry Division under British and Irish administrations. Central to this study are the views of Arthur Forbes, Director of the Forestry Division and Professor Augustine Henry, botanist and forester, on approaches to afforestation and re-afforestation in Ireland, which were found in expert literature. The views of

Agriculture Minister Patrick Hogan, responsible for forestry, and Ministers for Lands, James Connolly and Gerald Boland, could be ascertained in the political forum of parliamentary debates and in the literature. Theses and memoirs contributed to this research. Biographical information was found in online versions of the *Dictionary of Irish Biography* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and in newspapers. Some County Council histories of Agricultural Committees were reviewed for a local perspective and would be worthy of further study.

There was an active public discourse on state forestry development in the newspapers that was evident during the British administration, in reports from Forestry Society meetings, DATI Advisory meetings, or lectures on forestry, all of which contributed to the establishment of the foundations of the Forestry Division. Newspapers were also used at this time to communicate a philosophy of forestry development, such as Arthur Griffith's *Sinn Fein*, in the early part of the twentieth century, and the plans for the Provisional Government forestry administration, and these provided useful contextual information. In the search for primary sources for discourse on forest-related issues, both local and national papers were consulted, particularly for county council reports. They offered anecdotes and contributions on forestry, woods and developments in state forestry, generally from educated forest owners, professional contributors and editors. From the Irish News Archive, these were mainly the *Irish Independent*, *Kerry Champion*, *Donegal News*, *Derry People*, *Kildare Observer*, *Connaught Tribune*, and the online version of the *Irish Times*, *The Times*, and *Sinn Fein*.

An examination of secondary literature included published works of foresters and interested members of the public which were reconsidered in light of the thesis questions and the analyses of the debates. Many forestry history articles were obtained from the *Journal of the Society of Irish Foresters* and the *Journal of the Royal Scottish Forestry Society*. Other journals of the British and European Forestry Societies, and international forestry and environmental history journals were consulted.

Informal interviews were also conducted with some foresters, forest owners and farmers in the early part of the research to guide the study.

### *Time Period*

For the purposes of this research, two time periods have been considered for comparative purposes in discourse analysis. Firstly, the period of government under

Cumann an nGaedhael at the time of the establishment of the Irish Free State, from 1922 to 1931 and secondly, under the Fianna Fáil administration, from 1932 to 1939. The end point of research in 1939 reflects the conclusion of the period of state formation prior to the reformation of the Cabinet in September 1939 for war preparations.<sup>131</sup> The time period prior to the foundation of the Forestry Division of the Irish Free State is briefly discussed in the context of both the legacies of the British administration in Ireland on land management, forestry administration and attitudes up to 1922, and the legacies of the nationalist vision for state forestry, and the forestry administration of the Provisional Irish parliament from 1919 to 1921.

In conclusion, historic views and perceptions in the Irish state forest historiography have generally recorded the assumed suitability and superiority of one particular type of forestry under state control. The less valued sectors have been left out of the narrative, which has little to say about the traditional wood industries, the community users for fuel, timber, and employment, the lover of wooded scenery, the concerned naturalist or wood owner, the nationalist, with its attendant loss of an awareness of the natural woodland environment. This was to be replaced by the accepted belief that non-native plantation forests and their environment had to be created from scratch for the good of the nation, with their wildlife and public excluded unless strictly controlled.<sup>132</sup>

This thesis explores the perceptions of an articulate public, as well as other values and views of experts on the future of state forestry, at a critical time in the establishment of the Irish state and its forestry service. It examines parliamentary discourse, archival records and published material to understand how state forestry established its approach to forestry development and why this did not include native woodlands, their industries and public input. It challenges the accepted assumption of the public's lack of interest in trees and woods, and the beliefs around the superiority of conifers over broadleaf trees for every type of land and uses. The research undertakes the study of other contested views and perceptions that have not been included in the historiography through an analysis of expert and public discourse. These views and perceptions reintroduces the record of people's longer, mythical view of trees, woods

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<sup>131</sup> Mary E. Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939* (Dublin, 1992), p. 172. Daly argued that 1939 was the year of the establishment of a basic equilibrium of the protectionist and nationalist economic model in Irish society, which remained dominant until the 1950s.

<sup>132</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 4.

and forests, their expectation of a recovery of the traditional relationship between trees and people, and the planting of future trees, woods, forests and their uses as part of the restoration of the natural arboreal environment of Ireland.

### III. Thesis outline

This thesis is structured around two comparative studies of parliamentary discourse analysis in Chapters five and six, which are presented in the context of legacies discussed in Chapter four. The overview of the literature on Irish state forest historiography is discussed in Chapter two, and is undertaken in relation to the central question posed by the thesis, the types of discourse on trees, woods, forests and forestry, the participants and related issues. In both primary and secondary literature on British and Irish nationalist perceptions on state forestry, the overview looks at the nature of the discourse, and the differing perspectives of landowners, institutions, and the public.

Chapter three addresses the methodological approach in the first part, with a brief introduction of the use of discourse analysis, and its application in environmental policy history. In the second part, the application of the method is described and the results are illustrated. The limitations of this particular approach are discussed with recommendations for further study.

Considering the inherited perceptions on land use and trees, woods, forests and their uses, in relation to the state so evident in the literature and parliamentary forest-related debate, Chapter four considers the inherited legacy of land use, assumptions about trees, woods and forests, and perceptions about their uses in two parts. The long legacy of British administration in Ireland is introduced in the first part and its major contribution to the establishment of state forestry in the Irish Free State is addressed. Given the significance of the views on forestry of the architects of the Irish state, the second part of this chapter addresses the Revolutionary Dáil of 1919, the legacy of Arthur Griffith, and the symbolism of Arbor Day representing the essential role of forestry in Irish nationalism and the building of the nation.

Chapter five, presents the first period of analysis from 1922 to 1931, during the time of the Cumann an nGaedhael government, and is structured around four parts to facilitate analysis and discussion. The first part establishes the governmental and administrative contextual background, and introduces the participants from the



government and forest administration, including the county council, representing the considerable legacy from the British administration in Ireland. The second part presents the Oireachtas, and the participants in parliamentary debates. The third part summarises the results of the analysis of discourse on issues of interest to participants. The fourth part discusses the results according to the questions in discourse analysis and the influence on state forestry development.

Chapter six presents the second period of study from 1932 to 1939, during the time of the Fianna Fáil government, and is structured around four parts. The first part addresses the political and economic context for the period, the forestry administration, its leading participants, and their expert views on state forestry. The county councils' role in forestry is also briefly discussed. Part two considers public discourse on state forestry by authors J. Mackay and B. Hobson, and the views of private forest owner, T. Ponsonby. Part three addresses the Oireachtas, and the parliamentarians participating in forest-related debate. Part four summarises the forest-related issues raised in Dáil debate by order of interest. Part five discusses the results in relation to the three questions on discourse and their contribution to state forestry development.

Chapter seven reviews and discusses the findings of the research in relation to the central question of the thesis. The different views and visions of state forestry of Ministers, foresters and the public are discussed and conclusions are drawn from the research on the approach and outcome.

#### IV. Contribution to the literature

In investigating assumptions which contributed to the extreme development of non-native conifer forestry at the expense of native woodland, the main research contribution of the thesis to the literature is to the narrative of Irish state forest history. This thesis contributes to the research on Northern European state forestry history by taking account of the transition of Irish state forestry from extreme deforestation to plantation afforestation during the early twentieth century, influenced by political action rather than by population growth. The research approach of historical public discourse analysis on forest-related issues in parliamentary debates and expert literature challenged the perception that there was only one approach to state forestry at the time of establishment of the Irish Free State and its forestry service. It has identified alternative, competing historic visions and values for the future development of Irish

state forestry, building on existing narrative studies. It The research analysis shows greater complexity of state forestry development than found in the recorded history, particularly in relation to the unaddressed issue of national identity in state forestry development. It identifies 'paths not taken', the unrealised alternatives that were envisaged by the founders of the Irish state and its parliamentarians. It considers the combination of factors that led to the emergence of state conifer plantation forestry, and the influence of the conflicting legacies of the British government in Ireland and the provisional national administration. It adds new perspective to aspects of the land question related to early state forest development. It provides a more detailed look into the early years of British state forestry, and the influence of imperial and commonwealth scientific forestry on the formation of Irish state forestry administration. The research illuminates the both the role of forestry in the provisional Irish government and in the first years of the Irish administration, and the interrelationships of the participants in state forestry development.

### *Further Study*

The study of public and expert discourse on state forestry development in Ireland in the later years of the twentieth century using this approach would clarify the evolution of state forestry during this period. In particular, it could illuminate the post war period of tree planting expansion, the period of membership of the European Economic Community from 1973, with its funding and direction, and the establishment of the Independent Forest Authority of Coillte in 1988. Detailed study of county council archives to elucidate the role of local administration in forestry development, local newspapers, and memoirs would contribute to a greater understanding of the local implications of the state land acquisition and tree planting program. Investigative research into estate papers of land owners who were active managers of woodlands would provide a more illuminating view of their perspective, as well as the fate of estate woodlands during the twentieth century with impacts on their associated industries and skilled craftsmen. Further study is warranted on the leading participants and their particular interests in forestry and previous activities in promotion of forestry with regional focus. The approach developed in this thesis could also be applied to the study of state forestry history in other jurisdictions. Time and space precluded comparative analyses of Northern Ireland or Westminster parliamentary debates on forest-related issues which would provide useful material for further studies.

## Chapter Two: Irish forest history literature overview

This overview of the sparse but formative late nineteenth to mid twentieth century literature on Irish state forest history is structured around the central research question on the exploration of the foundations of the non-native approach to state forestry in Ireland, public exclusion, and the associated decline of native woodlands and their uses. The key concepts to be explored in this overview are the type of discourse on future forests, their uses, and the state, the participants, and the issues. Building on the work of Brian Gavin, compiler of Coillte's bibliography of twentieth century Irish forestry literature,<sup>133</sup> this review addresses the inherited legacy of assumptions that underlay the narratives, the technical language and the subtle perceptions of contested issues, common to national forest histories.<sup>134</sup> Given the importance of the legacy of the British administration on forestry in Ireland, a brief introduction to the literature on the landowners', the public, and forester Arthur Forbes'<sup>135</sup> views on the future of British state forestry in Ireland, is included in the first part of the overview. Part two examines the literature around discourse on state forestry under Irish administration from the institutional and the public perspectives.

The main sources for this literature overview include published works by professional foresters and civil servants, and by forestry amateurs. Evidence of discourse on the future of forestry in Ireland is more commonly to be found in the reports and published works of the late nineteenth to the earlier part of the twentieth century, by foresters and interested non-professional authors, rather than after 1922, the year of the foundation of the Irish state.

One of the first books on Irish state forestry history was published in 1964, entitled *The forests of Ireland*, by forester historian, H. M. Fitzpatrick. This record of the development of state forestry in Ireland reintroduced the hitherto absent public to a state forestry estate of maturing conifer forests, which was markedly different from traditional woods. It was a practical, informative guide to the history and planting of

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<sup>133</sup> Brian Galvin, 'An overview of twentieth century Irish forestry and forest products literature', in *Irish Forestry*, li, no. 1 (1998), pp 59-67.

<sup>134</sup> Hölzl and Oosthoek, *Managing Northern Europe's forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology*, p. 259.

<sup>135</sup> Arthur C. Forbes established the Forestry Branch of DATI and became Director of the Irish Free State Forestry Division.

trees in Ireland which was produced as a reference for foresters and interested members of the public alike.<sup>136</sup>

Another essential reference for this research is Eoin Neeson's *History of Irish Forestry*, published in 1991, which opened the first unofficial public discourse in the literature on differing state forest values and visions, since the early 1920s. His book was written from an institutional perspective, with the help of an advisory committee of state foresters.<sup>137</sup>

The unpublished thesis of engineer and forester Dr Jack (John) Durand, in 1969, provided an informative detailed narrative of the establishment of the state forestry administration and its perceptions, much of which is based on 'Forestry Files' which can no longer be accessed.

## I: Discourse on British forestry development in Ireland prior to 1922

The literature on the discourse on future forests in Ireland from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century between expert and amateur foresters and the British government, tended to encompass a broad view of forestry development, based on the use of native woods and communities as well as industrial scale conifer plantations. Nineteenth century foresters William Schlich and Daniel Howitz, and barrister William Bailey discussed the potential for large-scale afforestation in Ireland with a variety of species, and their use for local wood industries in published reports to the British Government.<sup>138</sup>

The Irish landowners' views on deforestation, replanting, the values of trees, woods and forests, and their influence on state forestry are discussed by Forbes,<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*.

<sup>137</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. vii.

<sup>138</sup> William Schlich, *Afforestation in Great Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, 1886); Daniel Howitz, *A preliminary report of the reforestation etc. of Ireland* (Dublin, 1884), 39; William F. Bailey, 'The woods, forests, turf-bogs and foreshores of Ireland: The opportunity for, and the advisability of, establishing government management and protection', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland*, ix, no. 70 (1890).

<sup>139</sup> A.C. Forbes, 'Tree planting in Ireland during four centuries', in *Irish Forestry*, 61, no. 2 (2004); Arthur C. Forbes, '100 years of Irish Forestry', in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, xli (1933), pp 168-199.

Durand,<sup>140</sup> Gray,<sup>141</sup> Neeson,<sup>142</sup> O Carroll and Joyce,<sup>143</sup> Kelly Quinn<sup>144</sup> and Carey.<sup>145</sup> Forester historian, Michael Carey's extensive documentary research gives detailed accounts of land ownership, tree-felling, sustainable coppice forestry, wood industries and deforestation in seventeenth to twentieth century Wicklow, all of which have shaped the landscape, as well as contributed to the legacy of the perceptions on the values of trees for the inheritors. Carey's forest history also looked at pollen records, ecological surveys, place names, and hearsay, noting that the history was 'often influenced by political bias,' and affected by fashion in production and marketing.<sup>146</sup> Neeson, Forbes and Carey detail the replanting of trees in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the English style by landowners for timber and aesthetics, for shelter belts<sup>147</sup>, avenues and orchards, hunting copses and timber plantations, but only in and around demesnes.<sup>148</sup> Trees on the estate were perceived as the crowning glory of the estate, symbols of civilisation, security and power, and selling trees was the second last act before selling the estate, according to O Carroll.<sup>149</sup> He also refers to Galway landowner, author and playwright, Lady Gregory and her fondness for the trees she has planted.<sup>150</sup>

But most estate woods in Ireland were not associated with any arboreal heritage and its preservation, whether British or local, by their owners. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Neeson describes the crisis of the felling of woods as a consequence of the implementation of the Land Acts in the 1880s, where woods were perceived as capital assets to be realised by departing landowners, many of them

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<sup>140</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'.

<sup>141</sup> H.J. Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, xxi, no. 2 (1964).

<sup>142</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries'.

<sup>143</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary'.

<sup>144</sup> Kelly-Quinn, 'The evolution of forestry in County Wicklow from prehistory to the present', pp 823-854.

<sup>145</sup> Carey, *If trees could talk: Wicklow's trees and woodlands for over four centuries*.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>147</sup> Shelter belt: Trees planted in a close formation to provide protection from wind for agricultural land, buildings or other trees.

<sup>148</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 92-7.

<sup>149</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 11-2; Robinson (ed.), *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916-1930*, p. 35. She also records her relief that the Department of Agriculture had taken them over after the sale of her estate in 1926.

absentee proprietors.<sup>151</sup> The significance of the legacy of wood clearance and deforestation for future approaches to state forestry in Ireland is reflected by the extent of Neeson's book (over one third), that is given over to discussion of these issues.

Resident landowners and professionals such as barrister William Bailey, employed by the Land Commission, were leading the discourse for state action to re-afforest the country, while calling a halt to the denudation of the landscape by departing landowners and incoming tenant purchasers at this time.<sup>152</sup> Much of this effort was centred on Irish Forestry Society which provided the forum for public discourse on the control of deforestation and replanting, and the introduction of the latest techniques of silviculture.<sup>153</sup> Founder Dr Robert Cooper, and members, William Dicks and J. C. Johnson published influential pamphlets on the potential for Irish re-afforestation at the turn of the century, from 1900 to 1921.<sup>154</sup> Another member, Litton Falkiner was one of the few who challenged the accepted notion of the treeless aspect of rural Ireland being the result of climate change hindering the growth of trees.<sup>155</sup> Although there was an active dialogue during the early years of the twentieth century, between the members and innovative English forester Arthur Forbes, employed by DATI, he considered their views (rather dismissively) to be from those 'who had been nursed in Utopian dreams of an undeveloped Ireland, which only required the want of an economic wizard to make its waste places blossom like the rose.'<sup>156</sup>

Many of the Forestry Society members were also participants in the first extensive public discourse on state forestry development in Ireland, conducted by DATI Forestry

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<sup>151</sup> Between 1869 and 1909, there were 13 pieces of legislation affecting landlords and tenants, which introduced the right to purchase land by tenants, with government financial benefits for the landlord making the sale. Landlord and tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870 (33 & 34 Vict.) Land law (Ireland) Act, 1881 (44 & 45 Vict.), Arrears of rent (Ireland) Act, 1882 (61 & 62 Vict.), Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885 (48 & 49 Vict.), Purchase of land (Ireland) Act, 1891 (54 & 55 Vict.), Land law (Ireland) Act, 1896 (59 & 60 Vict.), Irish land Act, 1903 (3 Edw. 7.), Irish Land Act, 1909 (9 Edw. 7.).

<sup>152</sup> Bailey, 'The woods, forests, turf-bogs and foreshores of Ireland: The opportunity for, and the advisability of, establishing government management and protection'; 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction*, (Dublin, 1908).

<sup>153</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 260.

<sup>154</sup> Dr. Robert Cooper, *Forestry in Ireland; Ireland's real grievance: The re-afforesting of Ireland* (Dublin, 1901); William Dicks, *Forestry in Leinster* (Dublin, 1902); Reverend J.C. Johnson, *Forestry in Ulster* (Dublin, 1904).

<sup>155</sup> C. Litton Falkiner, *The forestry question considered historically* (Dublin, 1908), p. 448. Litton Faulkner was a legal advisor to the Land Commission.

<sup>156</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 88.

Committee in 1907, which was reviewed by forest historians, Neeson and Durand.<sup>157</sup> They allude to the extent of the Report produced by the Forestry Committee, after fifteen public hearings and representations from all interested sectors of society.<sup>158</sup> This Report envisaged the re-forestation of Ireland by an independent forestry authority in conjunction with the private landowner and the county councils, with the planting of an Atlantic shelter belt, of river banks and mountains, to protect the soil and reduce lowland flooding, for soil enrichment and for the value of the ancillary products from a woodland as well as the timber.<sup>159</sup> Although the wide-ranging 1908 Report was based on the particular circumstances of pre-war Ireland, its only legacy would seem to be its operational planting goals, applied by Forbes, and the forest administration of the Irish state after 1922.<sup>160</sup> At almost the last page of his comprehensive history of Irish state forestry, Neeson records 'the virtually universal assumption' amongst foresters, that the Irish state planting program was based on the 1908 Report's proposed goal of one million acres of trees to be planted by the state'.<sup>161</sup> The recommendations for the preservation of woods and encouragement of education and wood industries for agricultural and industrial needs were quietly shelved, although discussed by Neeson and forest historian John Durand. Durand refers to the contribution of the findings of the 1908 Report to the continuing public discourse on state forestry in committee hearings that established the British Forestry Commission in 1919.<sup>162</sup> An essential element of the Commission was the regional consultative Advisory Council for public discourse, four of which were set up for Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland, according to Durand.<sup>163</sup> The Irish Advisory Council was not recalled after 1922, and there was no official replacement. This removed the forum for public discourse with the Department and the Forestry Division on state forestry.

After 1904, the foresters' view of state forestry development in Ireland was articulated by Arthur Forbes, the leading forester in the Forestry Branch of DATI. His publications had already shown his enthusiasm for the production of commercial timber both on state owned lands in Britain and on private estates with state assistance, and

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<sup>157</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 82-92; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 125-35; *Report of the Forestry Committee* (Dublin, 1908).

<sup>158</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee'.

<sup>159</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 120; 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908'.

<sup>160</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 156.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 150, 154, 156, 323.

<sup>162</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 162.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 161, 166.

he was critical of the 'hobby' forestry practices on the estates, and the lack of training for commercial forestry practice.<sup>164</sup> At the same time, he published technical papers on the establishment of conifer plantations, particularly in Scotland.<sup>165</sup>

Forbes' perceptions on the early years of state forestry in Ireland are found in his later publications and they were a major influence on the formation of assumptions and beliefs about state forestry over the twentieth century. According to Durand, Forbes' views on afforestation did not agree with those of Danish forester Daniel Howitz, who promoted a broader approach to state forestry development, whom Forbes referred to as a 'hoaxer'.<sup>166</sup> Howitz was a professionally trained forester, experienced in international forestry, but who had not been part of the imperial forestry profession. However, Forbes' interests in large-scale conifer plantation development did coincide with those of botanist Augustine Henry who was keenly interested in planting exotic species, particularly in experimenting with the establishment of conifers.<sup>167</sup> Henry's role in promoting the large-scale, non-native conifer plantation approach to forestry was seen in his remarks to the 1907 Committee that they should try out the scheme, and review it after twenty years, regardless of public opinion.<sup>168</sup> Forbes' and Henry's enthusiasm for the trial planting of non-native conifers in Ireland, in any site available, to fulfil British requirements for timber supplies after the First World War,<sup>169</sup> later resulted in their titles of 'Father of Forestry' in Ireland.

Public discussions of Forbes' state forestry approach of non-native conifer plantations took place in the Forestry Society meetings and in DATI, and there are few recorded challenges. One of these was a public debate in the prestigious Scottish Arboricultural Society Journal between Irish landowner and experienced forester, Thomas Ponsonby with Forbes on his plantation approach to forestry. Ponsonby conducted an extended debate with Forbes on the merits of regenerated woodland

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<sup>164</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, *The development of British forestry* (London, 1910), p. 252; Arthur C. Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?', in *Transactions of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society*, xv, no. 1 (1898), pp 44-53.

<sup>165</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, 'On establishing an experimental forest area in Scotland, for instruction and practice of scientific forestry', in *Transactions of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society*, xv, no. 2 (1898); Arthur C. Forbes, 'On Growing timber of clean growth, fine quality and high commercial value', in *Transactions of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society*, xiv (1895).

<sup>166</sup> Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', p. 15; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 121.

<sup>167</sup> Henry, 'Witness statements'.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.col. 4054-5; O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 25.

<sup>169</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', in *Irish Forestry Journal*, iv, , no. 1 & 2 (1947).



forestry over conifer plantations. Ponsonby's article on timber production systems for the British Isles, based on the European regenerated forest system, was a response to emerging evidence from the Continent of the disadvantages of the conifer plantation system. He argued that the conifer plantation system introduced by Schlich was already out of date in Europe, in Switzerland and Germany. His view was that the conifer plantation approach in Britain had not been updated by advances in ecology and heredity (genetics), but was being maintained by political considerations rather than silvicultural advantages. Ponsonby referred to the 'heroic' nature of experimental conifer plantation, with its failures cleared away, and funded by an 'almost inarticulate taxpayer.'<sup>170</sup>

Forbes responded negatively to his proposal to include natural timber production silviculture in British state forestry, referring to the amateur status of Ponsonby and his lack of training, the experimental nature of the silviculture approach, the uneconomic aspect of regenerated forestry, the difficulties of controlling production as well as pests, and the unsuitability of hardwoods for poor land.<sup>171</sup> Ponsonby countered with reference to French natural forestry approaches, the vulnerability of plantation forests and the lack of recognition of the scale of the experiment with no discussion of alternatives. Ponsonby challenged Forbes to account for his management of old copses and woods which were beyond their prime, to regenerate them instead of clear felling and replanting with conifers, so that natural regeneration would not be destroyed.<sup>172</sup> This discourse is an example of the gulf between the state forester and the private forest owner that had already opened up before the effects of the war of Independence and the civil war.

The issue of the balance between state and private investment in tree planting is considered by Neeson to be one of the critical questions at the time of the transformation of state forestry development under British administration to the Irish administration. He questioned the assumption of state development of large scale tree-planting by the Irish Free State rather than the joint development of state and private interests which was proposed by the 1908 Report.<sup>173</sup> However, from the above review,

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<sup>170</sup> Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles', pp 1-28; Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles'.

<sup>171</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles: criticism and reply', in *Scottish Forestry Journal*, xlv, no. 2 (1932), pp 123-6.

<sup>172</sup> Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles', p. 129.

<sup>173</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*.

it was evident that the critical question was the choice of species and tree planting approach which was being promoted on state and private lands.

As public fora of discourse on state forestry were being closed in Ireland, an international forum for discourse was being established at the annual British Empire Forestry Conference in London. Founded in 1920, its purpose was to integrate timber production and land management across the Empire, and to foster information exchange on forestry by an elite corps of scientifically trained foresters and land managers, working within the British Empire, and subsequently the Commonwealth.<sup>174</sup> The annual Conference became the forum for Forbes, Henry and other leading foresters working in the Irish Forestry Division, for discussion on research and management of forestry with imperial foresters and landowners, and it was an essential part of the research network for Irish state foresters in subsequent years.

## II: Discourse on Irish state forestry after Independence in 1922

This section examines different aspects of the literature on discourse on state forestry in Ireland after 1922. The landowner's perspective is no longer mentioned in the literature, rather the institutional perspective predominates, particularly in relation to its planting objectives, to land acquisition, to the challenges in the political climate of the day, as well as views on the public and trees. Finally, this section looks at the literature on public perceptions of trees and state forestry.

After the establishment of Saorstát Éireann, the Irish Free State, and the state forestry administration, the landowners' views on state forestry development were no longer heard, although Forbes was still expecting private forest owners and the county councils to plant their share of the total planting goal of one million acres.<sup>175</sup> The complex issue of private forest owners and the state's minimal state support which was limited almost exclusively to grant aid for conifer plantations, is discussed at length by Neeson, who highlighted the low priority given to state investment in this sector until the 1980s due to perceived political conflicts.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> *Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference 1920* (London, 1921).

<sup>175</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 155-6.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 257-77.

### *The institutional role in forestry*

The institutional perspective on state forestry development was extensively discussed by Durand,<sup>177</sup> Neeson,<sup>178</sup> O Carroll and Joyce,<sup>179</sup> Forbes,<sup>180</sup> and Fitzpatrick, among others.<sup>181</sup> This overview of the literature of discourse on the institutional view looks at four main aspects: the objective of tree planting, social and environmental planting, woodlands, and the institutional view on the public's perception of trees.

The literature on the objectives of planting state lands, the species selection and the relationships with private wood owners indicates the complexities of these issues at this time. At the conclusion of his state forest history, Neeson acknowledges the difficulties of the state foresters' role, and an appreciation of the remarkable achievement of 'those who devoted their energies and skills to the state, and to a lesser extent, private afforestation, sometimes in the face of considerable and ill-judged opposition.'<sup>182</sup> The discourse around the role and work of the state forester and the goals of the state planting program highlights confusion over objectives. Neeson describes the purpose of forest management to 'plant, husband, reap and profitably market the timber (conifer) product,' where 'the social aspect of forestry is not primarily a management function.'<sup>183</sup> He records the achievements of the state foresters who created 'a national forest enterprise, and pioneered cultivation of American species on a significant commercial scale, on previously unsuitable sites.'<sup>184</sup> O Carroll's view was that 'modern forestry (non-native conifer plantations) was at all times aimed primarily at the production of saw log material to be sold to sawmills',<sup>185</sup> and that 'forestry is an

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<sup>177</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'.

<sup>178</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*.

<sup>179</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary'.

<sup>180</sup> Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions'; Forbes, 'Land acquisition problems in relation to afforestation'; Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire'.

<sup>181</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*.

<sup>182</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 246.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>185</sup> Niall O Carroll, 'Book Review of 'Woodlands' by Oliver Rackham', in *Irish Forestry*, lxiii, , no. 1 & 2 (2006).p. 118.

activity whose primary purpose is to produce an industrial raw material'.<sup>186</sup> The role of the forester in fulfilling this ambition is memorialised by O Carroll in *Forestry in Ireland*, which was dedicated to state foresters: 'to the memory of those who worked hard for little reward and less thanks, to create an asset which we now all enjoy'.<sup>187</sup> Durand also dedicated his thesis *The evolution of state forestry in Ireland*, as a tribute to the foresters 'who cared for the forest with a devotion and intelligent interest that has contributed much to the development of the plantations and a tradition of service'.<sup>188</sup>

These affirmations of the role of the state forester are based on the work of the state forester as envisaged initially by Forbes, and to some extent by Henry,<sup>189</sup> to produce the maximum quantity of conifer timber from the experimental, large-scale, non-native conifer plantations on any available land.<sup>190</sup> For tree planting on state land, on private land and on shelter belts, species selection had been under Forbes' personal control in DATI, focusing on a variety of non-native conifers which were chosen for different sites, with a few broadleaf species included.<sup>191</sup>

This objective of maximum conifer timber production was taken up as the Department of Agriculture's planting program objective under Forbes' direction, in the newly formed Irish government of 1922.<sup>192</sup> The scale and heroic nature of the experiment on the ground only emerged in the writing of forest workers who were planting for the nation,<sup>193</sup> and of foresters, who believed in the potential of tree planting to turn 'the tide of clearance, destruction, neglect and decay'.<sup>194</sup> Economist Gray observed that that a financial return was of less importance than maximum production to supply home needs in state planting programs, since the end of the First World

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid. p.118.

<sup>187</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*.

<sup>188</sup> John F. Durand, 'Building a National Resource: Fifty Years of Irish Forestry', in *Irish Forestry*, xlix, , no. 1 & 2 (1992).

<sup>189</sup> Augustine Henry, 'Irish Forestry', *Series B, Industrial Development* (Cumann Léighachtaí an Phobail, 1921); Augustine Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, xiii, no. 52 (1924).

<sup>190</sup> Henry, 'Witness statements'; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 216; Forbes, 'Witness statements'.

<sup>191</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, pp 64, 72-6.

<sup>192</sup> Forbes, 'Witness statements'; Henry, 'Witness statements'.

<sup>193</sup> Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century*.

<sup>194</sup> Kilpatrick, 'Introduction'.

War.<sup>195</sup> However, although he reports that institutional forestry values aspired to be commercial and economic, there were no references to surveys or scientific reports of trials. This is an observation made by Mackay, who challenged Forbes for his lack of scientific rigour towards the state forestry experiment.<sup>196</sup> This illustrates the overwhelming assumption of the early state forest administration that the venture would be commercially successful.<sup>197</sup> Durand discussed the difficulties faced by early foresters in implementing this objective due to political influence, with neither an economic, social or political analysis of the state forestry program to guide them.<sup>198</sup> In his view, with no defining standards, maximum economic return was determined by social and political considerations.<sup>199</sup> Land acquisition difficulties contributed to the challenges faced by foresters, and reflected the perceived value of afforestation as being greatly inferior to the value of land for food and agriculture production of the period.<sup>200</sup> Mulloy notes that a Land Commission official was based in every office of the Forestry Division to ensure that no agricultural land was purchased up to the 1980s.<sup>201</sup> Neeson observes that 'forestry at that time was seen not as a crop, but rather as an undeveloped and undefined potential,'<sup>202</sup> which was being held back by the established agricultural economy that had created 'unnecessary and ridiculous restrictions on modern forestry'.<sup>203</sup>

The question of land, its quality and use and forestry is one of the defining factors in the forestry approach of the early twentieth century, and it was discussed by all forestry historians. Land was presented as an environment which was a challenge to be overcome, rather than a cooperative agency in the creation of new forests, in the operation of tree planting and harvesting. Irish state foresters of the early twentieth century saw 'bare', 'waste' deforested land without trees or often even shrubs, as

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<sup>195</sup> Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry', p. 20.

<sup>196</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 156-7. State forestry research was officially established in the Forestry Service in 1957.

<sup>197</sup> Durand, 'Building a National Resource: Fifty Years of Irish Forestry', pp 3, 6.

<sup>198</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 256.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, pp 34-5; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 159-64.

<sup>201</sup> Mulloy, 'Doneraile Park: Recollections and reflections', p. 248. P. 248. Fergal Mulloy was the first wildlife officer in the Forestry Division.

<sup>202</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 164.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

eminently suitable for the experimental planting of non-native conifers.<sup>204</sup> Neeson referred to this land as 'the dregs of the countryside',<sup>205</sup> and the cause of the primacy of choice of conifers which were considered the only tree that would produce timber on such poor land.<sup>206</sup> This was a perspective already established by Forbes. Poor quality land was also subsequently attributed to the cause of the failure of some of the trial planting schemes.<sup>207</sup> Gray observes that no other possible use for the land was entertained, other than agriculture,<sup>208</sup> and conifer plantations eventually were seen as a necessary adjunct to every farm by the state.<sup>209</sup> But Neeson does not discuss the legacy of dependency of the state on the conifer plantation model nor its need to promote it in the private sector. In the view of both O Carroll and Joyce: 'modern Irish forestry started with an almost exclusively clean sheet',<sup>210</sup> following the tradition of William Petty,<sup>211</sup> with no reference to the reinstatement of the natural arboreal environment, its preservation and expansion. The institutional, (unchallenged) perceptions of the arboreal environment and land use were crucial to the development of Irish state forestry over the twentieth century.

Durand, Neeson and O Carroll also discuss the second, 'social' aspect of tree planting objectives relating to employment in forestry work and forest maintenance. The legacy of British administration welfare schemes in rural districts experiencing malnutrition or even famine was continued in forestry employment schemes under the Irish state. Schlich had favoured tree planting schemes in the Western regions for employment and for their potential to bring peace in the countryside.<sup>212</sup> Henry referred to the success of large scale experiments in forestry employment with state and private

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<sup>204</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 11; Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions'.

<sup>205</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 159.

<sup>206</sup> Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry', p. 21; Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 61.

<sup>207</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, pp 49-58.

<sup>208</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 188.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>210</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 6.

<sup>211</sup> William Petty, 'Political Anatomy of Ireland', *Tracts; chiefly relating to Ireland*. (Dublin, 1672).

<sup>212</sup> William Schlich, 'Forestry operations in Galway, Ireland, 1895', in *Scottish Forestry Journal*, xvi, (1901).

forestry schemes, in 1920s Britain.<sup>213</sup> After 1922, Durand maintained that the main influences in early planting program expansion were social and political rather than economic.<sup>214</sup> Social forestry was of great political interest in regions of high unemployment and emigration, although it was resisted by the state forest administration at certain periods.<sup>215</sup> Durand noted that Minister Connolly's attempts to extend the state forestry program for the relief of unemployment in the 1930s were met with a lack of enthusiasm in the Forestry Division due to their concern that their program would be overwhelmed.<sup>216</sup> Neeson proposed that social forestry was arguably, not a management function.<sup>217</sup>

However, there were many other social implications of state forestry that had been initiated by DATI, and discussed in the 1908 Report, such as training in woodwork, fruit tree schemes, cooperative schemes, which were gradually abandoned after 1922 and which were not discussed in the forestry history literature. According to Neeson, Forbes' lack of interest in the broader social objectives of state forestry, such as its community connection, its re-education of the public on trees and woods, its employment in wood management or in the wood industry, seemed to be because his attitude to forestry was essentially commercial.<sup>218</sup> The term 'social forestry' also included soil conservation and other forestry objectives other than employment in commercial conifer timber production, a term found in the FAO Report of 1951, written by Scottish forester Roy Cameron at the request of the Irish government.<sup>219</sup> His recommendations on the social programme of state tree planting were not implemented.

Writing from the 1980s, Neeson and his colleagues favourably viewed the gradual broadening of the discourse on state planting objectives to include social forestry which also had an environmental value. He said that:

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<sup>213</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', pp 613-4.

<sup>214</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 257.

<sup>215</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 179, 184-7, 199.

<sup>216</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 215.

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<sup>218</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 164.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', in *Irish Forestry*, xx, no. 2 (1963).

... the idea of social forestry also incorporates the proposition that the commercial consideration of producing commercial timber quickly and easily as the sole criterion for afforestation, grotesquely distorts the role and function of forestry.<sup>220</sup>

He considered that 'forestry has an essential environmental – and therefore social – role antecedent to commercial management and not less important to the community as a whole'.<sup>221</sup> In his opinion these views were also held by the forester and botanist Augustine Henry, and the authors Bulmer Hobson, and John Mackay,<sup>222</sup> but he does not develop them.

Neeson concluded that despite the legacy of assumptions on forestry and land, and the discourse on economic state forestry, the official Departmental view of state forestry was that it was a non-commercial, experimental enterprise.<sup>223</sup> He finished by referring to the 'sudden coming of age of forestry, forestry planning and activities' which he attributed to the remarkable achievements of those responsible for state afforestation and century-long research and experimentation which, transformed the mixed species woods into young conifer plantations.<sup>224</sup>

Although there had been political efforts to broaden the program, Durand noted that an analysis of the state afforestation program had not been attempted nor seriously requested until the 1950s.<sup>225</sup> The lack of scientific reviews of this great experiment to establish its real economic, social and environmental value to the nation was one of Mackay's criticisms of state forestry in the 1930s.<sup>226</sup> Durand was also critical of the lack of effort by the Minister and the Opposition to discuss the overall economics of the program, besides the social and political values, which in his view, resulted in a planting program which had 'become an end in itself'.<sup>227</sup> He noted that the uncertainties of the objectives of the state forestry policy left the professional administrators and foresters with the responsibility of outlining and implementing a program for state forestry, with its attendant difficulties of reaching agreement on a tree

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<sup>220</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 202.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., pp 246, 253.

<sup>225</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 256.

<sup>226</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 156.

<sup>227</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 242.



planting program.<sup>228</sup> Neeson reflected institutional views when he criticised the 'opinion moulders and decision makers' for their apathy<sup>229</sup> in their acceptance of 'the unpalatable reality of Irish state forestry'. Included in his critique were the Departments of Finance and Lands for the low priority given to forestry and unrealistic expectation of economic returns.<sup>230</sup>

The consequence of confusion over planting objectives was seen in the Irish state forestry program being driven by ever increasing planting targets, resulting in 'unplantable' land being planted with conifers according to Neeson.<sup>231</sup> O Carroll refers to Forbes' successor, Crozier, as a Scotsman with very 'inelastic views on forestry,'<sup>232</sup> an approach that O Carroll considered was pragmatic under the circumstances.<sup>233</sup> This implies a reluctance to address or modify the inherited tree planting program from Forbes. In Durand's view, Scottish conservatism in state forest administration was the motivation for the recruitment of German forester Otto Reinhard, who had views on the public use of forests that 'were far in advance of his time.'<sup>234</sup>

This brief review of perceptions on state forestry objectives in the Irish forest history literature demonstrates that state foresters were initially innovative in establishing experimental plantation conifer forestry in Ireland, recommending planting programs and supporting services, but with without agreed national planting objectives. The foresters became more conservative in the 1930s exhibiting unswerving allegiance to the non-native conifer approach to forestry due in part to the deficiency of national policy priorities and objectives for Irish state forestry development. The impact of this absence is brought out in the tendency for participants to criticise the other for lack of action on direction for development. The late appreciation of social/environmental objectives of state forestry indicate the dominance of the economic rationale for tree planting in state forestry for much of the twentieth century.

The complexities and delays of establishing state timber processing and marketing offices for maturing plantations until the 1950s were also affected by lack of

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<sup>228</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 163.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 160-2. Footnote 27, p. 352. Forester McGlynn reported an estimated 48% of land planted land was uneconomic, a fact challenged by O Carroll.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>232</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 57.

<sup>233</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 166, 174.

<sup>234</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 216, 235.

direction, explained by Neeson. In his view, the state planting program had become the end objective of forestry policy due to 'caution, lack of funds, a mixture of anxiety and over-enthusiasm to inaugurate and establish any forestry procedure',<sup>235</sup> at both political and administrative levels. In his opinion this diverted attention away from the marketing and commercialization of the growing stock by the state, and a reliance on the private sector. However, his conclusion was that the privatisation of the wood industry was inevitable due to the cost involved in establishing the experimental state forestry program. He said:

The government of the day could not be expected to use public monies on speculative commercial processing ventures when it was already funding an immense speculative forestry venture.<sup>236</sup>

Institutional conviction that the wood industry was a private affair was also reflected in the absence of national timber drying standards and regulations for both conifer softwoods and hardwoods until the end of the twentieth century.<sup>237</sup>

The literature on the institutional perceptions on native and hardwood woodlands of pre-1922, was based on concern for the deforestation taking place and the need to develop both the value of the wood in the wider environment as well as the timber production and employment opportunities. Although Schlich had considered that conservation of the remnants of old woods in Ireland could be too late as the removal of the great forests had already occurred, and restoration was not part of his scheme, he held a broad view of the types of forests of diverse species that could be developed. He encouraged their use for timber production, for their environmental value, their value for the shelter of agricultural land, the supply of timber to local industries of wood craft, and the developmental potential of forestry in employment.<sup>238</sup> The 1908 Report on Irish Forestry discussed the impact of wood clearance on the loss of the local timber supply on sawmills and skills and included a report on detailed timber requirements for local industries.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 179.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>237</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 127.

<sup>238</sup> Schlich, 'Afforestation in Great Britain and Ireland', pp 10-11.

<sup>239</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 129. 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 419; Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 7.

After 1922, the declining traditional wood industry has a minor place in the state forest history literature as it was not seen as being part of the state foresters' responsibility, despite the national dependency on private woods for the supply of hardwood<sup>240</sup>. Foresters T. McEvoy and J. Huss *et al.* review the history of the environmental, social and economic aspects of broadleaf woods in Ireland,<sup>241</sup> with Huss *et al.* opening the discourse on the planting and marketing of hardwood timber. From this time, state management of the small acreage of state broadleaf planting was generally centred on the small woods associated with historic 'Big Houses' such as Doneraile Park<sup>242</sup> but the details were not discussed in annual reports. Private forestry woodland on estates was seen by Forbes in the 1920s as necessary both to be preserved and to be developed with grants for conifer plantations.<sup>243</sup> But Neeson's view was that 'private forester owners and the new administration were, by background, opposed to each other', and he attributes the cleavage of state and private forestry to 'changing political and social circumstances'.<sup>244</sup> The institutional discourse of the time was that private forests/native woods were seen as slow growing and that hardwood timber was uncommercial.<sup>245</sup>

However, the state also had a role in the preservation of woodlands under the Forestry Act 1928, which was originally intended for the preservation of scenic woods and trees and the control of tree felling on private lands. This Act did not seem to apply to the aesthetic or conservation considerations of state forestry where woodlands in state ownership were cleared for replanting with conifers, a practice which continued late into the twentieth century.<sup>246</sup> The effects of this approach were noted by Scottish forester and Director of the Forestry Division, Mark Anderson in 1932, who said that:

The marked preference of the British forester in recent years for conifer species, most of which have been introduced from abroad, has also lessened his interest in the natural woodlands of the country, which happened to be mostly composed of broad-leaved

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<sup>240</sup> Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 36.

<sup>241</sup> Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*.

<sup>242</sup> Mulloy, 'Doneraile Park: Recollections and reflections'.

<sup>243</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 183; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 155, 262-3, 266.

<sup>244</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 248-9.

<sup>246</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, pp 136-7.

trees. In most cases the tree crop is cleared or killed off before the areas are planted up.<sup>247</sup>

By the 1960s, the lack of interest in state investment in public or private woodland regeneration is confirmed by Fitzpatrick's report of the timber cleared and sold from over 72,000 acres of formerly private woods by the Department, which were then replanted with non-native conifers. This was out of a total woodland area in state ownership of over 82,000 acres.<sup>248</sup>

Although forester Thomas McEvoy proposed the revival of coppicing for timber production and the preservation of representative areas of native woodlands in 1954,<sup>249</sup> O Carroll quotes Forestry Professor Clear's view that old woodlands as being the most productive sites for conifer timber production.<sup>250</sup> In the 1990s, Forester O Carroll voiced the continuation of the low appreciation of native woodland and their timber in the state administration when he noted that the growing fashion in the late twentieth century for broadleaf planting would result 'in a heritage of unprofitable scrub.'<sup>251</sup> He referred to the sentiment that preserved native woods long past their normal harvest time,<sup>252</sup> and observed that any hardwood produced from these woods had little value in undeveloped markets.<sup>253</sup>

The markets for hardwood timber such as: oak, beech, sycamore, birch, ash, alder, cherry, walnut and others, had not always been so undeveloped, according to Huss *et al.*<sup>254</sup> Neeson referenced both the recommendations of foresters Howitz, Schlich and John Nisbet,<sup>255</sup> and those of the 1908 Forestry Committee on the duty of the state to foster and encourage rural and wood consuming industries to supply agricultural and industrial timber needs,<sup>256</sup> neither of which had been taken seriously in

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<sup>247</sup> Mark L. Anderson, *The Natural Woodlands of Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 1932), p. 16.

<sup>248</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 125.

<sup>249</sup> McEvoy, 'Irish native woodlands: Their present condition'.

<sup>250</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 23.

<sup>251</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 14.

<sup>252</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 12.

<sup>253</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, pp 49-53.

<sup>254</sup> Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*, pp 300-454.

<sup>255</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 124. Professor John Nisbet Report 1904, for DATI on state planting in Ireland.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

Irish state forestry development. Although Neeson and others do not record protests at the abandonment of traditional wood industries by the state after 1922, he did express some criticism of the neglect of the wood processing sector in favour of conifer softwood timber, as well as the marketing and timber quality control strategy for state forestry.<sup>257</sup> Huss *et al.* demonstrate the effect of the lack of any market development for hardwood timber in Ireland over the twentieth century, where they note that even in 2016, the market is so undeveloped that it is not even possible to obtain realistic prices.<sup>258</sup>

These few references show the marked lack of interest in historical institutional discourse on the future of hardwood and native woodlands in the possession of the state, and their many potential uses, their heritage, or even their survival under the state wood clearance program, until the end of the twentieth century. This was due to the assumption that there was no longer a market, or even future market potential for timber from hardwood trees.

### *Institutional perspective on the public and forestry*

The Irish forest history literature portrays an institutional perspective of the public's view of trees, woods and forests as an uneducated and often negative one. Forbes regretted the absence in Britain of the well-managed community woods of the Continent, where trees were treated with respect, and where there was a strict local control on their uses.<sup>259</sup> O Carroll *et al.* referred to the lack of tradition in Ireland on managing a crop of trees, although they did refer to ancient lore about the values attributed to individual species.<sup>260</sup> Neeson considered that negative public opinion towards forestry was due both to the historical association with landowners, and the occupancy of land that could be tilled for food. He observed that there was a section of the people who 'were not well-disposed towards the preservation of any system that smacked of the alien tradition which had just been shown the door'.<sup>261</sup> In his view,

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<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 180-2.

<sup>258</sup> Huss, Joyce, McCarthy and Fennessy, *Broadleaf Forestry in Ireland*, pp 71-8.

<sup>259</sup> Forbes, 'Some factors affecting a forest policy', pp 167-8. In France, this was a result of the implementation of the Code Forestière, 1827, which controlled the local maintenance and use of community woodlands.

<sup>260</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 9.

<sup>261</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 158.

'forestry was a dominant, visible and enduring feature of the alienation of the land from its native people,' a resource which was not seen to be of benefit to the local community.<sup>262</sup> Thus, despite the conviction of public support for afforestation that was expressed by the 1908 Report, noted by O Carroll *et al.*, O Carroll *et al.* also believed that the 'vestigial traces of the land hunger of their forebears' contributed to the lingering public distrust of commercial forestry'.<sup>263</sup>

The assumption that the legacy of innate hostility of local people to the estate-based oppression had been transferred to commercial forestry could have been seen in the very limited institutional efforts to educate the public on the state program of conifer plantation development from the early years of the state forestry program, where it had very low priority. However, Durand notes that there was an educated and aware public represented by the many resolutions from public bodies and societies from all over Ireland that were concerned about wood clearances and concerned for the development of local woods, whether native or conifers, and calling for action throughout the 1920s.<sup>264</sup> Even by the 1950s, there was no evidence of public education on forestry in Ireland, according to Neeson who referred to FAO Scottish forester Roy Cameron's recommendation in 1952, that commercial forestry (conifer plantations) in Ireland will not endure unless it is 'sold' to the people of Ireland due to 'their innate conservatism, suspicion and hostility'.<sup>265</sup> This was an indication of the continuation of institutional perceptions of the previous forty years which had not taken into account the role of the Department itself in contributing to negative perceptions around state forestry plantations.

Public antagonism to state conifer plantation development has also been associated to the historical conflicts of interests in land use for forestry between the Department and the hill farmer, in some regions, noted by all forest historians.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>263</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 10. O Carroll observed the transition taking place in attitudes to state forestry in the 1980s, in Niall O Carroll, 'Forestry in the Republic of Ireland', in J. R. Pilcher and S.S. Mac an tSaoir (eds), *Wood, trees and forests in Ireland* (Dublin, 1995), pp 51-8.

<sup>264</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 192.

<sup>265</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 205. Roy Cameron conducted a brief survey of land in Ireland suitable for forestry in 1950, *Report on FAO Forestry Mission to Ireland* (Dublin, 1951).

<sup>266</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 196-199; Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, pp 26-9; O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 9; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 102-5, 159-61, 164.

Successive Forestry Acts<sup>267</sup> reinforced the power of the Department to oblige recalcitrant land owners or 'uncooperative individuals',<sup>268</sup> to sell land or rights of use to the state, land in many cases had only recently been purchased by former tenants. Where conflicting views of land use on commonage land between grazing and forestry existed, these held back the state planting program over the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>269</sup> An example of public hostility to state afforestation in Leitrim, focused on conifer plantation development where, Neeson believed, it was the responsibility of politicians to change farmers' attitudes.<sup>270</sup> In a pertinent observation, he also noted that Leitrim farmers would consider an integrated afforestation program which included agriculture, industry, tourism as well as forestry, with demonstration and training in hardwood forests.<sup>271</sup> Institutional support for cooperative forestry through rented land or cooperative land owners was not favoured, where according to Neeson: 'the reasons very likely lie in the attitude of farmers to forestry and the reluctance of the government to challenge the farming community "unnecessarily" when so much depended on them during the war'.<sup>272</sup> With a relationship based on a lack of communication, O Carroll believed that only since financial support for farm forestry became available from the European Union has 'general public opinion softened' towards forestry (non-native plantations).<sup>273</sup>

In the 1980s, the public's late arrival to state forestry discourse was explained by C.S. Kilpatrick, Chief Forest Officer of the Northern Irish Forestry Division, in his 'Introduction' to Fitzpatrick's *A history of Irish forestry*, reflecting the views of state foresters of the time. He wrote:

The loss of our once great forests has been so complete that the Irishman accepts the need for re-afforestation almost without question. The acceptance is now being replaced by interest and pride as more young forests grow toward maturity.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Forestry Acts of 1928, 1946 and 1956.

<sup>268</sup> Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 42.

<sup>269</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*; Mulloy, 'Forestry and the environment: a sustainable prospect', p. 159.

<sup>270</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 242-3, 276.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 201, 161-2.

<sup>273</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 10.

<sup>274</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*. Forward by C. S. Kilpatrick.

During the early years of the Irish state forestry administration, Forbes could insulate himself from the necessary discussion on his experimental forestry approach and its alternatives. Although he recommended an independent Board and an advisory council, neither his former constituency of expert forest owners and managers in the Advisory Council nor the Irish Forestry Society were available to him for discussion of the prudence of funnelling all state investment in forestry into a large scale speculative venture, at a time of financial hardship. Their departure represented a loss of public-spirited expertise and accumulated knowledge about forestry and its environment, at a time when it was needed the most,<sup>275</sup> particularly their experience on regenerated wood management and the wood industry. Although some of them became parliamentarians, public parliamentary discourse was disregarded by Neeson who portrays politicians as vote-seeking and short-term in their approach to state forestry development.<sup>276</sup> He criticised the 'opinion moulders and decision-makers for their apathy' in their acceptance of the unpalatable reality of Irish state forestry.<sup>277</sup> His brief reference to the input of parliamentarians on state forestry is dismissive, referring to their 'implicit faith on the return of investment with no informed debate on long-term financial commitments'.<sup>278</sup> Representing a return to public discourse by foresters, 'the forum for independent development of Irish forest thought' in the Society of Irish Foresters was founded by Dr Anderson, Director of the Forestry Division in 1942. The unquestioned institutional assumption of public ignorance and apathy towards forestry continued unchallenged in discourse between the government and the public on forest-related issues.

Public input into state forestry development has been only recently established. In 1964, Fitzpatrick lists shooting and fishing rights, recreation, and the scenic aspect of a few large plantations as aspects of forestry relevant to the public, but he does not refer to any discourse on public input into the management of these aspects of state forestry.<sup>279</sup> Mulloy refers to the low level of public appreciation of nature conservation in the late 1960s.<sup>280</sup> However, from the 1990's, Neeson refers to discourse between

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<sup>275</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*. p. 149.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 162-3.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 161-2.

<sup>278</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 241.

<sup>279</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 136.

<sup>280</sup> Mulloy, 'Doneraile Park: Recollections and reflections', p. 247.



foresters, civil servants and Ministers, and with non-professional members of the public, on long-standing issues of national forestry policy, land and land use, the conifer planting program, 'social' forestry or employment, and environmental issues, in forest development schemes.<sup>281</sup> At the same time, forester Patrick Purser acknowledged the historic lack of discourse on the relationship between foresters, the forestry administration and the public over the twentieth century, expressing his view on 'the enormity of the task of rebuilding trust'.<sup>282</sup>

### *Public perspective on state forestry*

References to non-institutional public perspectives on the value of state forestry for this period are scattered across the history of state forestry in Ireland. The culture of tree and wood use by local people and communities that had been associated with the woods and forests was a minor part of the early twentieth century literature, although it was considered integral to forestry management on the Continent.<sup>283</sup> Public discourse on the future of state forests during the first two decades of Irish government was represented in the literature by the works of independent experts, John Mackay, a passionate amateur and critic of government action, or its lack of action in forestry development, and Bulmer Hobson, a nationalist leader and civil servant. Despite several publications based on extensive research, Mackay's research on the heritage of national woodlands and their developmental potential for the nation through an independent forest authority<sup>284</sup> were considered non-professional by some forestry experts, although his work was influential in political circles. He also noted local unfamiliarity with the term 'forest' due to centuries of deforestation, but he believed that 'forests are at the heart of a nation's prosperity',<sup>285</sup> and: 'Our forests once destroyed, we no longer counted on the scale of nations ... The loss was crushing then, for

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<sup>281</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 241-6.

<sup>282</sup> Patrick Purser, 'Book Review, Policy Paper on Forestry and the National Heritage, by The Heritage Council', in *Irish Forestry Journal*, 55, no. 2 (1998).

<sup>283</sup> Radkau, *Wood: A history*.

<sup>284</sup> John Mackay, *Trodden Gold: Merchandise of silk and paper and wood and the glory of the arat-tree* (Dublin and Cork, 1928); John Mackay and Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, *Forestry in Ireland: A study of modern forestry and of the interdependence of agriculture and industry* (Dublin and Cork, 1934); John Mackay, *The forest and national life* (Dublin, 1938); John Mackay, *The rape of Ireland* (Dublin, 1940).

<sup>285</sup> Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, p. 18.

stripped of its trees, the very inspiration departs from the land'.<sup>286</sup> Inspired by Continental industrial wood production, Mackay's vision of a two million acre large scale national reforestation scheme was closely associated with economic and social revival of rural areas. He referred to wood pulp as 'the breath of civilisation' which was the essential component for paper manufacture, and to the industrial potential of 5,000 separate articles made out of wood which were needed at that time. His trenchant views on compulsory purchase, resettlement, peatland planting, foresters' and public education, soil health and Forbes' unscientific approach to forestry challenged the Departmental views on state forestry. Neeson was the first forest historian in the 1980s to discuss Mackay's views on state forestry, and he quotes extensively from his work.<sup>287</sup> He reluctantly admits that some of Mackay's criticisms might have been justified, given the uncertainties of the new government, and the 'delicate' relationships between the new political masters and the established administration, particularly in relation to land issues.<sup>288</sup> Some of Mackay's proposals were eventually implemented.

Neeson also refers to Hobson's pamphlets written in the 1930s on a national forestry policy on re-forestation, on the establishment of a national forestry authority, and the renewal of wood industries.<sup>289</sup> Hobson's pamphlets represented the culmination of discussions that took place during the early years of the twentieth century on state forestry by a group of interested individuals, which could have contributed to the forestry priorities of the Revolutionary Parliament of 1919, and the views of Minister Joseph Connolly in the 1930s.<sup>290</sup> At that time, Durand records that Hobson's views on planting peatlands in the Gaeltacht were rejected by the Director of the Forestry Division, saying that 'planting on the West coast was of doubtful value and could only be carried out after prolonged experimentation.'<sup>291</sup>

Thus while the literature identifies informed public discourse contributing to the foundation of state forestry in Ireland under British administration, there is little

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<sup>286</sup> Mackay, 'The forest and national life', p. 7.

<sup>287</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*. Chapters 10 and 11.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>289</sup> Bulmer Hobson, 'Forestry and the Gaeltacht,' in *Ireland To-Day*, xxxiii, (1936); Hobson, 'Irish Forest Policy'.

<sup>290</sup> The forestry group of Hobson included Maud Gonne McBride, mother of Sean McBride who was known for his political advocacy of state forestry in the 1950s O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 12; Seán McBride, *A message to the Irish people* (Cork & Dublin, 1985).

<sup>291</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'.

evidence that public discourse contributed to its adaptation to meet the needs of the Irish state after 1922. Neither is there a record of the views of the hill farmers on state afforestation. Without accepted official channels of public discourse, conflicts around different assumptions on state tree planting objectives or land use were difficult to resolve, program reviews remained intradepartmental, and goals were in the hands of the practitioners. Thus Neeson observed that professional foresters and administrators were 'left the responsibility of developing and carrying out a planting program for the Irish state at this time.'<sup>292</sup>

### *Northern Ireland state forestry*

The inclusion of Northern Ireland's (NI) forest history in this literature review highlights the similarities of the early history of forestry of the region with that of Irish Free State forestry, since 1922.<sup>293</sup> The NI state forestry approach based on non-native conifers was recorded by forester D. Thomas to reverse deforestation, provide timber, employment and to initiate state action.<sup>294</sup> Forester and Director Cecil S. Kilpatrick referred to 'the logic out of which both forest services were born'<sup>295</sup> on the divided island of Ireland, from the early twentieth century. In his history of forestry in Northern Ireland, Kilpatrick charts the course of the Land Acts, the establishment of the Forestry Commission, and the ceding of forests and personnel from DATI. In his tribute to the dedication of the first foresters, he acknowledges Chief Inspector David Stewart, as father of Northern Ireland's state forestry.<sup>296</sup> As a former colleague of Forbes, Stewart established a similar managerial style, and Kilpatrick notes that he acquired land for the NI Department of Agriculture, decided on the planting program and hired and fired staff, saying that: 'All foresters owed loyalty to him and his word was law.'<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 163.

<sup>293</sup> Malcolm H. Beatty, 'The development of forest policy in Northern Ireland', in J. R. Pilcher and S.S. Mac an tSaoir (eds), *Woods, trees and forests in Ireland* (Dublin, 1995).

<sup>294</sup> D.E.L. Thomas, 'Economic Aspects of Forestry in Northern Ireland', in *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry in Ireland*, xx, no. 5 (1962), pp 196-217.

<sup>295</sup> Pat McCusker, 'Book Reviews-Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history', in *Irish Forester*, xlv, , no. 1 (1988); Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 85.

<sup>296</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 41.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

NI Forestry Division had similar focus on softwood imports replacement, land improvement, and employment potential of forestry.<sup>298</sup> The environmental issues raised also related to the challenges of planting conifers in unproductive heath land, and the effects of wind, fire and exposure.<sup>299</sup> Mostly Scottish and English foresters were hired, some with imperial or commonwealth forestry service, and forester recruits were trained in Scotland. Private forestry in NI declined as fast as in the Irish state, according to Neeson, but the shelter belt planting of conifers was considered quite successful.<sup>300</sup> As in the Irish Free State, some of the plantation schemes failed, such as the 1955 Rathlin Island planting scheme, where non-native conifers were planted for shelter and firewood, without success.<sup>301</sup> Kilpatrick underlined the close connections between the two state forest services, where relations were maintained informally by foresters. Although there was no official public discourse on an all-Ireland approach to state forestry, the founding of the Irish Forestry Society for professional foresters in 1943, by Mark Anderson, Chief Forestry Inspector of Ireland, established a forum for discourse between foresters from both administrations.

In conclusion, it is evident from this literature overview of the leading state forest histories that public discourse on state forestry in Ireland, particularly on the role of the state in forestry development, and on the balance between public and private planting, almost ceased after 1922. After this time, the emphasis of the historical record focuses on the heroic establishment of large-scale experimental non-native conifer plantation forestry in Ireland by British foresters, with minimal participation of private or local government interests. It underscores the belief that it was the best approach to restore trees to Ireland and to produce timber for Britain by transferring knowledge for experimental adaptation of plantation forestry techniques to local conditions in any type of land; that it would generate a rapid economic return to the public or private landowner on large-scale areas of 'waste' hill lands; that it would provide employment and be a conduit for welfare payments; that it would produce a rapid economic return to the state from the sale of conifer timber; and that only conifer trees would grow in waste land. Some of these assumptions were not critically

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<sup>298</sup> Beatty, 'The development of forest policy in Northern Ireland', pp 59-67.

<sup>299</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, pp 30-1.

<sup>300</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 280.

<sup>301</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 46.

examined until almost forty years after the founding of the state forestry service in the research of Gray, Convery, Clinch, and Bacon.<sup>302</sup>

Other assumptions were that the state, could neither politically nor economically afford to develop native woods; nor should the state get involved with wood industry support or development; that the political class had dictated the quality of land that could be planted with conifers because of the agricultural lobby; and that there was no political interest in a national forestry policy; that the value of small scale hill farms was secondary to forestry; and that people could not be trusted with trees and woods.

The literature also portrays a continuing level of institutional assumptions about public ignorance on trees, woods, forests and their uses due to perceived legacies of estate land ownership and local conflicts. The review indicated a certain inherited institutional paternal perception in its association of the public with 'a lack of sense', ignorance and hostility around forestry, along with a lack of institutional interest in public forestry education. The accepted institutional perception of the inherent negative public views on forestry did not take into account Departmental action on hill land acquisition from the 1920s, legacies which were not studied until the late twentieth century.

It is also clear from the overview that the future of native woodland in the deforested landscape of Ireland was confined to its continued, perilous existence in private ownership. The noteworthy disappearance of discourse on native woods, their cultivation and their uses after 1922 was evident, with little discussion on the destruction of most of the woodlands owned by the Irish state to plant non-native conifer plantations. This was justified by the value of conifers on poor land compared to the perceived lack of value of natural woodlands. The forester historians focused on conifer plantation development, and it is apparent that the hardwoods industries were left to fend for themselves. The dearth of political will for a national forestry policy was explained in terms of vote catching, and there was institutional criticism about the indifferent or regressive support from the political class.

Thus the literature overview highlights the effects of a single rationality in the historical record on state forestry development after 1922, which was generated in the state forest administration. This dominant approach to forest history can also be seen in allusions to the foresters' military approach to the planting program which did not

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<sup>302</sup> Convery, *Forestry and Irish economic and social development*; Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry'; Peter J. Clinch, 'Cost-benefit analysis of Irish forest policy', in David Pearce (ed.), *Environmental valuation in developed countries: case studies* (Cheltenham, 2006).

encourage public discussion, in the in land use conflicts, in the lack of interest in other approach to forestry besides the experimental non-native tree planting program, and the lack of education on any other tree species as an alternative to conifer trees. The literature on contested land-related issues that affected forestry, and on the paternal administrative practices reflected some of the inherited assumptions and structures of control from the DATI experimental conifer plantation program.<sup>303</sup> Unofficial adherence to the 1908 Forestry Report goal of one million trees was assumed by Forbes and by subsequent foresters to apply to conifer tree planting, is an indication of the lack of public discourse on national forestry policy from 1922 until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>304</sup>

This thesis proposes to address the gaps in the literature on the existence of alternative and inclusive views and perceptions on future Irish state forests. It investigates the existence of public interest and input on the future of state forestry, including native and mixed woodland in private or state ownership, and its hardwood production. It enquires into the political direction of the period, and whether 'apathetic' was an accurate depiction of the public discourse on state forestry and its future at the time. The research applies an innovative methodological approach to identify and analyse the issues raised in the gaps of this literature overview in public discourse on state forestry. These issues include: the existence of a forum for discussion, the perceptions of participants in the discourse on less well recorded issues, the input of experienced forest owners, the role of the political class in the discourse, the review of the forestry experiment, and the market development for wood products.

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<sup>303</sup> The Annual Forestry Reports of the Department of Agriculture remained unchanged in format from 1906 to 1933, with a focus on planting programs, numbers of apprentices, disease control and horticultural schemes.

<sup>304</sup> Since 1989, 'Policy... is no longer based simply on acquisition and planting. Marketing, environmental, social, demographic and other aspects of national importance are given due consideration and place.' Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 246. Post war policies, expansion, industrialisation, European Economic Community membership all contributed to shaping a national forestry policy of the twenty first century.

## Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter documents the search for a methodology that illuminates the historical views on trees, woods and forests, and the state, for a particular period. Part one introduces the approach to the methodology, its application and limitations. Part two summarises the methodology used in the analysis of discourse on forest-related issues in parliamentary debates, which also guided the review of the literature. As stated in chapter one, the central research of the thesis is the study of the foundations of the non-native conifer plantation approach to state forestry and the associated decline in native woodlands and its uses.

### I: Methodological approach

This research is situated between the fields of environmental history and natural resource management, combining the history of nature-related ideas, human values and resource management and allowing a wider frame of reference outside institutional historical narratives.<sup>305</sup> Although McNeill affirms the place of a constantly evolving nature in environmental history,<sup>306</sup> it is evident that people's perceived values of an environment determines their preferences, actions and strategies in the relationship and management of that environment and its historical record, preferences which often forgets to take into account that nature, the environment is the context in which human history unfolds.<sup>307</sup> Forest history-related disciplines also inquire into the identification of potentially conflicting visions and values.<sup>308</sup> The 'multiple conflicting values, moral positions and belief systems that are characteristic of the present-day issue of

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<sup>305</sup> Sörlin and Warde (eds), *Nature's end: History and the environment*, pp 1-22. Nils Bunnefeld, Emily Nicholson and E.J. Milner-Gulland (eds), *Decision-making in conservation and natural resource management: Models for interdisciplinary approaches* (Cambridge, 2017), 2.

<sup>306</sup> J. R. McNeill, 'The nature of environmental history', in *History and Theory*, xlii, no. December (2003), pp 5-43.

<sup>307</sup> Kathleen Schwerdtner Mánez, Poul Holm, Louis Blight, Marta Coll, Alison MacDiarmid, Henn Ojaveer, Bo Poulsen and Malcolm Tull, 'The future of the Oceans Past: Towards a global marine historical research initiative', in *PLOS ONE*, ix, no. 7 (2014).p. 5.

<sup>308</sup> Mauro Agnoletti and Steve Anderson, 'The Development of Forest History Research', *Methods and approaches in forest history* (Cambridge, 2000), 3.

resource sustainability'<sup>309</sup> present the environmental historian with the challenge of their representation in the context of the environment. This can be seen in the study of landscape where the actions of different cultures have generated ecosystem-wide changes that have often persisted for centuries, with institutional conflict evident from differing goals and motives.<sup>310</sup> Sörlin and Warde consider that the historical method is particularly suited to the articulation of the ways and means of this co-existence of nature and humanity.<sup>311</sup>

Human perceptions of nature have traditionally been based on historic cultural beliefs with their inherent conflicts, such as those held by Russian scientists who regarded peatlands as 'mistakes of nature', and as expendable resources rather than as valuable ecosystems.<sup>312</sup> The management systems described in forest histories had many objectives and motivations which were not always specified nor were the perspectives of the public included.<sup>313</sup> As people's responses to environmental issues are mediated by cultural perceptions,<sup>314</sup> even the provenance of documents may bias the building of institutional forest histories.<sup>315</sup> Forest historians were charged by Radkau who pointed out the with unstated values and unspoken emotions 'which permeate the literature on wood and forests'. He noted that 'too often they do not reveal themselves as such but are smuggled into the text, or else their author remains unaware of his subjective judgment.'<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Paul Warde, Libby Robin and Sverker Sörlin, *The environment: A history of the idea* (Baltimore, 2018), pp 151-181. J. Robinson, 'Squaring the circle? Some thoughts on the idea of sustainable development', in *Ecological Economics*, xlviii, no. 4 (2004). p. 382.

<sup>310</sup> Aaron M. Petty, Christian Isendahl, Hannah Brenkert-Smith, David J. Goldstein, Jeanine M. Rhemtulla, Syed Ajjur Rahman and Tyra C. Kumasi, 'Applying historical ecology to natural resource management institutions: Lessons from two case studies of landscape fire management', in *Global Environmental Change*, xxxi (2015).

<sup>311</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment: A history of the idea*, p. vii.

<sup>312</sup> Katja Bruisch, 'Nature mistaken: Resource-making, emotions and the transformation of peatland reclamation in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union', in *Environment & History* (2018). <https://doi.org/10.3197/096734018X15254461646567>.

<sup>313</sup> Winkel, 'Foucault in the forests: A review of 'Foucauldian' concepts in forest policy analysis', pp 81-91.

<sup>314</sup> Peter Burke, 'Afterword', in Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde (eds), *Nature's end: History and environment* (Hampshire and NYC, 2011), p. 355; J. Donald Hughes, *What is environmental history?* (Cambridge and Malden, 2006), p. 8.

<sup>315</sup> Schwerdtner Mánez, Holm, Blight, Coll, MacDiarmid, Ojaveer, Poulsen and Tull, 'The future of the Oceans Past: Towards a global marine historical research initiative', p. 6.

<sup>316</sup> Radkau, *Wood: A history*, pp 8-9.



In the rapidly evolving field of environmental history,<sup>317</sup> how can subjective views, judgments and perceptions on the history of the forest and arboreal environment and its management be addressed? In Peter Steinsiek's study of theoretical approaches to research in forest historiography, he concluded that, as forest history possesses scientific, socio-economic and political aspects, the connection of classical, interpretive, knowledge-gathering historical research with rule-based analytical research contributes to findings of greater verifiability.<sup>318</sup> This research finding prompted a cross-disciplinary search for an analytical approach to account for different perceptions on historical values and beliefs around state forestry in Ireland.

Forest history research is characteristically rich in information and detail, traditionally presented in a chronological narrative rather than accepted scientific definition of theory.<sup>319</sup> In their review of forest history and methodology, Agnoletti and Anderson welcomed both the absence of an agreed methodology,<sup>320</sup> and the opportunities presented by widening the research approach to include methodology from other disciplines.<sup>321</sup> They propose the consideration of the mutual influence between humans and the biosphere to integrate the environmental and cultural aspects. They do not, however, endorse any particular approach.

The contemporary dominant forestry discourse is considered by Williams to be the result of the universal tendency to see a division between nature and culture; a discourse that was based on the scientific reductionist view rather than an appreciation of holistic complexity.<sup>322</sup> These dominant discourses describe forestry management systems that, according to Cleaver were created out of society, reflecting its culture,

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<sup>317</sup> Verena Winiwarter, Marco Armiero, Petra Van Dam, Andreas Dix, Per Eliasson, Poul Holm, Leos Jeleček, Robert A. Lambert, Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, Manuel Gonzalez de Molina, Timo Myllyntaus, Oosthoek Jan, Christian Pfister and Lajos Rácz, 'Environmental history in Central Europe from 1994 - 2004: Enthusiasms and consolidation', in *Environment & History*, x, no. 4 (2004), pp 501-530.

<sup>318</sup> Peter M. Steinsiek, 'Theory in (forest) history: A success story?', in *Forest Policy and Economics*, li (2015). p.60.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> An example of a forest history narrative by Richard Hobbs, 'Woodland restoration in Scotland: Ecology, history, culture, economics, politics and change', in *Journal of Environmental Management*, xc (2009), pp 2857-2865.

<sup>321</sup> Mauro Agnoletti and Steve Anderson, *Methods and approaches in forest history* (Oxford & New York, 2000), pp 1-7, 17.

<sup>322</sup> M. Williams, 'Putting 'Flesh on the Carbon-Based Bones' of Forest History', in M Agnoletti and S. Anderson (eds), *Methods and approaches in forest history* (Oxford & New York, 2000), iii, pp 35-6.

and are changing over time.<sup>323</sup> Both authors conclude that understanding community perceptions of place and being are essential to forest management and its history.<sup>324</sup> Thus the dominant forestry discourse, which is primarily concerned with production issues, requires a broader historical context to describe the cultural and social context of forest history and its interpretation.<sup>325</sup> How can a dominant view of forest history be reconciled with an understanding of the non-institutional view of trees, woods and forests and the state for a particular period of time?

This inclusive perception of forestry, community and nature is fundamental to recent natural resource management practice, and recognition of different values and beliefs has been a growing practice of international forestry resource management systems, particularly in Europe, the United States, Australia and Canada. In his study of natural resource administration in the United States and Canada, Donald Sparling discusses the role of the public and its relationship with resource management, and the challenge of including sociological and ecological values.<sup>326</sup> Agnoletti and Anderson observed that to signify forest nature as an 'actor', playing an important role in the many ecosystems in this history, is one of the most important issues of our time.<sup>327</sup> Warde *et al.*, proposed that this challenge could be addressed by considering the human aspect of environmental histories in geological time and the forest (the non-human) in ethical terms.<sup>328</sup> The ethical or value-based aspect of resource management literature addresses the perceptions of participants on their values.<sup>329</sup> As values can

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<sup>323</sup> F Cleaver, 'Reinventing institutions: bricolage and the social embeddedness of natural resource management', in *European Journal of Development Research*, xiv (2002), pp 11-30.

<sup>324</sup> Petty, Isendahl, Brenkert-Smith, Goldstein, Rhemtulla, Rahman and Kumasi, 'Applying historical ecology to natural resource management institutions: Lessons from two case studies of landscape fire management', p. 8.

<sup>325</sup> C. Ernst, 'How professional historians can play a useful role in the study of an interdisciplinary forest history', in M Agnoletti and S. Anderson (eds), *Methods and approaches in forest history* (Oxford & NYC, 2000), iii, pp 30-33.

<sup>326</sup> Donald L. Sparling, *Natural Resource Administration: Wildlife, Fisheries, Forests and Parks* (San Diego & London, 2014), p. 297.

<sup>327</sup> M. Agnoletti and S. Anderson (eds), *Forest history: International studies on socio-economic and forest ecosystem change* (2000), 2, p. 17.

<sup>328</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment: A history of the idea*, p. 176.

<sup>329</sup> David N. Bengston, 'Changing forest values and ecosystem management', in *Society and Natural Resources*, vii (1994), pp 515-533. Eloise Seymour, Allan Curtis, David Pannell, Catherine Allan and Anna Roberts, 'Understanding the role of assigned values in natural resource management', in *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management*, xvii (2010), pp 142-53. W. L. Adamowicz and T. S. Veenan, 'Forest policy and the environment: changing paradigms', in *Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques*, xxiv, no. 2 (1998), pp S51-S61. They found that evaluating ecological integrity as well as social values was necessary for forest management. Richard W. Guldin, Niels Elers Koch, John Parrotta, Christian Gamborg and Bo Jellesmark

'predispose attitudes and ultimately behaviour',<sup>330</sup> Jones *et al.* referred to values which 'represent the deeply held, emotional aspects of people's cognition,' in their study on the many ways people think about the environment besides its economic or utilitarian value.<sup>331</sup>

Values thus represent the basis of attitudes and beliefs. An example of a nature-oriented value system is illustrated in Paterson's typology of environmental values used in a study on the integration of the protection of biodiversity and island heritage,<sup>332</sup> which distinguishes the aesthetic, economic, instrumental, cultural, natural historic, and intrinsic values. These are described as follows:

Aesthetic value: the importance of the landscape and the scenery to the diversity and beauty of the trees being planted.

Economic value: the role of financial incentives in the value of nature.

Instrumental value: the importance of nature in providing for human welfare.

Cultural value: the value of nature based on traditional or historic relationships between people and their surroundings.

Intrinsic value: the value of nature for its own sake.<sup>333</sup>

Forest values have also been codified for both commercial and non-commercial, material and non-material use and appreciation. Manning *et al.* found that identification of values and attitudes in forestry management was particularly useful where forestry management is contested.<sup>334</sup> They identified different opportunities for people to interact with trees, woods and forests from survey data, which were expressed as a perceived value of a forest in its landscape and its management. The values recorded included aesthetic, ecological, economic, educational, historical and

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Thorsen, 'Forest science and forest policy in Europe, Africa and the Middle East: Building bridges to a sustainable future', in *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*, xix, no. 4 (2004), pp 5-13.

<sup>330</sup> Stewart D. Allen, Denise A. Wickwar, Fred P. Clark, Robert Potts and Stephanie A. Snyder, *Values, beliefs and attitudes: A technical guide for Forest Service land and resource management, planning and decision-making* (United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, 2009), PNW-GTR-788.

<sup>331</sup> Natalie A. Jones, Sylvie Shaw, Helen Ross, Katherine Witt and Breanna Pinner, 'The study of human values in understanding and managing social-ecological systems', in *Ecology & Society*, xxi, no. 1 (2016). She distinguished those that are broad or 'held' values, those that are specific or 'assigned' values and those that are reflect lived experiences or 'relational' or 'felt' values.

<sup>332</sup> Barbara Paterson, 'Ethics of wildlife conservation: Overcoming the human-nature dualism', in *Bioscience*, lvi (2006). p. 142-9.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> Robert Manning, William Valliere and Ben Minter, 'Values, ethics and attitudes toward national forest management: An empirical study', in *Society and Natural Resources*, xii (1999), pp 421-436.

cultural, intellectual, moral, recreational, scientific, spiritual, therapeutic, work-related, and residential. The tabulation of these values and their description is included in Appendix I. This typology was used to establish a guiding framework capable of including economic, social and environmental aspects of state forestry.

Although this approach is now generally required under resource management legislation in most countries and determined by survey, in the historical record, the spoken or unspoken values is to be found in discourse rather than in surveys. 'Discourse' is a term widely used in several fields over the last thirty years, particularly in political science and environmental policy. Discourse analysis has its own history and geography expressed through language and historical context.<sup>335</sup> In environmental policy analysis, discourse analysis is a communication tool to facilitate understanding amongst stakeholders through analysis of language,<sup>336</sup> and to render nature linguistically intelligible.<sup>337</sup> Arts and Buizer show that discourse can refer to the meanings of words and texts, the shared frame of meaning, as well as a social practice, some aspects of which are often not immediately evident.<sup>338</sup> These shared frames of meaning can be identified as discourse coalitions in opposition to a distinct group of different values and beliefs. As language conveys meaning but is also the producer of meaning, this can result in linguistic and administrative dominance in environmental conflicts.<sup>339</sup> This dominance is maintained by separation of scientific knowledge and non-professional knowledge,<sup>340</sup> also known as local, experience, or lay

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<sup>335</sup> Raymond M. Garrison and Bryan H. Massam, 'Changing governments and changing environmental politics in Ontario: A discourse analysis', in *Local Environment*, vi, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 177.

<sup>338</sup> Bas Arts and Marleen Buizer, 'Forests, discourses, institutions: A discursive-institutional analysis of global forest governance', in *Journal of Forest Policy and Economics*, xi (2009), pp 340-347.

<sup>339</sup> Garrison and Massam, 'Changing governments and changing environmental politics in Ontario: A discourse analysis', p. 330.

<sup>340</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 180.

knowledge,<sup>341</sup> both being grounded in cultural assumptions that are not universally shared,<sup>342</sup> and which change over time.

Discourse analysis can also highlight changing values and changing relationships identified in the discourse. Williams views the challenge of the forestry historian as one of determining these relationships, and defines forest history as an inquiry into the changing relationships between forests and forester, forests and the public, and the public and forests.<sup>343</sup> By understanding these relationships, discourse analysis can help to identify how society or state forestry administration is shaped through discursive interaction.<sup>344</sup>

Thus, as historical research cannot conduct the surveys of inquiry, the methodological approach to this study is based on discourse analysis of historical records. This approach can illuminate the changing relationships between participants in state forest debate, as well as their perceptions on the values of trees, woods and forests and their uses, and can contribute to understanding the underlying premises of forest history authors. This approach also brings attention to aspects that might not have been recorded in existing forest histories, by revealing participants' perceived awareness of the wider arboreal environment.

### *Terminology*

The terms 'environment', 'forest culture', 'wood users', 'natural woods', 'native woods', 'deforestation' and 'afforestation', amongst others, have many meanings with as many definitions as there are countries, due to different cultural interpretations. The term 'arboreal environment' was not a defined concept in the early part of the twentieth century, and its use risks the inclusion of recent perceptions of this term. A lexical search of Oireachtas debates of the 1920s and 30s did not find any references to 'environment' a term which is used first in 1948 by ornithologist and environmental historian, William Vogt.<sup>345</sup> But the absence of this term does not preclude participants'

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<sup>341</sup> Vuuko Kurki, Annina Takala and Eija Vinnan, 'Clashing coalitions: A discourse analysis of an artificial groundwater recharge project in Finland', in *Local Environment*, xxi, no. 11 (2016).

<sup>342</sup> Hajer and Fischer (eds), *Living with nature: Environmental politics as cultural discourse*.

<sup>343</sup> Williams, 'Putting 'Flesh on the Carbon-Based Bones' of Forest History', pp 35-6.

<sup>344</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 182.

<sup>345</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment: A history of the idea*, pp 9-14.

interest in nature, rather this interest is evident in their discourse on deforestation, climate effects of forestry, choice of species for planting, and appreciation of trees in the landscape. For the purpose of this thesis, arboreal environment is understood as a general term that includes the tree-related ecosystem and its associated flora and fauna, within and interacting with the wider environment.

By contrast, the term 'forest culture' was found in lexical searches of Oireachtas debates during the 1920s and 30s. This demonstrates an awareness amongst parliamentarians of the importance of wood and forest tradition and heritage. Public use of trees, woods and forests can be associated with a particular forest culture. Forest historian Ito Taiichi defines forest culture as that which is related both to the physical and mental values of the people, foresters and those involved in the traditional wood sector.<sup>346</sup> It includes the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits that constitute a distinct complex of tradition of a racial or social group.<sup>347</sup> In this study, forest culture relates to the values of the main participants in Irish state forestry discourse, the foresters, and the people who interact with trees, woods and forests.

The term 'public' is defined more broadly in this historical study than how it is used in recent natural resource administration, which is limited to the people who interact with the resources managed by the administration, and the people who are employed by government agencies.<sup>348</sup> In this thesis, the term 'public' also includes those people who might not have a direct interaction with forests, but on whose behalf the state manages the forests.

For the purposes of this research, 'discourse' is defined as 'an ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social phenomena',<sup>349</sup> which contributes to a framework for differing narratives, concepts, ideologies and value belief systems.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Ito Taiichi, 'Review of forest culture research in Japan: Toward a new paradigm of forest culture', in Kyoji Sassa (ed.), *IURFO Conference* (Japan, 19-23 October 1990), 54, pp 148-55.

<sup>347</sup> European Environment Agency website, Glossary, (Source: WEBSTE) [https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary#c0=all&c4=10&b\\_start=620&c2=Environment](https://www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary#c0=all&c4=10&b_start=620&c2=Environment). (Accessed 14 November 2017).

<sup>348</sup> Sparling, *Natural Resource Administration: Wildlife, Fisheries, Forests and Parks*, pp 279-80.

<sup>349</sup> Hajer and Versteeg, 'A decade of discourse analysis of environmental politics: Achievements, challenges and perspectives', p. 175.

<sup>350</sup> Jurgen Klein, 'Fiddling while Madagascar burns: Deforestation discourses and highland history', in *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, lviii (2004).

## II: Method

This thesis is based on discourse analysis of parliamentary debates and review of published material to uncover contemporary ideas and perceptions on forest-related issues and the future of state forestry, at the time of the foundation of the Irish state. Present-day resource management tools were applied to assist the initial identification of the main historical environmental issues, causes and impacts, specifically the Driving forces, Pressures, State, Impacts and Responses (DPSIR) framework,<sup>351</sup> and Concept Maps (CMAP).<sup>352</sup> These proved useful in establishing a preliminary understanding of the leading environmental factors in Irish forestry history in the early twentieth century, which included land issues and deforestation, poverty and unemployment, and timber supply. This initial review contributed to the development of a typology of forest-related themes based on environmental, economic and social aspects of trees, forests and their uses. The typology guided the study of discourse in publicly available documentation, which in turn provided a framework for a more structured historical review.

While the institutional aspects of Irish state forestry management of the 1920s and 30s can be gleaned from published records, their perspective on less-well recorded issues and that of the public was harder to find. The voice of the public in newspaper articles was limited to editors' views, articles and letters, and to a few independent publications. Thus, this thesis uses the archives of the debates of the Irish Parliament, an t-Oireachtas to trace public opinion as it was articulated by parliamentarians, both Senators and Deputies, or Teachtaí Dála (TDs). These debates between Ministers and public representatives on forest-related issues provide considerable information on participants' perceptions of trees, woods, forests and their uses in relation to the state, as well as the relationship between the public and the state on forest-related issues, and have not been closely studied.

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<sup>351</sup> Hanne Svarstad, Lars Kjerulf Peterson, Dale Rothman, Henk Siepel and Frank Watzold, 'Discursive biases of the environmental research framework DPSIR', in *Land Use Policy*, xxv (2008). DPSIR - Driving forces, Pressures, State, Impacts and Responses.

<sup>352</sup> Concept Maps <https://cmap.ihmc.us/>

(Accessed 27 March 2016).

The bi-cameral Irish Parliament was established in 1922 based on the Westminster model. Some experienced former Members of Westminster Parliament were elected to the Oireachtas, but most representatives did not have parliamentary experience.<sup>353</sup> There was extensive public debate on forestry-related issues in the exchange between the Ministers and the public representatives, both in the Chamber, in Committee and in Parliamentary Questions (PQs). The record of this exchange is evidence of considerable individual experience and knowledge. The review of written and oral parliamentary questions was also a source of information on Departmental activities, and all contributed to establishing the issues of importance to TDs, and perceptions of the institution of the state on these issues. Forest-related issues were of both national and local interest, and stimulated wide-ranging debate.

Although political affiliations are recorded, this study does not seek to present a detailed analysis of the framing of political party positions on forest-related issues. Rather, the thesis aims to establish a narrative of the discourse on forest-related issues of greatest interest to the participants, through the analysis of themes raised in parliamentary discourse, in the context of political parties and governments. The annual Dáil in Committee Estimates debates and those on the 1928 Forestry Bill, with Parliamentary Questions and replies, were identified as a major source for such an analysis. Government speakers in these debates had priority and all were limited to ten minutes. Speakers could not contribute to the debate more than three times on any one occasion.<sup>354</sup> For this study, all Dáil debates and Parliamentary Questions on forest-related issues from 1919 to 1939 were coded and numerically analysed. A list of documents coded for forestry-related issues is in Appendix IV. Seanad debates were few, the longest debates on forest-related issues were in 1924, and in 1928 on the Forestry Bill, and there were passing references to forestry in Seanad debates on other issues. Both these contributions as well as the particular state forestry debates in the Seanad were not coded but were included in the narrative of analysis where relevant. Short question and answers on forest-related issues in the Committee of Public Accounts annual review were also not coded, but also used for the analysis.

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<sup>353</sup> Mary Stafford, 'The Senate and the Civil War 1922-1925: Prologue, Duration and Protracted Aftermath' (PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2012). Established 11 Dec 1922.

<sup>354</sup> 'Report of Committee on Standing Orders', *Provisional Dáil Éireann Reports* (Dublin 14 September 1922).



## *Analysis of debates*

After an initial review of Oireachtas debates on forestry-related issues, an outline coding system was initially set up with reference to different typologies of forest values. With the accessibility of these debates on-line, the analysis was initially attempted with Excel software, but for more efficient management of large amounts of information and more rapid analysis, MaxQDA, a software tool for computer-based data and text analysis, was used. It was originally developed in the 1980s for analysis of words, phrases and meaning in political discourse on the environment,<sup>355</sup> which allowed an analysis of stakeholder input over time.<sup>356</sup> MaxQDA facilitates hierarchical text coding with memos, where the initial typology of codes of forest-related issues were defined during the analyses, and refined during the course of research. For the purposes of this research, MaxQDA was used to determine themes and topics of segments of text to chart meaning and value. A list of codes and subcodes used in the analysis is in Appendix IV.

During a forest-related debate, each speaker could raise several topics, each one of which would be coded. Each code was related to a segment of text. Two or more codes for the speaker and issue were assigned to each segment, with some segments having several codes. Thus quantification of coded segments indicated a relative rather than an absolute value on forest-related issues. The Minister's contributions during debates and replies to questions from the TDs were also coded, when they were in addition to the material in the Department of Agriculture's Annual Forestry Reports that were summarised at the start of the debate on forestry. Procedural exchanges were not recorded.

Basic quantitative analyses of numbers of contributions of participants and frequencies according to topic were applied, from which a determination of importance could be made. Only the TD contributions in the Dáil were graphed for comparison over time, as Seanad contributions were made infrequently and often associated with debates on other issues. The frequency of times a topic was raised in debate and in questions was assumed to relate to its interest to the participant, indicating the topics,

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<sup>355</sup> Udo Kuckartz, *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software* (English, Second ed., London, 2014).

<sup>356</sup> Robin Grimble and Kate Wellard, 'Stakeholder methodologies in natural resource management: a review of principles, contexts, experiences and opportunities', in *Agricultural Systems*, lv, no. 2 (1997); Andrej Lange, Rosemarie Siebert and Tim Barkmann, 'Sustainability in land management: An analysis of stakeholder perceptions in Rural Northern Germany', in *Sustainability*, vii, no. 1 (2015).

themes or issues of value to the speakers. Content analysis was also considered useful for analysing changes over time, and attention was paid to a particular topic and how it was valued or portrayed, both positively and negatively. Summary grids were plotted and graphed and used to illustrate the narrative of the discourse.

### *Results of analysis*

When the methodology was finalised, parliamentary forest-related debates in committee, in house, on legislation, and parliamentary questions from 1919 to 1939 were coded. The Dáil Debates from 1922 to 1939 were analysed, taking into account 3,137 coded segments, from 187 documents, using 140 codes. 75% of documents analysed had five or under coded segments, the longest debate had 306 coded segments. All contributions on forest-related debate and parliamentary questions over the two decades were shown to have increased over the period.

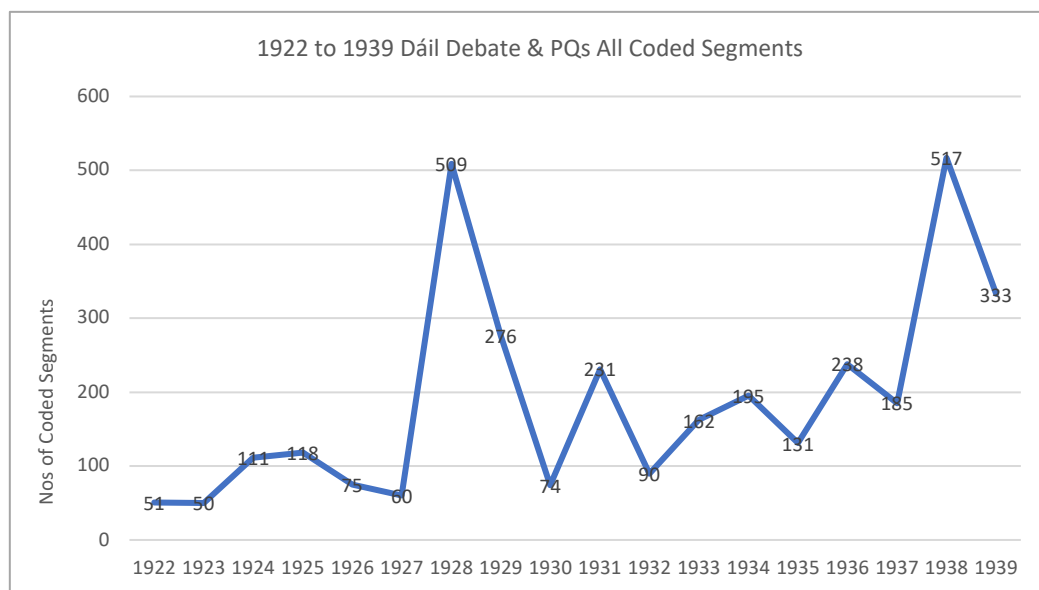


Figure 3: Dáil debates and PQs by TDs on all forest-related issues by year

This figure shows the increase in contributions to Dáil debate and Parliamentary Questions on forest-related issues over two decades by all TDs, measured by numbers of coded segments. The spike in contributions in 1928 was due to the discourse on the Forestry Bill. Detailed analyses of forest-related discourse during two periods of government from 1922 to 1931 under Cumann na nGaedhael, and 1932 to 1939 under Fianna Fáil are presented in Chapters Five and Six.

Debates and Parliamentary Questions during this period were also coded for political party which gives an indication of relative participation, as shown below.

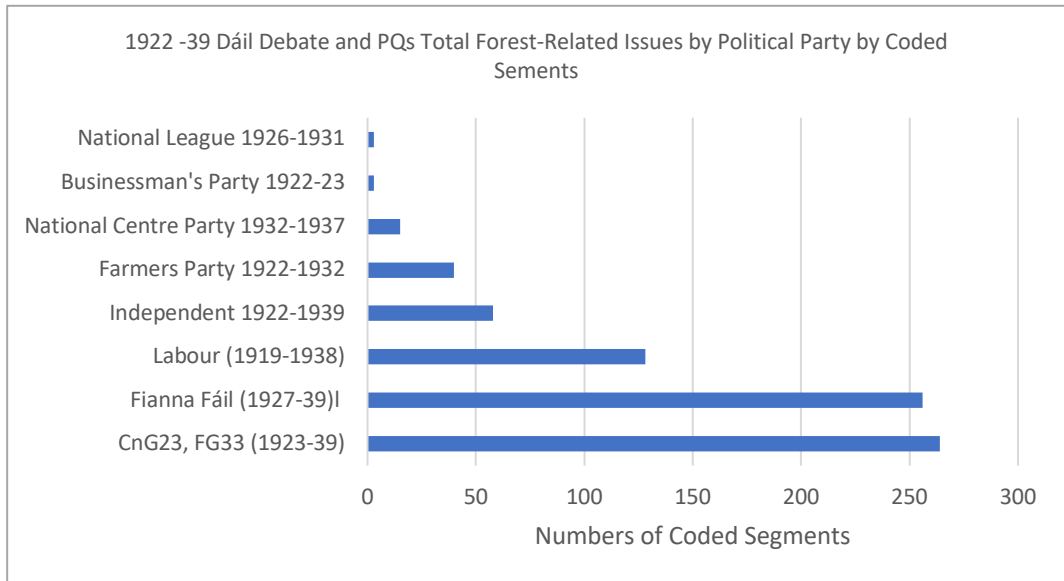


Figure 4: 1922-39 Dáil debates by political parties on forest-related issues.

This figure shows that members of Cumann na nGaedhael are the most active in forest-related debates over the period, with Fianna Fáil contributing the most during the debate on the Forestry Bill of 1928 and afterwards into the 1930s. For their small membership, the Farmer’s Party representatives were active participants in the debates on forest-related issues.

### *Themes and topics of interest*

Forest-related issues in debates and parliamentary questions were coded by theme and topic. This is shown in the following figure of the most frequently raised themes in Dáil debate and parliamentary questions over the first eighteen years of the Irish state.

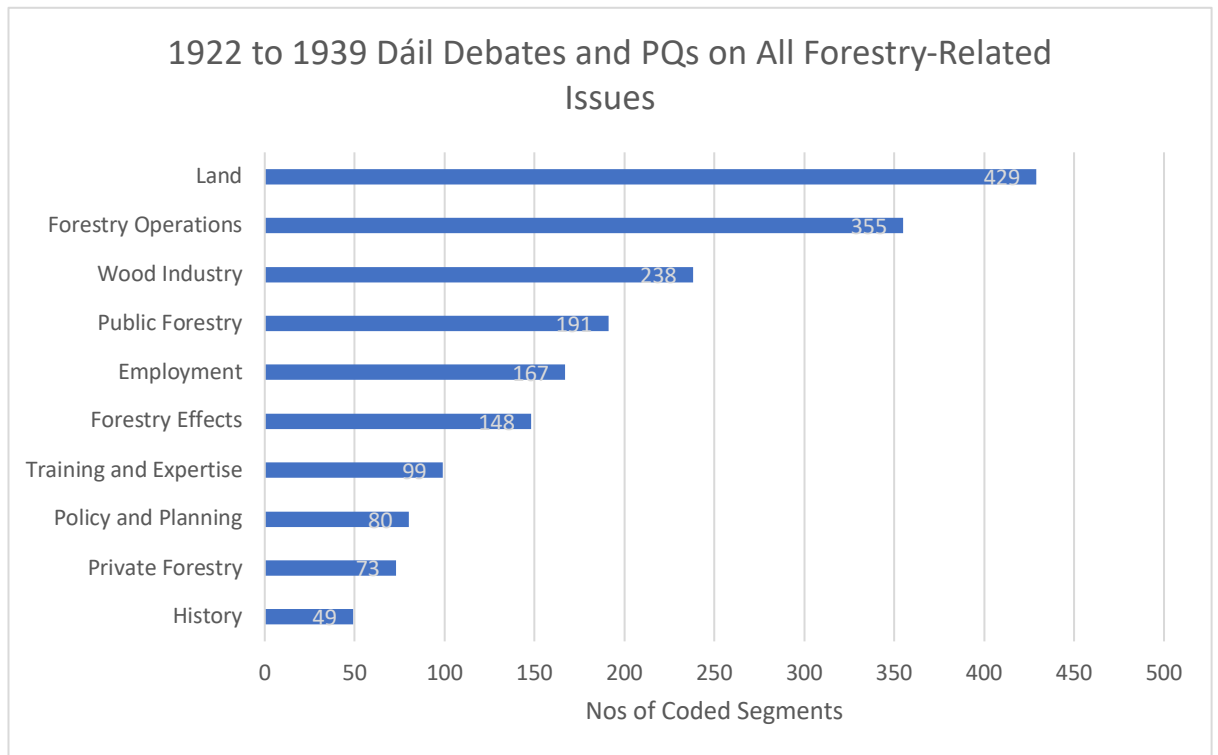


Figure 5: 1922-39 Dáil debates and PQs on all forest-related issues

This figure shows the dominance of the themes of land, forestry operations, and wood industry, in all forest-related Dáil debates and Parliamentary Questions from 1922 to 1939.

Aspects of themes have been subdivided into topics representing particular issues discussed in relation to trees, woods, forests and their use, which are represented in a hierarchy of codes. This is illustrated in the table below.

<b>Codes: Themes and Topics</b>	
Land	Training and Expertise
Land Availability	Forestry Expertise
Peatland	Foresters Education
Gaeltacht land	Foreign Expertise
Land Use, Rights	
Mountain Land	History
Foreign Forestry Schemes	
Public Forestry	Private Forestry
Public Input	Forestry Operations
Recreation/Health	Wood Regeneration/ Preservation
Historical Forest culture	Tree Felling
Attitudes	Forest Maintenance
Arbor Day	Replanting/Planting
Public Education	Species Selection
	Nurseries
Employment	Wood Industry
Forestry Administration	International Wood Industry
Forestry Employment	Industrial Wood Industry
Wood Industry Employment	Department Sawmill
	Timber Import
Policy and Planning	Timber Supply
	Wood Fuel
Forestry Effects	Timber Export
Flooding, Soil	Traditional Wood Industry
Aesthetic	Transport
Deforestation	
Climate, Climate Change	

Table 1: Coding hierarchy for forest-related themes & topics in Dáil debates.

Each segment of coded text can be coded under several topics. While there is some overlap in themes and topics, the essence of the meaning of the segment of text is coded into one of these codes. The frequency of occurrence of these codes represents an indication of their interest to the speaker, their importance or their value. The frequency of issues raised varied according to several factors: the period of debate, whether the contribution was made during the estimates, or during debates on legislation, or in parliamentary questions. Less frequently raised themes of employment, physical environment, education, or cultural issues were also recorded and incorporated into the analyses and narratives of the study. After the results were analysed, the historiography, official reports and publications on Irish state forest history were re-examined in light of the findings which emerged from the analysis. The analysis of the Ministers' contributions in the Dáil also provides an insight into his understanding of forestry, foresters and the public, and his intentions for legislation and for state forestry development.

### *Limitations of the methodology*

The limitations of the methodology are seen in the application of the MaxQDA text analysis to historical discourse where the coded segment is considered a unit of

measurement which is established on the basis of a subjective decision on its relevance. The level of interest is determined by the frequency of occurrence, without correlating information to improve the assignment of codes. As there are no comparative studies on the coding analysis, this approach can only be used as a guide to relative incidence rather than an absolute measure.

The second limitation of the methodology is the amount of material this approach generated in the coding process which proved challenging for the development of the most concise synthesis. Thus, there were many aspects of this study that could not be included in the narrative due to limitations on time and space, outside of the main topics of interest and selected issues of particular relevance, such as Arbor Day.

Other limitations of this approach were the few debates available in the Seanad on forest-related issues for comparative purposes. Only the Dáil archive was analysed using MaxQDA, as the annual debates and parliamentary questions provided a continuity for comparison. Seanad contributions on forest-related debates infrequent and mostly on tree-felling control. These contributions were not coded but their issues were included in the narrative.

Due to the time required for coding analysis, analysis of Departmental Annual Reports was not possible although they would have provided an interesting comparative narrative.

In conclusion, the methodology developed for this research was found to be a useful means of analysing the perceptions of participants in parliamentary debates and questions, in particular how Ministers and parliamentarians perceived forest-related issues during the first years of the Irish Free State, as well as their interrelationships. This methodological approach brings to light key participants in discourse and debates, their perceptions, and hitherto hidden views and voices. It also provides a context for reviewing published work on trees, woods and forestry, their uses and the state. It allows for the identification of the unrecorded aspects of state forest history where different values, assumed or stated were held by administrators, foresters and historians on environmental, economic, social and cultural issues. Analysis of the results illustrates the local, experiential, and lay view of trees, woods, forests and their uses in relation to the state, as well as the expert and political views. Discourse analysis assisted in determining the meaning of an issue, and its interest to the participants, as well as identifying systems of thought and practice. This was shown to change over time as the relationship between the participants changed.

## Chapter Four: British and Irish legacies

The inheritance of aspects of the British administration of land use and forestry in Ireland in 1922, was a mixed blessing for the future of Irish state forestry. This chapter explores the contextual background of the legacy of British land legislation and its newly established forestry administration, which influenced not only the extent of trees, woods and forests in Ireland but also the attitudes of later administrators and people towards trees, woods, forests, their uses and the state, particularly in relation to deforestation and replanting.

The first part of this chapter enquires into the legacy of land use, the inherited arboreal environment and public participation within that environment, prior to 1900. Part two looks at the British forestry administration established since 1900, in response to extreme deforestation in Ireland. Part three discusses the brief legacy of the Provisional (Revolutionary) Irish government's forest administration, whose vision for the re-forestation of Ireland was expounded in the first unofficial Irish parliament, Dáil Éireann. All of these legacies have potentially contributed to differing visions and values that have shaped the development of state forestry in the Irish Free State from 1922.

### I: British administration and forestry in Ireland

British administration in Ireland was founded on a long history of management based on the early settlement of lands by loyal subjects of the English crown, which was generally accompanied by tree-felling. The question of deforestation of native woods dating from the post-Cromwellian period of settlement is actively debated by historians and naturalists, such as Forbes, Everett, Neeson, Mackay, McEvoy, Fitzpatrick, Gray, O'Carroll, Rackham, Kelly-Quinn, Carey, Hall, and McCracken, amongst others.<sup>357</sup> Both the extent of native woods and the causes of the rapid

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<sup>357</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries'; Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire'; Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions'. Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800*. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*. Mackay, *Trodden Gold: Merchandise of silk and paper and wood and the glory of the arat-tree*;

increase in tree felling after settlement are uncertain, with different emphases on the main drivers of timber consumption and woodland removal. War, invasion, appropriation and long disputes over title to land ownership left woods vulnerable to destruction.<sup>358</sup> Whether it was the case that 'the clearance of the primeval forest was an essential part of the operation of colonization', according to forest historian Fitzpatrick,<sup>359</sup> or, as was Forbes' view, that the tradition of commonage, and the division of townlands were the main consumers,<sup>360</sup> deforestation ensued. Historian William Lecky observed that, in the late sixteenth century:

The new proprietors had none of the associations which attached the Irish to the trees that had sheltered their childhood and which their forefathers had planted; and fearing lest a political change should deprive them of their estates, they speedily cut down and sold the woods, and thus inflicted an almost irreparable injury on the country.<sup>361</sup>

However, he also noted that historian James Froude attributed the clearing of forests to the 'perversity of the native Irish'.<sup>362</sup> Thus, whether by owner or disowned, native trees, woods and forests were rapidly consumed for commercial gain,<sup>363</sup> whether to be sold as fuel for industry or exported as timbers, by the early eighteenth century, having been a wood exporter, Ireland became a net importer of timber.<sup>364</sup> Eighteenth century forester Hayes remarked that:

Such has been the waste of timber in Ireland during the last century from the unsettled state of the kingdom, and other causes amongst which we may reckon the introduction

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Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*. McEvoy, 'Irish native woodlands: Their present condition'. Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*. Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry'. Niall O'Carroll (ed.), *The forests of Ireland: History, distribution and silviculture* (Dublin, 1984). Rackham, 'Looking for ancient woodland in Ireland'. Carey, *If trees could talk: Wicklow's trees and woodlands for over four centuries*. Hall, 'The history of Irish forests since the Ice Age'. Kelly-Quinn, 'The evolution of forestry in County Wicklow from prehistory to the present'. McCracken, *The Irish woods since Tudor times: Distribution and exploitation*.

<sup>358</sup> Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800*, pp 57-90.

<sup>359</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 4.

<sup>360</sup> Forbes, 'Tree planting in Ireland during four centuries', pp 6-15.

<sup>361</sup> William Edward Lecky, *A history of Ireland in the eighteenth century* (London, 1913 (publ. 1892-6)), 1, pp 333-6.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336. Footnote

<sup>363</sup> Anna Pilz and Andrew Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', in *New Hibernia Review*, xix, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>364</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 67.



of iron forges and furnaces, that there scarcely exists in some districts, a sufficiency to favour the supposition, that we ever possessed a valuable growth.<sup>365</sup>

As well as consumption of trees for charcoal furnaces, woods were felled to increase land for arable cultivation and for security of settlers. Wood clearance for political reasons was still in evidence up to the early nineteenth century when some woods were 'extirpated ... to destroy the shelter which bands of outlaws found in their recesses' according to Professor John Kane.<sup>366</sup> Travel writer John Carr recorded that After the 1798 Rebellion, the army fired the oak woods around Glanmore in County Wicklow, which took three weeks to burn.<sup>367</sup>

What is less well discussed in the literature that with the clearance or enclosure of native woods,<sup>368</sup> there was an accompanying loss of associated ancient local forest traditions and customary regulation of use, represented by the pre-Christian Brehon texts on tree management.<sup>369</sup> The demise of the forests of Slievenamon recorded in song, affected hundreds of local people who had to turn to peat sods for fuel.<sup>370</sup> With an increasing population over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, local use of marginal land for grazing, and any shrubs or bushes for fuel hindered the regeneration of trees and shrubs. This contributed to the increasingly treeless, bare presentation of the scenery outside of estate walls.

Without community ownership, people no longer had access to wood or even a relationship with woods, and traditional forest culture gradually became part of local mythology. This disconnection of the local people from trees, woods and forests was observed by Arthur Young, a visiting eighteenth century English agronomist . He recorded that every part of Ireland showed the existence of former woods but recorded

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<sup>365</sup> Samuel Hayes, *A practical treatise on planting and the management of woods and coppices* (Dublin, 1794). p. 106-7.

<sup>366</sup> Professor of Philosophy and Chemistry,

<sup>367</sup> John Carr, in *Hibernian Magazine*, ii (1810).

<sup>368</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 78.

<sup>369</sup> Fergus Kelly, 'Trees in early Ireland', in *Irish Forestry*, lvi, no. 1 (1999). Traditional woodland culture had benefited from an ancient system of customary regulation under the Brehon Laws, ancient law-texts that were written down during the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and survived up to the seventeenth century in parts of Ireland under Gaelic control.

<sup>370</sup> M. Larkin, 'Slievenamon', in M. Larkin (ed.), *A Social History of forestry in Ireland* (Coillte, 2000), pp 76-81.

whole regions free from trees except around gentlemen's houses.<sup>371</sup> Young's landlord host attributed the blame for arboreal destruction to local people, saying that it was the:

...common people, who they say, have an aversion to a tree; at the earliest age they steal it for a walking stick; afterwards for a spade handle; later for a car shaft; and later still for a cabin rafter.<sup>372</sup>

Young wondered why the landlords did not make tenants preservers of woods and tree planters, or even supply the essential pieces of timber that they needed for agricultural and household use at cost price, for fuel or osiers for baskets.<sup>373</sup>

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Wicklow estate of the Fitzwilliam family employed a team of keepers, wood rangers and woodmen to protect their woods and coppices, applying significant fines and punishments in the local court for the theft of wood by local people.<sup>374</sup> In the early nineteenth century, cutting down ornamental shrubs, trees on a demesne, or setting fire to the underwood received the death penalty.<sup>375</sup> This was a common estate management practice of the time.

Although Froude proposed that the ownership of Irish soil had descended from a time when the lordship of the Big House was a military command,<sup>376</sup> and settlement an uncertain and contested adventure, Everett rejected the claim that forests had been felled in Ireland by incoming settlers over the centuries and proposed that settlement brought a new level of civilisation and morality that could be seen in their approach to tree planting<sup>377</sup>:

Far from carelessly wrecking a great arboreal patrimony, the English conquest and the rising ascendancy, introduced conservative standards of forest management until then neglected.<sup>378</sup>

His view was that on land cleared of trees and people, the new landowner considered that:

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<sup>371</sup> Arthur Young, *A tour in Ireland (1776-1779)* (2nd ed., London, 1780), p. 85.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., p. 86. Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800*. 1705 and 1710 Acts prohibiting the taking of timber. Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>374</sup> Carey, *If trees could talk: Wicklow's trees and woodlands for over four centuries*, pp 225-6.

<sup>375</sup> John Joe Costin, Nurseries in the past, present and future, personal communication.

<sup>376</sup> James A. Froude, *The English in Ireland* (London, 1874), ii, p. 191.

<sup>377</sup> Everett, *The woods of Ireland: A history, 700-1800*, p. 15.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

...extensive planting was readily envisaged as an expression of modern, largely Protestant civility, opposing more or less latent traditions of Irish barbarism and popery.<sup>379</sup>

This civility was personified by the enlightened landlord, who introduced the wise use of resources, the planting of trees to beautify the landscape and the overall civilizing influence of the estate.<sup>380</sup> Forbes wrote about the contribution to the landscape of the eighteenth and nineteenth century landowner's planting objectives to perpetuate aesthetic beauty and order with the judicious planting of trees for amenity and timber,<sup>381</sup> estimated at nearly half a million acres of trees before the Great Famine in 1841. These included trees planted for shelter, in hedges and for amenity by larger tenants of the landowners.<sup>382</sup> From this time, nurseries supplied trees and plants to fulfil the arboreal and gardening requirements of the new landowners.<sup>383</sup>

Lyttleton observed the importance of the role of the landscape, as well as buildings and dress for the new settlers in Ireland, in demonstrating personal worth that was independent of noble (or native) ancestry.<sup>384</sup> These eighteenth and nineteenth century expressions of civilisation were assisted by legislation to compel and encourage landowners and wood industries to plant trees with grants from the Royal Dublin Society, from 1741 to 1808.<sup>385</sup> Eighteenth century forester Samuel Hayes perceived the potential of re-afforesting Ireland, and advised landowners on wood preservation and replanting the cleared land, at the time when valuable trees were oaks. He observed that:

Ireland in due time is capable of producing timber of the first magnitude; and that consequently we can never be too careful of the woods we already possess; while the

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., pp 193,195,201. Nigel Everett, *The Tory view of landscape* (Hong Kong, 1994), p. 61.

<sup>381</sup> Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', pp 13-4.

<sup>382</sup> William J. Smyth, 'The greening of Ireland: Tenant tree-planting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', in *Irish Forestry*, liv, no. 1 (1997). p. 68.

<sup>383</sup> Eileen McCracken, 'Notes on Eighteenth century Irish nurserymen', in *Irish Forestry*, xxiv, no. 1 (1967), pp 39-58.

<sup>384</sup> James Lyttleton, *The Jacobean Plantations in 17th Offaly* (Dublin, 2013), p. 181.

<sup>385</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 83. William III (1698), An Act for Planting and Preserving Timber Trees and Woods. C. Litton Falkiner, 'The forestry question considered historically', in *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry in Ireland*, xi, no. 83 (1903). Kelly-Quinn, 'The evolution of forestry in County Wicklow from prehistory to the present'.

several specimens of rapid growth ... will be found sufficient on the other hand to encourage the planter.<sup>386</sup>

Forester Fitzpatrick, in the first history of Irish state forestry published in 1965, also noted the influence of English forestry culture in the planting of new demesne and formal woodland by landowners in Ireland, now known as the Anglo-Irish, who were by the mid-eighteenth century 'sufficiently secure to indulge on a grand scale in farming and estate improvement.'<sup>387</sup> Everett developed his view of the of English forest landscape that was beyond commercial enterprise, where the English estate is:

... is opposed to a narrowly commercial conception of life and associated with a romantic sensibility to the ideas of continuity and tradition felt to be embodied in a certain kind of English landscape.'<sup>388</sup>

Trees planted at this time became the symbol of the 'Big House' and, according to Pilz, had come to symbolize the Anglo-Irish elite itself.<sup>389</sup> The walls of the estate sheltered maturing arboreta filled with trees from around the world which displayed the reach of the global imperial culture, and highlighted the ignorance of those not so equally appreciative.<sup>390</sup> But with little cultural heritage to connect him to the land, its trees or its people, the civilized landlord's estate depended on walls to keep out former residents cleared from the grounds, and the wandering dispossessed.

The class-related arboreal culture is described by Elizabeth Bowen who referred to the encircling effect of trees on a large house as a defence, symbolic of privacy and private property. Trees were also to protect the inhabitants, to keep the world beyond the demesne gates out of sight and out of mind, particularly 'the world of the ragged poor'.<sup>391</sup> The romantic ideals of an estate-based arboreal landscape in Ireland and its restoration was caricatured by James Joyce who parodied the association of trees and woods with class hierarchy in Ireland. This was represented by Catholic nationalists and Protestant landowners, whose hobbyhorse was re-

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<sup>386</sup> Hayes, *A practical treatise on planting and the management of woods and coppices*, pp 107-8.

<sup>387</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 12. David Dickson, *Old world colony: Cork and South Munster 1630-1830* (Cork, 2005), pp 173-4; Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 4.

<sup>388</sup> Everett, *The Tory view of landscape*, pp 61, 211.

<sup>389</sup> Pilz and Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', p. 70.

<sup>390</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 12, 14.

<sup>391</sup> Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Big House', in *The Bell*, i, no. 1 (1940). in Pilz and Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', p. 78.

afforestation. Joyce's awareness of nature and contemporary forestry politics was demonstrated with allusions to a National Foresters (INF) parade, where participants were named after local trees with newcomers given the unadorned names of conifer species.<sup>392</sup> Although the INF had old connections with the English Ancient Order of Foresters which had branches named after the law courts of Royal English Forests, the INF regalia reflected the dress of Robert Emmet and other symbols of Irish nationality rather than those of mythological forestry. The INF also did not have a particular relationship with wood industries but supported all the local working population and trades, all of which represented a cultural disconnection from the local wood industries and skills in Ireland.

By contrast, estate tenants were not as enthusiastic about estate trees which limited their land area for food production to pay the rent, and which Pilz considered as allegories for a conquered nation.<sup>393</sup> Forbes referred to the Reverend Thomas Radcliffe's tour of 1814 on the estate of the Marquis of Landsdowne at Kenmare, where local seeds were being collected, for planting farm holdings. Radcliff noted that "he found in his tenantry ... a strong, but determined aversion either to the planting or the protection of trees." The Marquis was considering closing down the nursery.<sup>394</sup> The small holder tenant farmer, the 'ragged poor,' or the labourer who made up the majority of society at the time, were those most affected by malnutrition and successive famines. After the Great Famine of 1846 to 1848, the post-famine landscape outside the walls of the estate, according to the geographer Frank Mitchell, was one of devastation: 'one would see a ruined landscape almost destitute of any woody growth.'<sup>395</sup> This was the inherited 'bare' landscape that was considered to have so much potential for the state-funded planting schemes of the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries in Ireland. After Famine times when labour was cheap, particularly after the market for oak wood for British shipping had collapsed and the English and Welsh market for conifer pitwood for the mines was readily available,<sup>396</sup> the

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<sup>392</sup> James Fairhall, 'Ecocriticism, Joyce, and the politics of trees in the 'Cyclops' episode of Ulysses', in *Irish Studies Review*, xx, no. 4 (2012). Lai Yi-Peng, 'The tree wedding and the (eco) politics of Irish forestry in 'Cyclops'', in Robert Brazeau and Derek Gladwin (eds), *Eco-Joyce: The environmental imagination of James Joyce* (Cork, 2014).

<sup>393</sup> Pilz and Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', p. 82.

<sup>394</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 82.

<sup>395</sup> Arthur Mitchell and Michael Ryan, *Reading the Irish landscape* (8 ed., Dublin, 1986.), pp 334, 338.

<sup>396</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 13.

experimental scenic groves and non-native tree plantations became the foundation stone of the new industry, according to Forbes.

However, these commercial ventures were uncommon and nineteenth century silviculture was mostly focused on amenity and sport, in Ireland as well as England, managed by generally Scottish, Protestant foresters who also doubled as gamekeepers.<sup>397</sup> Often associated with the estate woodland was a sawmill and its local traditional wood manufacturers of farm and home implements. But where the estate and family were in decline, Fitzpatrick refers to the sentiment for the trees and woods on Irish estates,<sup>398</sup> where the selling of the trees was one of the first indications of an embarrassed estate.<sup>399</sup>

### *Land League, Land Acts and sale of estate woods*

From the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, a second wave of rapid estate wood clearance affected every region of Ireland. The clearing of the remaining woodlands on estates which had started after the Great Famine had bankrupted some estates, was rapidly advanced by the implementation of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Land Acts.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 139; Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?'. O'Carroll (ed.), *The forests of Ireland: History, distribution and silviculture*, p. 119.

<sup>398</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 6.

<sup>399</sup> Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?', p. 48.

<sup>400</sup> Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 (44 & 45 Vict. c. 49), and Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Act 1882 (61 & 62 Vict. c. 22 S.L.R.).



Plate 1: Glendalough in the late 1890s, with little woodland remaining. (From *Mason Photographic Collection*, NLI).

The treeless nature of the late nineteenth century landscape can be seen in this picture of Glendalough. This shows the effects of wood clearance on the valley, with little wooded vegetation besides church yew trees, patchy scrub, and the growing conifer mining plantation on the hill slope. Forests and woods have both been planted by the state and have grown naturally in this valley since this time.

The Land Acts facilitated the selling of the land by the land owner, and their purchase by their small holding tenants, with loans and grants from the British government.<sup>401</sup> Between 1869 and 1909, there were 13 pieces of legislation affecting landlords and tenants, which introduced the right to purchase land by tenants by mortgage, with government financial benefits for the landlord making the sale.<sup>402</sup> The Land Acts were preceded by the Land League movement of the 1880s, which was created by the alliance of community, religious and political forces to address the

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<sup>401</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 6.

<sup>402</sup> Between 1869 and 1909, there were 13 pieces of legislation affecting landlords and tenants, which introduced the right to purchase land by tenants, with government financial benefits for the landlord making the sale. Landlord and tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870 (33 & 34 Vict.) Land law (Ireland) Act, 1881 (44 & 45 Vict.), Arrears of rent (Ireland) Act, 1882 (61 & 62 Vict.), Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885 (48 & 49 Vict.), Purchase of land (Ireland) Act, 1891 (54 & 55 Vict.), Land law (Ireland) Act, 1896 (59 & 60 Vict.), Irish land Act, 1903 (3 Edw. 7.), Irish Land Act, 1909 (9 Edw. 7.).

structural reforms of land tenure to end the extreme poverty of small holding rural tenants, particularly in the West of Ireland. These tenants rented marginal lands<sup>403</sup> on annual tenure, had little access to natural resources or capital, and lived with the constant threat of eviction, malnutrition and emigration.<sup>404</sup> The threat of another famine during 1877 to 1879 from the effects of poor harvests and diseased potato crops,<sup>405</sup> was the catalyst for the land reform movement in 1881. In composition, tactics and ideology, Lee regarded the Land League as one of the 'most effective and sophisticated movements of rural agitation in nineteenth century Europe,'<sup>406</sup> accompanied by its attendant costly government Coercion or Military Rule in many districts of the West of Ireland.<sup>407</sup>

The long-term impact of the Land Acts would create hundreds and thousands of new property owners out of former tenants, fulfilling the vision of William O'Brien, founder of the United League, who considered that he was "undoing the unnatural divorce between the people and the land."<sup>408</sup> By the time the 11<sup>th</sup> Land Act had been implemented in 1909, after twenty-eight years of rural social and economic confrontation and transformation, nearly 370,000 holdings had been purchased under terms agreeable both to the landlord and the tenant,<sup>409</sup> amounting to a cumulative acreage purchased of over five million acres, with the British government taking on the role of banker for the 60-year loan repayment period.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> 40% of Mayo land was peat and bog land. Schlich, 'Afforestation in Great Britain and Ireland', p. 27.

<sup>404</sup> Fergus Campbell, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland 1891-1921* (Oxford and New York, 2005), pp 28-9, 53. Froude viewed the Gaelic tenant as one 'who was at once Celt and Catholic, received a legacy of bitterness from the past which he was forbidden to forget. The invaders were in possession of the land of his fathers. He had been stripped of his inheritance for his fidelity to his creed. He saw himself trodden down into serfdom on the soil which had been his own, and England - England only - he knew to be the cause of his sorrows.' Froude, *The English in Ireland*, p. 195.

<sup>405</sup> John Joseph Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society 1848-1918* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1973), p. 67.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>407</sup> Charles Townsend, 'Martial law: Legal and administrative problems of civil emergency in Britain and the Empire 1800-1940', in *The Historical Journal*, xxv, no. 1 (1982).

<sup>408</sup> William O'Brien, *An olive branch in Ireland and its history* (London, 1910), p. 86; in Campbell, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland 1891-1921*, p. 29.

<sup>409</sup> Lee, *The modernisation of Irish society 1848-1918*, p. 82. William F. Bailey, *The Irish Land Acts: A short sketch of their history and development* (Dublin, 1917).

<sup>410</sup> Campbell, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland 1891-1921*, p. 91.



The unintended effect of the legal changes in land ownership was the increase in tree felling on estates that were sold to the British government through the agency of the Estates Commission, the Land Commission and Congested Districts Board.<sup>411</sup> During this time, there was a 'trail of destruction' in every county left by travelling sawmills from England and Scotland going from estate to estate where 'the landlords were unable to weather the economic storms which beset them after 1880'.<sup>412</sup> According to the 1908 DATI Forestry Report, there were 843 of these mobile sawmills in Ireland in 1907.<sup>413</sup> The departure of the sawmills left: 'a vista of bare and sterile mountain landscape,' according to Dr Cooper, a forestry enthusiast who founded the Irish Forestry Society in 1902, and whose patrons included William Schlich, the leading British forester of the time.<sup>414</sup> The land that was cleared for timber for immediate export was 'left derelict, to develop into profitless, rabbit infested scrub' where there was no interest in restoring the woodland.<sup>415</sup>

Eight years after the establishment of the Land Commission to facilitate the workings of the Land Acts, one of their Commissioners, William Bailey wrote of his concern about the deforestation of estate woodlands by departing landlords or by the former tenant purchaser.<sup>416</sup> Bailey reported the wholesale felling of timber by buyers and sellers of land under these Acts and proposed a tree felling prohibition by the Land

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<sup>411</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 6. Terence Dooley, 'Estate ownership and management in nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland', in Terence Dooley (ed.), *Sources for the History of Landed Estates in Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), pp 3-16. Due to civil disturbance and rent collection issues, mortgagees called in their loans as Irish land was no longer regarded as a safe collateral. John Maxwell, Chairman of the British Forestry Commission questioned the loss of capital from estate timber clearance by the vendor, in the 1930s. John S. Maxwell, 'A decade of state forestry and its lessons', in *The Scottish Forestry Journal*, xlv, no. 1 (1931).

<sup>412</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 7.

<sup>413</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 9. Mr. J. L. Pigot, Land Commission Forester

<sup>414</sup> 'Irish Forestry Society Annual Report', *Robert Barton Collection* (1904), BMH/CD/264/16/1; *Irish Times*, 31 May 1901. Sir William Schlich, born in Germany, graduated from University of Geissen in 1867, professional forester for nearly twenty years in the British civil service in Burma, Inspector General of Forestry in India 1883, founded the British Forestry School in Indian Engineering College, Surrey in 1885, Professor of Forestry and consultant to British government, in Royal Society

<sup>415</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 7. This was in contrast to the penalties imposed on tree fellers for damage to the wood in nineteenth century Fitzwilliam estate in Wicklow. Carey, *If trees could talk: Wicklow's trees and woodlands for over four centuries*, p. 224.

<sup>416</sup> Bailey, 'Forestry in Ireland'. Bailey, 'The woods, forests, turf-bogs and foreshores of Ireland: The opportunity for, and the advisability of, establishing government management and protection'. Niall O Carroll, 'Commissioner Bailey's foresight', in *Irish Forestry*, lxxv, no. 1 & 2 (2008).

Commission, with the promotion of tree planting.<sup>417</sup> He believed that the use of turf instead of timber was one of the reasons there was so little attention and care for local trees. He also referred to the climatic effects of deforestation on a formerly fruitful region, turned into stony plains only good for meagre goats and sheep. He sketches the different forestry management approaches of France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, noting the obligation of local communities to plant non-agricultural lands and the assistance of the state for poor communities.<sup>418</sup>

Whether sold by departing landlords, purchased and removed by saw millers, or cut down by purchasing former tenants, the loss of estate woods, shelter belts for farms and single trees during this time, prompted recommendations for action by the state towards the reforestation of the country.<sup>419</sup> Even tree planting was halted on solvent estates during this time of political and social insecurity. At the House of Commons Committee of 1887, Wicklow landlord and planter of extensive plantations,<sup>420</sup> Lord Powerscourt, stated that he had himself stopped planting because of 'the degree of insecurity.'<sup>421</sup> He endorsed the proposal that the state would take over the role of landlord and that, in the absence of resident landlords in the West of Ireland, direct government intervention, in his opinion, would be the best method of ownership.<sup>422</sup> This role in land use management had already been taken on by the Congested Districts Board in the West of Ireland.

From the perspective of the estate owners affected by the sale of estates in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the demise of the trees and woods of the Anglo-Irish landowner was a popular subject of the Irish literary revival poets and writers expressing the loss of a way of life. The civilised order and values that were represented by the Big House were framed by its trees and woods, in contrast to the uncertain contested order and values of the local community.<sup>423</sup> References to the role of women in Irish forestry culture were generally found in Anglo-Irish literature on estate history, where wives and widows looked after the woods of the estate. Pilz

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<sup>417</sup> Bailey, 'Forestry in Ireland', pp 1-7.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., pp 5-7.

<sup>419</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', pp 1-2.

<sup>420</sup> 'The Re-afforesting of Ireland', in *Forestry*, vii (1883).

<sup>421</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 9.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Smyth, 'The greening of Ireland: Tenant tree-planting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'. Pilz and Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', p. 66.

remarked that Galway landowner and author, Lady Gregory considered that demesne woods were 'a bulwark against change and a link with tradition and order;' they represented continuity of tradition and made a contribution to a family, to the neighbourhood, to Ireland.<sup>424</sup> She writes of her love of her woods, whose nursery that had been laid down by the Gregory family was noted by Arthur Young in his travels, and her keen sense of loss on their sale to the Land Commission. This can be seen in her diary of 1924, when she said:

The love of the trees came back very strongly as I looked at some I had tended and cut ivy from...But planting is over for me - money goes to house and rates and taxes and labour, and it may be that energy that went into these plantings has lessened, though I longed to begin again.<sup>425</sup>

She was evidently pleased that the land would be sold on to the Forestry Division and the trees would not be cut down by timber merchants who would 'turn in cattle'.<sup>426</sup> Her sentiments were echoed on most estates in Ireland at the time.

The solution to the 'haemorrhage' of wood resources in Ireland was to devise a role for the British government in replanting woods, with the help of expert advisory reports.<sup>427</sup> This interest in state action for re-forestation amongst some landowners, MPs and forestry enthusiasts coincided with a renewal of interest in state forestry in Britain. Although many European countries, notably Germany, France, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland had been addressing the effects of declining wood production and deforestation over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with innovations in forestry science, Britain was relatively late to the table due to her dependency on timber imports from across the Empire.

### *British forestry reports and trials*

In response to the public interest in addressing the issue of wood clearance and re-forestation, the first legislative attempt to develop a central forestry

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<sup>424</sup> Pilz and Tierney, 'Trees, Big House Culture and the Irish Literary Revival', p. 80.

<sup>425</sup> Robinson (ed.), *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916-1930*, p. 35.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 16-17.

<sup>427</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 111, 121-3. Eoin Neeson was a civil servant who co-authored a history of Irish forestry with forestry experts; the first history to record some of the conflicts in state forestry.

administration in Ireland was a private Bill in Westminster in 1884.<sup>428</sup> This pioneering but unsuccessful Bill was presented by Dr Robert Lyons MP for Dublin<sup>429</sup> sponsored by William Gladstone, a keen tree feller, and by Charles Parnell, MP for Cork City, leader of the Home Rule League and the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Bill proposed a national afforestation program to be directed by a Forestry Department, a budget of £1 million for a planting program on one third to a quarter of both state and private 'waste' land, funded by loans and rates from landowners, with preservation of woodland.<sup>430</sup> The Bill was the result of experimental tree plantings in Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal, and other areas, with donated land and trees.<sup>431</sup> The view of the potential for afforestation in Ireland was summarised in the *Forestry* magazine, a rich resource on all matters trees and wood management which proposed that although Ireland had been formerly thickly wooded even on hillsides, trees such as oak, fir or birch could no longer flourish at high elevations due to climate cooling,<sup>432</sup> but lower inferior land unsuited to tillage could be planted. Lord Powerscourt reported on successful trials on elevated marginal land in the 1880s,<sup>433</sup> and with public support, Gladstone requested more information on the proposal to re-afforest Ireland.

British government reports from the late nineteenth century continental foresters, German William Schlich and Danish forester Dr Daniel Howitz,<sup>434</sup> both of whom had considerable imperial forestry management experience, proposed expansive forest development schemes in Ireland. They both promoted the establishment of an integrated forestry management system with a fund for land purchase, a Forestry Authority, commissioners, and a forest service forestry school with diplomas. The administration and its work was to be financed by landowners and

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<sup>428</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 2. 'Wastelands Afforestation (Ireland) Bill, 40, (February, 1884), was assisted by both the Howitz Report and the Scottish Arboriculture Society.

<sup>429</sup> Dr Robert Dyer Lyons was a Cork-born military physician from a merchant family, who had extensive interest and experience in forestry.

<sup>430</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 6.

<sup>431</sup> 'The Re-afforesting of Ireland', p. 69.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 135-8.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 288-93.

<sup>434</sup> Dr Daniel C. Howitz was a Danish forester and anthropologist, who worked in Denmark and Australia and did advisory work for the British government in Australia, and the French government in Algeria; in M McNamara, 'Extracts from "A preliminary report on the reafforestation etc. of Ireland" by W. Howitz', in *Irish Forestry*, 24, no. 2(1) (1967). p. 77.

the government.<sup>435</sup> In 1885, Howitz presented his report to the House of Commons Committee on Industries (Ireland) at the request of Gladstone,<sup>436</sup> in which he referred to the state's responsibility for the restoration of Irish forestry, making reference to its former abundance:

There are but few human works which are so unselfish and noble as the planting of forests and where, as in Ireland, such great and valuable forests have once existed, the re-forestation of it is only a payment of a debt due to posterity.<sup>437</sup>

Howitz urged the planting of forests for shelter to improve agricultural land, to protect river basins from excessive flooding, for employment as well as for the capital return on the timber. He maintained that Ireland could grow better timber than in Scotland or England and proposed a goal of three million acres, planting 100,000 acres per year, beginning with 10,000 acres around Lough Neagh on peat and mountain land. Considering the imported demand for timber in Britain, he advocated conifers due to their rapid growth rate, for their use and for their marketable timber, but favoured deciduous trees in sheltered lowlands, river basins for flood management, and as fire breaks.<sup>438</sup> The initial species list of Howitz ran to ninety native and non-native species,<sup>439</sup> including 52 hardwood species.<sup>440</sup> McNamara noted that Howitz's large scale afforestation programs did not address the technical, administrative or financial issues, nor the resettlement of tenants.<sup>441</sup>

Howitz's afforestation schemes were similar in approach to those of William Schlich, German founder of the imperial forestry school in Britain, and regarded as 'Chief and Master' by professional foresters.<sup>442</sup> He also recommended the replanting of

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<sup>435</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 29-30. McNamara, 'Extracts from "A preliminary report on the reforestation etc. of Ireland" by W. Howitz', p. 82; Schlich, 'Afforestation in Great Britain and Ireland', p. 29.

<sup>436</sup> 15 June, 14 August, 1885, Chairman Sir Eardley Wilmot. Report on Waste-Lands. H.C. 39. 1884.

<sup>437</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 7; McNamara, 'Extracts from "A preliminary report on the reforestation etc. of Ireland" by W. Howitz'.

<sup>438</sup> M McNamara, 'Extracts from "A preliminary report on the reforestation etc. of Ireland by W. Howitz, forest conservator', *Irish Forestry*, 24 (1967); Howitz, 'A report on Waste Lands'. p. 85.

<sup>439</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 7.

<sup>440</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 7.

<sup>441</sup> McNamara, 'Extracts from "A preliminary report on the reforestation etc. of Ireland" by W. Howitz', pp 77-8.

<sup>442</sup> Powell, p. 858.

most of non-agricultural land in Ireland which was considered 'waste'.<sup>443</sup> In his report to the British government on Irish forestry in 1886, Schlich considered that the conservation of the remnants of old woods could be too late as the removal of the great forests had already occurred and restoration was not part of his scheme. He held a broad view of the types of forests that could be developed, their use and timber production, the environmental value of woodlands, the value of shelter for agricultural land, the supply of timber to local industries of wood craft, and the developmental potential of forestry for employment.<sup>444</sup>

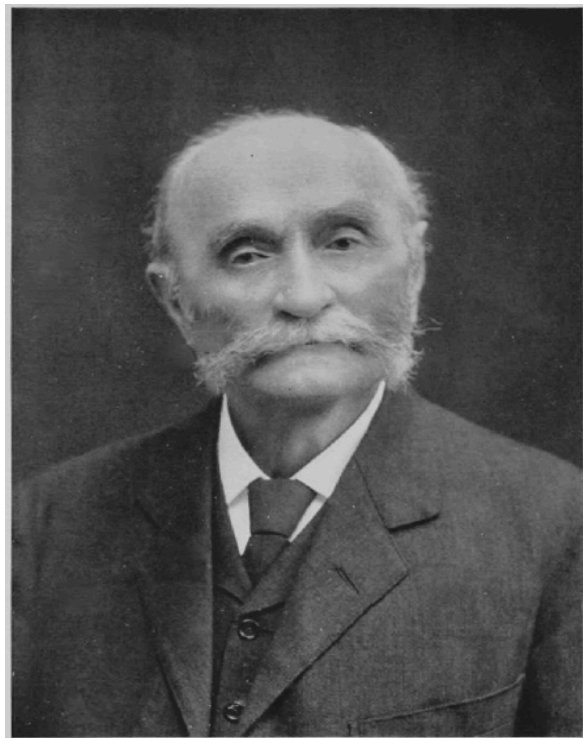


Plate 2: Sir William Schlich. (From 'Obituary', *Royal Society of London Proceedings*, 1927, vol ci, no 71).

Although being chiefly associated with conifer plantation forestry, Schlich favoured planting well-established species first, such as: Scotch fir, spruce, alder, oak and silver fir, larch, birch and beech, and he suggested a cautious approach to exotics until their success was proven.<sup>445</sup> He viewed the first government-funded forestry scheme in Ireland in Knockboy more positively than later foresters.

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<sup>443</sup> Schlich, 'Afforestation in Great Britain and Ireland', pp 23, 28.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 10-11.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

The Knockboy afforestation scheme is referred to in most forest histories of Ireland from Falkiner, Forbes, Durand, and Fitzpatrick, as an example of the futility of planting conifers on peatland.<sup>446</sup> This scheme illuminates some of the complexities of tree planting, of land ownership and of land use of the time, as well as the government's view of welfare for people affected by malnutrition and extreme poverty. In 1887, the first state-funded forestry plantation in the British Isles was planned by the House of Commons Committee on Forestry, for one of the poorest regions of the British Isles in Knockboy, outside Carna in Connemara, West Galway.<sup>447</sup> Although the forestry scheme was expected both to provide employment for some hundreds of destitute local people, and to be an experiment in state-funded tree planting and timber production, the first government large-scale trial tree planting scheme picked a particularly challenging site and was handicapped by lack of understanding of the conditions and history of the site. Eight hundred acres of windswept coastal peatland were to be planted with nearly three million trees of twenty-six to forty species of tree,<sup>448</sup> both hardwoods and softwoods, under the direction of experienced Scottish foresters, recruited for the scheme. However, most of the trees died, despite the best efforts of the Congested Districts Board, the land management and development agency in the West of Ireland.<sup>449</sup> In Schlich's report in 1895, *Forestry operations in Galway*, despite the lack of success of the first round of plantings in Knockboy, he foresaw the potential for timber production in Connemara with the use of shelter belts, and the prospect of local industry development to accompany commercial plantations. Schlich believed in the benefits of the scheme for local seasonal employment, with the additional effect on the establishment of peace in the county. He said that: 'it will help to cut away the ground under the feet of the political agitator,' by settling the land question.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>446</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 8-9; Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', p. 15.

<sup>447</sup> 'Select Committee on Forestry Debate', *House of Commons* (3 August 1887), vol. 318, c. 1037.

<sup>448</sup> O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, pp 17-20. Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 87. Some Sitka spruce, pines, birch alder and beech are growing there in the site today.

<sup>449</sup> Ciara Breathnach, *The Congested Districts Board of Ireland 1891-1923* (Dublin, 2005), p. 68. Ciara Breathnach, p. 68. Over the lifetime of the agency, it purchased 951 estates and over 1.77 million acres at a cost of £6.73 million. 'Thirtieth Report 1921-22', *Congested Districts Board* (Dublin, 1923).

<sup>450</sup> Schlich, 'Forestry operations in Galway, Ireland, 1895', pp 249-262.

Despite Schlich's positive view of the Knockboy scheme for the experience gained in peatland drainage, planting on peat, and training of local workers,<sup>451</sup> it was perceived to be a failure particularly by forester Arthur Forbes, and the scheme was seen to be an administrative and political embarrassment for many years afterwards. Forbes, future Director of Irish state forestry, was adamant that, although 'the forester tried every way he knew to get trees to grow, the experiment must be declared to be a failure,' and, that it 'illustrated the evils of political influence being applied to technical work.'<sup>452</sup> Even though botanist Augustine Henry believed that peatland planting was possible, Forbes' views ensured that peatland planting was avoided by state foresters for many years. Northern Ireland Chief Inspector Kilpatrick attributed the blame for the planting trials in Knockboy to the unsuitable location and to ignorance,<sup>453</sup> despite the employment of professional foresters to ensure the latest forestry techniques were used. In 1938, local politician, Joseph Mongan TD, subsequently referred to the loss of saplings due to transport delays as a contributory factor to the death of the tree saplings.<sup>454</sup> In spite of the competing objectives, the Knockboy forestry plantation scheme brought together all the essential elements that would launch an experimental state forestry development program which were: availability of cheap land, cheap labour, availability of imperial forestry expertise, state aid, and political and public will.

## II: British institutional forestry administration

By the end of the nineteenth century, in an effort to initiate a more lasting solution to the chronic and extreme social and economic deprivation of the poorer rural communities in Ireland, political will had established a system of local government and a government administration for agriculture in Ireland. The former Vice President of the Congested Districts Board (CDB), Sir Horace Plunkett,<sup>455</sup> MP and founder of the

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 86; Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', p. 15.

<sup>453</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 8.

<sup>454</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 609 (4 May 1938), Seosamh Ó Mongáin.

<sup>455</sup> Horace Plunkett was a Meath-born landowner, farmer and agriculturalist, founder of the cooperative movement in Ireland, experienced Wyoming rancher, member of Parliament, and



rural cooperative society movement, led the parliamentary discourse on the development of administrative structures for state involvement in agricultural development and education, including forestry. At this time, re-forestation was 'considered one of the most important of all directions in which the wealth of Ireland may be increased'.<sup>456</sup> In 1896, after extensive hearings and research, with advice from Howitz, Plunkett's parliamentary committee<sup>457</sup> recommended the establishment of an Irish Department of Agriculture, modelled on the English Board of Agriculture, with a consultative committee. In 1898, on the basis of the report, the Irish Chief Secretary, Arthur Balfour introduced the Local Government Bill, and in 1899, a Bill to establish the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, with an Advisory Board and Council, and considerable financial autonomy.<sup>458</sup> Plunkett's associate in the cooperative movement, and a leading member of the DATI founding committee, Thomas P. Gill was selected to be its first Secretary.<sup>459</sup>

This Act also legalized the British state's involvement in forestry in Ireland at a time when forestry science across the British Empire was becoming increasingly innovative.<sup>460</sup> In 1900, public interest in government action for woodland restoration coalesced in the Irish Forestry Society (IFS) which included all political views in its focus on the re-forestation of Ireland. Its founder, charismatic Dr Robert Cooper, had been successfully lobbying for the urgent establishment of a Forestry Department to undertake a two million acre re-forestation program of mountain land, and to start a forestry school.<sup>461</sup>

Cooper was a leading medical homeopath and amateur naturalist, whose particular interests were in man's relationship with plants and trees, their healing

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later informal advisor to the US President on agriculture. James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (9 vols, Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>456</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 23; Mary E. Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture* (Dublin, 2002), p. 13.

<sup>457</sup> *Report of the Recess Committee* (Dublin, 1896).

<sup>458</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, pp 13,14, 17.

<sup>459</sup> T.P. Gill was a Catholic Nationalist MP from Tipperary, a journalist, and Land War leader during the imprisonment of John Dillon, MP and William O'Brien in 1885, with international experience; from Daniel Hctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture* (Dublin, 1971), pp 26-8.

<sup>460</sup> Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management*, pp 32-3.

<sup>461</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 9.

properties and the preservation of their environments. Drawing on the studies of the Swiss response to deforestation of the Alpine slopes,<sup>462</sup> he was a passionate advocate of the re-forestation of Irish hills. He gave public lectures on the protection of mountain soil from erosion and the prevention of the silting of rivers, by planting trees on the hill slopes of the country. He promoted the excellent quality of the Irish soil and climate for growing trees, despite the existence of a belief to the contrary. He referred to the local wisdom of tree planting in deforested areas, and the benefits of scattering local seeds rather than using transplants.<sup>463</sup> His view on the fundamental differences in forestry between Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom were not due to natural laws on the propagation of trees but due to 'statute law and social conditions,'<sup>464</sup> and he traced much of the agricultural poverty of his native land to the ruthless cutting down of trees.<sup>465</sup> His widely published writings brought together landowners, established professions, the church and eminent foresters of the day, including William Schlich.<sup>466</sup>

Public input into DATI was represented by its Council which was 'to keep the Department with a sound and vigorous public opinion.'<sup>467</sup> The Council and Board of DATI membership of 104 was made up of 68 representatives of county councils, who were overwhelmingly nationalist, with some farmers, and most nominee members were from the landed gentry.<sup>468</sup> The Council was considered to be an agricultural rather than a farmer's parliament,<sup>469</sup> and they met twice a year. With limited powers, they debated and contributed to forestry development issues, continuing the long tradition of private landowners participating in government policy in Ireland.<sup>470</sup> DATI represented unprecedented cooperation between unionists and nationalists,<sup>471</sup> and in its first report

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<sup>462</sup> Dr. Robert Cooper, *Forestry in Ireland* (Dublin, 1901), p. 37.

<sup>463</sup> Cooper, 'Forestry in Ireland; Ireland's real grievance: The re-forestation of Ireland', p. 10; *Irish Times*, 10th February 1902., Report on Irish Forestry Society

<sup>464</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 10.

<sup>465</sup> *North American Journal of Homeopathy* (1904).

<sup>466</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 123. Dr Robert Cooper was referred to as the founding father or the catalyst of the Irish forest service in both administrations of Ireland by forester, Pat McCusker, in McCusker, 'Book Reviews-Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history', p. 85.

<sup>467</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 69.

<sup>468</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, pp 17-8.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>470</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 2.

<sup>471</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 2.

of 1901, DATI stated its operating principles were to be achieved 'through central action, local initiative and encouragement of organization,'<sup>472</sup> by 'removing the obstacles which at present hinder in Ireland the due exercise of initiative in industrial matters' and to create 'a state of things in which private enterprise can act with confidence and freedom.'

The second meeting of the Council addressed the critical issue of the devastation of the last woods of Ireland, which they considered would require more comprehensive legislation. In the meantime, DATI had the power to compile statistics and make plans.<sup>473</sup> In the Vice President's Address, possibly inspired by members of the Irish Forestry Society, Plunkett estimated that two million acres of land would be needed and £20 million worth of trees to supply the timber requirements of the United Kingdom. He referred to a proposal for a government school of forestry and a scheme for planting waste land with trees either by government or by private landowners, with the help of a government loan.<sup>474</sup> Plunkett considered the limiting factors to be both lack of funding and experts. He also promoted the idea of an Irish Arbor Day to be managed by county and district councils.<sup>475</sup>



Plate 3: DATI Agricultural Advisory Council, the 'farmers parliament' meeting in the RDS, Leinster House, 1921. (From D. Hoor, 1971).

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<sup>472</sup> *First Annual Report 1900-1* (Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Dublin 1902), pp 6-8, 21.

<sup>473</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 38.

<sup>474</sup> 'Vice President's Address, First Report of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction 1900-1', in *Journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland*, i (1901). p. 159-60.

<sup>475</sup> Arbor Day was instigated in America 'to plant trees in order to replace the idea that civilization and clearance were synonymous'.

Although Cooper died in 1903, the IFS continued to provide a public forum for debate and education in the rapidly developing field of forestry, both for state agencies, private forest owners, foresters and the public. Members had a broad view on woodland forestry and new approaches, and the DATI tree planting trials of Forbes were followed with interest and debate. Initially encouraging all aspects of forestry development, arboriculture and woodland management for timber and coppice, IFS became more focused on the technology of plantation forestry for timber trees, reclamation of waste land and development of private forestry over the first two decades of the twentieth century. During this time, some of its members produced pamphlets and lectured on forestry in Ireland. Forester, William Dicks defined re-forestation as 'a restoration of the ancient forest covering with the kinds provided by nature, giving attention to the most economic value'. Dicks published pamphlets on the reintroduction of woods and trees into rural Ireland. He supported a state scheme for regenerated forestry with undergrowth to provide timber which was then being imported from the Continent for wooden hoops, willow rods, alder and buckthorn for gunpowder, birch brooms, alder for clog wood, and spool bobbins from birch.<sup>476</sup> He was against the 'sweeping off of whole plantations of larch and scotch fir at pit prop age' which he considered short sighted management.<sup>477</sup> The forester's view of J. Scott Kerr also supported natural woodland forestry, with understorey planting in new woods instead of single age, single species planting, and wood industry development.<sup>478</sup> Another member, Reverend J.C. Johnson, promoted forest education in agricultural courses and national schools as a 'beautiful and ennobling subject'. His response to the negative attitudes of Ulster farmers to trees, seen 'as the farmer's enemy, absorbing the ingredients of the soil that ought to nourish his crops or his pasture,' was public education and practical demonstrations for farmers.<sup>479</sup>

IFS member's interest in promoting the use of all types of wood locally was evident in reports of their informative tours. In 1904, forester Kerr recorded a visit to the regenerated woodland in Charleville, Tullamore to examine the Continental forestry system for the collection of seedlings and management of a living woodland environment for timber. There was also a tour to Lord Castletown's sawmill in Doneraile, Co. Cork, which was producing butter boxes out of beech and wheels out of

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<sup>476</sup> Dicks, 'Forestry in Leinster', p. 26.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>478</sup> *Irish Times*, 4th June 1901.

<sup>479</sup> Johnson, 'Forestry in Ulster'.

ash, oak and elm, with good employment and demand. Lord Castletown also noted that the Scots pine which used to cover the district was of different quality to the imported conifers.<sup>480</sup>



Plate 4: Sawmill for the lead mines in Glendassan Valley, Wicklow mountains (Photograph by French, NLI).

The illustration above shows an outdoor sawmill operation in the Wicklow mountains in Glendassan valley on the Wynn estate, in the early twentieth century, where poles from the local conifer plantation were being sawed with a steam powered engine for mining props.

In 1904, the Irish Forestry Society Essay Prize was awarded for the best article on the prospects and practical suggestions for the re-forestation of Ireland, funded by Dr Cooper's legacy. In the same year, IFS also promoted Arbor Day on November 1st, saying it had benefited tree planting in the United States and on the Continent. Arbor Day 'would attract the attention of the government and lead to the replanting of the land,' and could be organized with the help of county councils, agencies, cultural associations such as the Gaelic League, and the distribution of free trees. One of the organisers, John Scallon, proposed that each tenant on acquiring ownership of his holding under the Land Act, might commemorate it by planting a tree. He reported that in the Barony of Forth, Co. Wexford, a large number of trees were recently planted by new owners, former tenants. He also proposed that every railway station, police barracks and school house could plant trees on an annual Arbor Day. With DATI assistance, a cross-community IFS Arbor Day was celebrated from 1904 to 1918,

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<sup>480</sup> 'Irish Forestry Society Annual Report'.

with the first event held in Fairview, Co. Dublin. The Irish Forestry Society also supported the idea of Crown woods in Ireland for the protection of ancient forests. Land Act 1903 and state forestry land acquisition

In 1903, to facilitate the sale of estates, another more extensive land act, the Wyndham Land (Purchase) Act was introduced with landowners and Irish MPs support, with more generous terms for vendors and more manageable purchase loan terms for former tenant purchasers. This increased land sale and purchases to half a million acres a year,<sup>481</sup> and also increased the rate of wood clearance and tree felling. Historian Brian Farrell considered this the turning point in Irish political development by bringing to an end the old order of landlord rule of economic and social control which had dominated Irish society for two hundred and fifty years, supported by coercive laws which were no longer tenable.<sup>482</sup> It was under this Act in 1904, that DATI bought land from the Estate Commissioners for the new forestry school and research centre in Ireland,<sup>483</sup> in the historic but deforested estate of Avondale, formerly owned by Charles Parnell MP.<sup>484</sup>



Plate 5: Avondale House, between 1865 to 1914. (From *The Lawrence Collection*, Photograph by Robert French, NLI). The hill in the background is nearly bare of trees, in contrast to the present landscape.

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<sup>481</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 9.

<sup>482</sup> Brian Farrell, *The founding of Dáil Éireann: Parliament and nation-building* (Dublin, 1971), p. xv.

<sup>483</sup> John Nisbett, *Forestry Survey* (Dublin, 1904); John Nisbett, *Report on Woods, Plantations and Waste Lands in the South Eastern Counties of Ireland* (1904).in Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 123-4. Professor John Nisbet was formerly Indian Forest Service official, and Burma. He lectured in the West of Scotland Agricultural College.

<sup>484</sup> 'Fourth Annual Report 1903-4', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (1905), p. 55. The estate had been under negotiation since 1901 with the Parnell family, *Irish Times*, 10th August 1901.

This picture shows the home of both Samuel Hayes, eighteenth century forester, and Charles Stuart Parnell MP, before it was sold to the Department of Agriculture in 1904. The deforested hills are evident in the background.

The school opened in the same year to train 'working foresters,' and woodmen for state and private employment, under the direction of Arthur Forbes.<sup>485</sup> Forbes was recruited by DATI to give advice and care of woodland and proposed plantations, in the 'hope of a strong stimulus will hereby be given to the work of preserving and extending the woods of the country,'<sup>486</sup> and to lay out a demonstration area in the new forestry school of Avondale.<sup>487</sup> He brought many years of experience as an English forester, an expert in estate woodland management, and a promoter of scientific forestry or plantation production for commercial timber.<sup>488</sup> Forbes' initial planting trials included native and non-native tree species, both hard and softwood timber species, and an arboretum and pinetum were planted.<sup>489</sup> The seeds for the 480 species came from Kew, Indian, French and Belgian forest Departments.<sup>490</sup> Avondale was also Forbes' test bed for experimental cultivation of plantation forestry on a large scale for commercial timber production. His experience in Ireland would contribute to conifer research and the development of British state and private forestry,<sup>491</sup> particularly as estates in England, Scotland and Wales were affected by lower returns on rents, falling land values and estate taxation, and landlords were looking to forestry to increase their income.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> 'Seventh Annual Report 1906-7', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (Dublin 1907), p. 46. Michael Carey, 'Avondale: a national forestry resource', in *Irish Forestry*, lxi, no. 2 (2004). Coincidentally, Avondale had been the home of forester, Samuel Hayes and parliamentarian, Charles S. Parnell.

<sup>486</sup> 'Sixth Annual Report 1905-6', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (Dublin, 1907), p. 59.

<sup>487</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 18; Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 625. p. 625. The seeds for the 480 species came from Kew, Indian, French and Belgian forest Departments.

<sup>488</sup> Forbes, 'On Growing timber of clean growth, fine quality and high commercial value'; Forbes, 'On establishing an experimental forest area in Scotland, for instruction and practice of scientific forestry'; Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?'; Arthur C. Forbes, *English Estate Forestry* (London, 1904).

<sup>489</sup> 'Fourth Annual Report 1903-4', p. 46.

<sup>490</sup> *Ninth Annual Report 1908-9* (1910), p. 75.

<sup>491</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 251.

<sup>492</sup> Judith Tsouvalis and Charles Watkins, 'Imagining and creating forests in Britain, 1890-1939', in M. Agnoletti and S. Anderson (eds), *International studies on socio-economic and forestry ecosystem change* (Oxford, 2000), p. 379.

Forbes was later known as the 'Father of Irish forestry' by Anderson, Clear and Durand, who attributed to him 'the philosophy and work ethic of the state forester, and whose views shaped future forests in Ireland for generations to come'. He formed the nucleus of the technical staff in both British and Irish forestry administrations and organisation,' and according to Anderson, all who work in state forestry are his heirs and still work along lines initiated by him.<sup>493</sup>

Also acquired by DATI under the Land Act of 1903 were several wooded parcels of land in Wexford and Tipperary from the Estate Commissioners.<sup>494</sup> However, the defects in the previous Land Purchase Acts affecting the preservation of woods were perpetuated in the Land Act of 1903. This meant that the presence of woods could delay sale of an estate, as they were offered on the basis of the price of the timber, hindering the purchase by a public body which could neither pay the price, nor did not have the funds to manage the woods. This increased the risk of felling by the seller, and even the Estate Commissioners<sup>495</sup> had been felling timber after paying the price for the woodlands when there was no government agency with funding to manage them.<sup>496</sup> However, the provisions of the 1903 Land Act did allow 'advances to be made to trustees for the purchase of any parcel of an estate sold under the Act for the purposes of the planting and preservation of woods'.<sup>497</sup>

Some county councils took on the role of trustee of local woods, encouraged by DATI. In a letter to all councils, DATI expressed concern over extensive tree felling, 'without regard to their present usefulness for shelter or ornament, or to their value as timber when felled,' requesting their 'cooperation on arresting general policy of destruction' and giving encouragement for tree planting.<sup>498</sup> In 1908, the Kildare County Council increased the rates by halfpence for woodland management on gifted and purchased lands.<sup>499</sup> They hired a forester to implement a forestry scheme as a result of a gift of wooded land donated by local landlord, Lord Gough, which was planted with

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<sup>493</sup> Durand, 'Building a National Resource: Fifty Years of Irish Forestry', p. 4; Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 36. p. 36.

<sup>494</sup> 'Eighth Annual Report 1907-8', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (1909), p. 72.

<sup>495</sup> Land management agency established in 1849 to facilitate the sale of indebted estates after the effects of the Great Famine from 1946-8. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 125.

<sup>496</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 6.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>498</sup> 'Sixth Annual Report 1905-6', p. 249.

<sup>499</sup> 'Eighth Annual Report 1907-8', p. 72.



Douglas fir, larch (which initially failed), Corsican and Austrian pine and beech. The Council also purchased 'waste' land for afforestation. As the leading DATI forester, Forbes recommended Sitka and common spruce, poplar, alder and other quick growing species, Douglas fir, ash and larch.<sup>500</sup> The third Kildare council afforestation scheme in Brackney wood was cleaned of scrub and planted, but as reported in the local newspaper, the young trees did not survive the theft by locals, 'who did not see why they should not help themselves to the wood as there was no caretaker'.<sup>501</sup>

In the same year, Donegal county council began distribution schemes of cost-price trees and shrubs to new landowners, a scheme which was to continue until the war.<sup>502</sup> For both public and private forestry planting and education, the county councils were supported by DATI, although only some county councils had embraced tree planting from their first days of establishment. County councils were also promoting shelter belt tree planting, a scheme where tree planting recommendations for farmers were made by Forbes through travelling horticultural inspectors. This scheme operated successfully until the First World War. The list of recommended trees was mostly cost-price conifers, with the inclusion of some untried giant tree species that would be eventually out of place around a small farm in rural Ireland.<sup>503</sup> This indicates the experimental nature of the conifer tree planting at the time.

During the early years of DATI, Nisbet and Forbes made surveys of the well-wooded lands and areas where planting might be undertaken, and they provided technical advice on planting and management.<sup>504</sup> Meanwhile, DATI called for government action to resolve the urgent issue of deforestation as the clearance of estate woods by vendors and purchasers was continuing and a report on the question was requested by DATI Department Secretary, Thomas W. Russell.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 23rd May 1908.

<sup>501</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 13th February, 1909.

<sup>502</sup> *Kildare Observer*, 8th October, 1904.

<sup>503</sup> Arthur C. Forbes, *Forestry notes: Being practical hints on the formation, management and protection of woodlands in Ireland* (Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, 1911), pp 14-15.

<sup>504</sup> In 1902, Nisbett surveyed the south-eastern counties and Arthur Forbes supplemented this with information from north, west and south. Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'. p. 6.

<sup>505</sup> Head of farmers and Labourers' Union for Northern counties; MP for over twenty years; elected as Independent Unionist MP in 1906 representing Tyrone South.

## *DATI Forestry Committee Report 1908*

In 1907, Department Secretary, Thomas P. Gill chaired a DATI forestry committee<sup>506</sup> which would have long-lasting influence on state forestry in Ireland, both before and after Independence. This Committee of concerned representatives of the landowning and professional class, the wood industry and imperial foresters,<sup>507</sup> was directed to inquire into state aid for forestry, the preservation of woods and woodland, and the provisions for a comprehensive scheme for forestry in Ireland.<sup>508</sup> It endorsed an earlier Committee Report on British forestry and land that stated that afforestation was a 'matter of grave national concern.'<sup>509</sup>

The 1908 Forestry report was notable for its inclusive, innovative, expansive vision for forestry development in Ireland. Its recommendations for state conifer timber production, county council local wood preservation and production, and private forestry preservation and production, was the first state and private, cooperative forestry program proposed in the British Isles. The findings were the result of forty-eight hearings from landowners, administrators, timber industrialists, railway proprietors, and members of the Irish Forestry Society, with reports from the Estate Commissioners and the Congested Districts Board, and reports on timber supplies for the railways and woodworking industries. Reports were also presented from forestry experts, Forbes, (now Chief Inspector of Forestry Division), Nisbet, and botanist Augustine Henry, who proposed tree planting schemes.<sup>510</sup>

The urgency for state action due to the defects of the land purchase acts was evident in the reports of widespread tree felling over the previous twenty years. In his report to the Committee, J. L. Pigot, surveyor in the Land Commission, attributed to the 1903 Act, the unnecessary forestry destruction which was occurring, and noted that

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<sup>506</sup> 'Eighth Annual Report 1907-8', p. 2.

<sup>507</sup> Committee Members included William Redmond, MP; Lord Bishop of Ross; landowners, Denis Kelly, Hugh de Fellenburgh Montgomery and Lord Castletown; William F. Bailey, Estate Commissioner; and forestry experts, William Rogers Fisher, University of Oxford, and Professor John R. Campbell, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, DATI.

<sup>508</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 2.

<sup>509</sup> Agriculture Department Report on British Forestry, Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 97-8.

<sup>510</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 2. Appendices 51 to 65.

this was avoided by other countries through legislation or cooperative societies.<sup>511</sup> The Committee was informed that in 1907, there were an estimated 306,661 acres of woods in Ireland or 1.5% of land area, compared with England's 5.3% and Scotland's 4.6%, with less than one-third worked for profit.<sup>512</sup> There was an estimated felling rate of one thousand acres per year of mostly amenity woods on estates, with little replanting being done by landlords. There was also the issue of lost employment and industrial opportunities due to the export of great quantities of unprocessed timber to Britain, which amounted to around 72% of all cut timber or an estimated 1 million trees, with no tax paid on exports to support home industry.<sup>513</sup>

The Report laid some of the blame for deforestation at the feet of the English administration in Ireland and concluded that 'the excessive reduction of the woodland area of this country is due either to what the State has done or to what it has neglected to do ...'.<sup>514</sup> It highlighted the fact that after the various confiscations, the great land grants, including crown lands from which quit and crown rents were administered, contained vast areas of forests which are described in the grant deeds as the Kings Woods. No precautions were taken by the State to save these in any way and the grantees were allowed to do as they pleased with the timber. This resulted in the greater part of the country being deforested and left in a bare and wind-swept condition, from which at least shelter might have been preserved. The Report noted that had provident and intelligent government action been applied to the issue of forestry in Ireland, the general agricultural wealth would be in a far better position than it was then.<sup>515</sup>

The 1908 Report also noted that British forestry in Ireland has been inefficient, as woods have been managed for the purposes of sport, amenity, landscape effects and shelter and not generally for profit or as a long-term national asset, with no records, or regular schemes of management. This was in contrast to Continental forestry management where it was considered to be a valuable national asset, worth

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<sup>511</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 127.

<sup>512</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 377. Appendix 49

<sup>513</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', pp 11-13.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*

preserving and extending, an approach which gave a direct profit to the state on the money invested in it, apart from its other national advantages.<sup>516</sup>

It then considered the responsibility of the state towards forestry preservation after the implementation of the Land Acts:

Having abolished the landlord through the land purchase acts, the state is bound to provide a machine to discharge his functions in respect of those which cannot be left to individual tenant purchasers, in which the general community have an interest. If action is not taken at once it will mean a great neglect comparable with the improvidence of the past and far less excusable.<sup>517</sup>

The Report voiced the concern for the deforestation of the countryside, and a recommendation for the legal control of tree felling: 'Grievous mischief, loss and waste, accompaniments of legislation and other State action are going on and ought to be checked without delay. Furthermore, as another accompaniment of legislation, a great opportunity for husbanding and developing one of the resources of the country is now available.'<sup>518</sup> Insight into the sawmill sector and the impact of the defects of the Land Acts were presented to the Forestry Committee by Land Commission Inspector and former professional forester, J. Pigot, who informed the Committee of the 843 sawmills operating in Ireland. Over half of the sawmills had been started since 1881, and 249 since 1903, many of them mobile units sent over by English and Scottish timber merchants attracted by the low price of timber.<sup>519</sup> Many of the owners were ignorant of their value and sold at low prices, which also did not encourage replanting.<sup>520</sup>

Although the consumption of timber per head in Ireland was less than one fifth of that in Denmark at that time,<sup>521</sup> the effects of deforestation and the export of timber were also presented by the wood industry: the cartwrights, the furniture makers, the coach builders, cart and wagon makers, a declining ship and boat sector, box manufacturers, bobbins, spools and tool makers, and the construction and railway sectors. They reported on the difficulty of locating a steady supply of local timber for manufacturing, which was considered to be of a quality higher than that available in England. The manufacturers endorsed the good prospects for a timber industry in

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<sup>516</sup> Ibid., pp 16-18.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., pp 59-60.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>520</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 394.

<sup>521</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 21.

Ireland if supplies were sustainable.<sup>522</sup> The report recommended that the Forestry Section of DATI extend training programs to experts, forestry officers and forest owners, promote a proper organization of the timber and forest industries sector, with assistance, education and training from the Department.<sup>523</sup> The importance of education in processing timber and in the manufacturing of timber, supported by the wood industry sector, was not part of foresters' education in Avondale at the time.<sup>524</sup>

In their presentations to the Committee, neither Forbes nor the international botanist and forester, Augustine Henry<sup>525</sup> endorsed the Crown woods approach for the protection of ancient woodlands in Ireland, although Henry referred to the appreciation of state forests in continental Europe as a valuable national asset. Henry considered this unnecessary in Ireland, noting that: 'Foreign Governments look upon their forests as reserves, as so much stored up wealth against danger coming against invasion or calamity,' but 'We are not contemplating that in the afforestation of Ireland. What we contemplate is a commercial scheme.'<sup>526</sup> He was in favour of planting those species such as non-native conifers such as larch and Sitka spruce which had done better than native species, conifers that had already been produced in private plantations over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but not been tried on a large scale up to that time.<sup>527</sup> In Henry's statement, he promoted an experimental forestry program saying:

The first step is to grow quick growing conifers and cover the ground with fast growing wood and by the end of twenty to thirty years, everyone will be in a better position to know what to do the next time. That is the plan for the moment and the hour.<sup>528</sup>

His belief that planting species of trees that would grow in the 'rough grazing' lands that were covered in bracken, heather and rushes, such as Douglas fir and Sitka spruce would 'give astonishing returns' over fifty to sixty years. Henry proposed planting these species as demonstration forests so that 'people will see that there is something useful in it.'<sup>529</sup> For these experimental planting schemes, suitable land would have to be found in large plots, that would be cheap enough to make the

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<sup>522</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', pp 10-13.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 27, 59.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 72-4.

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<sup>526</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 165.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 167-8.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 168, . col. 4082.

<sup>529</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', pp 165, 167.

operation profitable. The compulsory purchase of hill grazing land was discussed with Dr Nisbet.<sup>530</sup> Forbes' and Henry's planting recommendations were ultimately supported by the Committee.



Plate 6: Professor Augustine Henry. (National Botanic Gardens, Dublin).

The Committee also considered the funding of state afforestation in Ireland with a government loan and the proceeds of Quit Rents and Crown Rents,<sup>531</sup> of the order of £80,000 to purchase land, with the added benefit of returning some of the seventeenth century English settlement taxes which had been invested since that time in City of London property.<sup>532</sup> This was not supported by the Commissioner of HM Lands, Woods, and Forests, Stafford Howard who also noted that there were no Crown Woods left in Ireland.

The Committee concluded that as landowners were no longer planting trees, the state was the only hope for forestry in Ireland. They insisted that only the state had the capability to direct an afforestation program, whether carried out by the Department, county council or private landowners, during the exceptional time for acquiring land cheaply for forestry, which could create a return after eighty years.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', pp 114-5.

<sup>531</sup> Crown Rents are based on property of a colony being vested in a sovereign alone; the title to land being based on grants from the crown, and unappropriated territory was and is officially known as 'Crown Lands' in Charles E. Bagot, 'On the management of Crown Lands in the Australian Colonies and the appropriation of revenues arising from them', in *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, iii, no. 12 (1863). p. 405. Quit rents were paid on all Irish lands to the Crown, after the Acts of Settlement of Ireland 1652-62.

<sup>532</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 112-4.

<sup>533</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 323.

Under existing legislation, the one million acre afforestation program proposed in the report was based on a cooperative planting program of 300,000 acres of existing private woodland, 500,000 small private plots managed by county councils, and 200,000 acres of large tracts of State forestry, mostly on mountain or other rough or waste land.<sup>534</sup> Other recommendations were the preservation of existing woods; the preservation and expansion of shelter belts and amenity, the prohibition of woodland clearance except by forest authority approval, the control of mountain burning, and the destruction of ground game in plantations. The Report did acknowledge the rising cost of building materials and scarcity of softwood and recommended support for the wood industry and its timber supply, which was shown to be a profitable sector when quality timber could be obtained. The Report also recognised the increasing demand for fuel wood, but did not make any recommendations on either issue.

After the publication of the report in 1908, it was sent to Members of Parliament and Cabinet,<sup>535</sup> and the Irish Forestry Society sent around a request to all county councils for their support.<sup>536</sup> However, the ambitious recommendations of the 1908 report were not implemented as 'public opinion was not ripe for such measures, either in Ireland or in Great Britain'. However, it did prompt the Treasury to fund an experimental planting program in DATI and some of its provisions guided the Forestry Division and Forest Service tree planting programs for the next thirty years.<sup>537</sup> After its publication, three Scottish foresters were recruited to the DATI Forestry Division to manage the expansion of experimental state forests in Ireland.<sup>538</sup>

In 1909, another Land Act allowed DATI and the county councils to buy land for forestry purposes on loan terms similar to tenant purchasers, a power which was greater than that held by state agencies in the United Kingdom at the time.<sup>539</sup> The Act also prohibited felling trees without a permit on land purchased by tenants under the Act but did not prohibit landowners from felling trees or clearing woods. DATI could now acquire and manage land from other government departments for forestry development, and woodlands could be surveyed, fenced, cleared and replanted, with

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<sup>534</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 58.

<sup>535</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 120.

<sup>536</sup> *Irish Times*, 10th February 1902.

<sup>537</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 91; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 164.

<sup>538</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 131.

<sup>539</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Tenth Annual Report 1909-10* (Dublin 1911), pp 15-6.

the secondment of foresters from Avondale.<sup>540</sup> In 1910, DATI received a forestry development loan of £25,000 with no repayment for 30 years,<sup>541</sup> and land purchases increased. By 1911, 12,800 mostly wooded acres had been purchased at an average price of £6 an acre.<sup>542</sup>

As part of its self-help approach to rural development and due to popular interest in the fruit tree sector at the Cork Exhibition in 1902, DATI sent trainees to the South of England fruit farm centres,<sup>543</sup> to develop tree expertise as travelling horticulturalists for private and commercial use. DATI also supported the cider industry in Drogheda and Portadown.<sup>544</sup> More widespread was the shelter belt and fruit tree scheme for farmers managed by county councils from 1905.<sup>545</sup> DATI also supported the training needs of traditional wood industries by funding courses in woodwork, organised by county councils. From 1904, there were nineteen different woodwork courses offered around the country, from carriage-building to carpentry.<sup>546</sup> There were a few specialized woodwork courses, including coach building in Clonmel, furniture schools in Kilkenny, and special woodwork schools in Sligo and Longford, the latter 'characterised by the excellence of the instruction and the appreciation of the students.'<sup>547</sup> These courses were attended by 1,557 men studying building construction and woodwork out of a total of 16,872 in technical instruction in 1906.<sup>548</sup> The decisions on which courses should be offered were left to the County Councils. There was a highly developed nineteenth century traditional furniture industry, which used local woods, an example of which is shown in the illustration below, and detailed in the 1908 Forestry Report.

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<sup>540</sup> *Ninth Annual Report 1908-9*, p. 75.

<sup>541</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 127.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>543</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Third Annual Report 1902-3* (Dublin, 1904), pp 20-1.

<sup>544</sup> 'Fourth Annual Report 1903-4', pp 7, 44.

<sup>545</sup> *Fifth Annual Report 1904-5* (Dublin, 1906), pp 23, 186.

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 64-77.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 62-77.

<sup>548</sup> *First Annual Report 1900-1*, pp 24, 55; 'Sixth Annual Report 1905-6', p. 23.





Plate 7: Killarney Davenport desk, late nineteenth century. (From Eleanor Flegg, 2016).

This desk is an example of the furniture craftsmanship in Killarney, where local wood was used. This figure shows the inlaid marquetry skills of Killarney furniture manufacture of the nineteenth century, using arbutus wood.

While the 1908 Forestry Report includes extensive evidence from the wood industry sector and its relationship to local woods,<sup>549</sup> the local wood manufacturing sector was rarely included in the schemes for rural agricultural industry organization, and the self-help cooperative objectives of DATI did not seem to apply to the development of the forestry or wood industry. Neither were the wood manufacturers included in the Cork Exhibition of rural industries, and the annual RDS Department exhibit was generally limited to crafts, small woodwork and basketry.<sup>550</sup>

Following the recommendations of the 1908 Report on foresters' education, in 1913, T. P. Gill suggested Henry apply for the post of the first DATI Professor of Forestry in the College of Science, Dublin, which he duly accepted.<sup>551</sup> Henry gave lectures to agriculture and horticulture students as well as one forestry student, and contributed research papers on genetics and taxonomy of trees. He was also consulted by landowners with forests in the British Isles, including Ireland due to his extensive knowledge and research on the trees of Britain and Ireland,<sup>552</sup> and his

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<sup>549</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 13.

<sup>550</sup> *First Annual Report 1900-1*, pp 13-8.

<sup>551</sup> Augustine Henry, *Augustine Henry and Evelyn Gleeson Papers* (National Library of Ireland, 1903-1913), Ms 13,698.

<sup>552</sup> Henry E. Elwes and Augustine Henry, *The trees of Great Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1906-13), 7 volumes.

interest in the introduction of new tree species.<sup>553</sup> Henry contributed to the series of informative pamphlets on forestry and tree planting which were published in 1921 by the provisional Dáil. He described the types of forest which could be planted by farmers and local agencies for ornament, shelter and timber production. Although appreciative of natural woods, he had firm views on their preservation on estates rather than by the state, which he considered was the only agency capable of planting large scale forests at the time. He actively promoted non-native conifer trees for their (as yet unknown) commercial potential.<sup>554</sup> Although Forbes and Henry worked for the same Department, they did not frequent the same social circles,<sup>555</sup> and might have held different views on forestry and the nation.

### *The First World War and Home Rule*

The First World War created an urgent demand in Britain for home-grown timber, a demand normally supplied by imported timber whose transport had been blocked by marine warfare. By the end of the war, the small British forestry resource was depleted by 450,000 acres,<sup>556</sup> and Irish private woodlands had provided an estimated 30,000 acres of timber for the supply of military and industrial needs. In Ireland, this operation was coordinated by Arthur Forbes as Controller of Timber Supplies, assisted by forestry trainees who were now without a Forestry School in Avondale, which had been closed since 1914. Forbes was later knighted for his wartime work in supplying timber for Britain.<sup>557</sup> The rate of timber felling at this time was around 2,000 acres per year,<sup>558</sup> while state tree planting had ceased from 1917.<sup>559</sup> DATI staffing levels were also depleted by the war, evident in the annual report of

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<sup>553</sup> E. Charles Nelson, 'The joys and riches of Kathay': Augustine Henry and the trees of China', in *Irish Forestry*, lii, no. 1 & 2 (1995).

<sup>554</sup> Henry, 'Witness statements', pp 83-4; Nelson, 'The joys and riches of Kathay': Augustine Henry and the trees of China'.

<sup>555</sup> John J. Gardiner and Maarten Nieuwenhuis, 'Celebrating 100 years of forestry education in UCD', in *Irish Forestry*, xxvi, no. 1 & 2 (2014).

<sup>556</sup> Maxwell, 'A decade of state forestry and its lessons'.

<sup>557</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 20. Forbes was knighted for his work as Timber Controller for Ireland after the war.

<sup>558</sup> *Evening Herald*, 18 August 1918. Lecture by Arthur Forbes to the Dublin Rotary Club.

<sup>559</sup> *Eighteenth Annual Report 1917-18* (Dublin, 1919), p. 30.

1916-17 which noted that 141 members of staff were serving in the armed forces, and 21 of them had died since the war began.<sup>560</sup>

The approval and subsequent suspension of the Home Rule Act in 1915, which would grant devolved government to Ireland, resulted in a request from the Development Commissioners for the immediate repayment of loans to the British Exchequer, including afforestation loans. DATI proposed that the money could be considered as development grant-aid, given that the program of tree planting had been considered experimental. This view was acceptable to the Commissioners.<sup>561</sup> In 1916, they proposed a land leasing scheme for forestry to DATI who discussed the proposal with large landowners.<sup>562</sup>

Meanwhile five county councils, Kildare, Westmeath, Limerick, and Cavan and Louth, were acquiring small woods and plots for afforestation, under the Land Purchase Act and with DATI support.<sup>563</sup> DATI offered forestry advice and urged county councils to preserve local woods and to plant trees for shelter belts, proposing that:

... such measures, by stimulating local interest in the planting of trees and evoking an appreciation of their aesthetic value would do much to preserve and to enhance rural amenities.<sup>564</sup>

But despite having the power to raise a local rate for the land purchase annuities, DATI was disappointed at the low response of the county councils. This was probably due to urgent financial demands being placed on county council finances at the time.

After the First World War, the perceived threat of an imminent timber famine in Britain galvanized political action to support the development of state forestry. Thus issues of conservation and investment in forestry in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland became a national military necessity.<sup>565</sup> By this time, Irish woodland was reduced to an estimated 286,000 acres, in a condition that was generally poor in

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<sup>560</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Seventeenth Annual Report 1916-17* (Dublin, 1918), p. 134.

<sup>561</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 141.

<sup>562</sup> *Eighteenth Annual Report 1917-18*, p. 9.

<sup>563</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Sixteenth Annual Report 1915-16* (Dublin, 1917), p. 66.

<sup>564</sup> *Eighteenth Annual Report 1917-18*, p. 73.

<sup>565</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Seventeenth Annual Report 1916-17*, p. 73.

quality, and there was no replanting.<sup>566</sup> As timber production for Great Britain became more important than the control of tree felling in Ireland, a Forestry Subcommittee of the House of Commons Reconstruction Committee was appointed by Prime Minister Lloyd George, chaired by A H Dyke Acland, including William Schlich as a member, to consider afforestation in the British Isles.<sup>567</sup>

In 1917, the Acland Forestry Committee visited Ireland to inquire into the experience of state forestry of DATI over the thirteen years up to the war. By this time, the British Government in Ireland had purchased thirteen wooded estates, where trees had been felled and replanted mostly with conifers, on a total of nearly 6,700 acres.<sup>568</sup> This land portfolio represented the only state forests in Britain, apart from Crown woods at this time.<sup>569</sup> The Acland Report included many of the recommendations of DATI Forestry Commission Report of 1908,<sup>570</sup> and it noted that Britain was unique in Europe in that there was no forestry policy, state forest program nor a forestry authority. The Report attributed the lack of forestry development to unlimited supplies of cheap imported timber which had been available during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>571</sup> The post war imperative of the Acland Committee to plant enough low-cost trees for a three-year timber supply for the British mainland, focused the choice of species on Scots pine, spruce, larch and lodge pole pine. and was the basis of the Forestry Act of 1919.<sup>572</sup>

In 1918, the Acland Report was used as the guidelines for the Interim Forest Authority to prepare legislation for a British state afforestation program to ensure strategic supplies of timber, which included Ireland. In the same year, land purchase by DATI was suspended due to events unfolding in Ireland, although tree felling from DATI centres continued.<sup>573</sup> After the Sinn Fein election success in 1918, during this period of political instability in Ireland, the Interim Authority discussed administrative arrangements with DATI who agreed to represent the Authority as their agent in Ireland

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<sup>566</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 620.

<sup>567</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 144.

<sup>568</sup> Henry, 'Irish Forestry', p. 8.

<sup>569</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', in *Journal of the Empire Forestry Association*, i (1922). p. 72.

<sup>570</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 145.

<sup>571</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 147 - 149.

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>573</sup> *Eighteenth Annual Report 1917-18*, pp 9, 14-5, 30.

on an ad interim basis from January 1920.<sup>574</sup> As all DATI forestry lands could pass into the hands of the Forestry Commissioners, DATI also started looking into leasing lands for afforestation and development at this time.<sup>575</sup>

### *British forestry legislation 1919*

The Forestry Act of 1919 introduced a forestry policy for Britain 'from scratch', to establish conditions in which the nation's state forests were held in trust, and where continuity of policy was achieved regardless of government.<sup>576</sup> The Act established an independent Forestry Commission with eight Forestry Commissioners, which was considered to be the junior forest authority of the British Empire, in contrast to the older authorities in its Dominions, according to Lord Lovat, its founder, first Chairman and innovative forester.<sup>577</sup> In his speech at the launch of the Forestry Commission in London in 1920, Lord Lovat mused on the evolution of British forestry, and considered the effect of importing timber from all over the British empire on traditional woodland management as well as the legacy of estate forestry on the demise of community arboreal culture and skills. He said that:

There can be no doubt that we have lost a great deal from the fact that the treatment of forests in Great Britain has been entirely individual. Instead of having a high percentage of the rural community interested in forestry as communal owners, imbued with a good working knowledge of timber yields, prices and produce, we have a complete ignorance of forestry life and values.<sup>578</sup>

He added that:

The extent of virgin forests that have been acquired by the Empire at different stages of her growth has, no doubt, tended toward carelessness and indifference. In this respect we have been the spoilt darlings of fortune. ... we have allowed our capital in the shape

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<sup>574</sup> *Twentieth Annual Report 1919-20* (Dublin, 1921), p. 8.

<sup>575</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 158.

<sup>576</sup> R. Robinson in 'Proceedings of the First Annual Report 1920', *Empire Forestry Conference* (London, 1921), p. 104; 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', p. 13.

<sup>577</sup> Lord Lovat, 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference', (London, 1920), p. 2.

<sup>578</sup> Lord Lovat, Chairman of the Forestry Commission, *ibid.*, pp 2-6.

of woodlands to be destroyed for immediately realizable assets in the form of grazing or agricultural extension.<sup>579</sup>

Lord Lovat referred to the 'heredity hostility to forests of the British race'<sup>580</sup> saying 'It is small wonder that we are not forest preservers, as they are in Switzerland, France, Germany and Belgium, but at heart forest vandals who look on all woodland as their prey.'<sup>581</sup> He was concerned that the arboreal heritage of Britain be preserved as a national asset, querying:

... Are we, as a unit of civilization, taking the necessary steps to preserve the great heritage of timber to which we have succeeded? ... We in Great Britain were the last European State to adopt a forest policy, with hesitating steps ... and establish a Forest Authority. Of all the nations of Europe we have the smallest area of State forest.<sup>582</sup>

The Act instituted a program for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, with a forestry fund of £3.5 million to 'promote the interests of forestry, the development of afforestation, and the production and supply of timber in the United Kingdom.'<sup>583</sup> The military imperative for the founding of the Forestry Commission was voiced by Vice-Chairman F.C. Coulthorpe MP, who reiterated the role of the Forestry Commission as 'insurance against failure of pitwood to keep the mines working in the event of another war... entire independence of imports could only be secured by planting 100,000 conifer trees per year.'<sup>584</sup> The Commissioners were granted the power to purchase and lease land for afforestation, purchase and sell state and private timber, to make afforestation loans, to promote the development of woodland industries, to undertake research, promote forestry education and training.<sup>585</sup> This centralised forestry development administration and planning had been developed across the British empire by Schlich and other imperial foresters, such as influential first Director of the Imperial Forest Institute in Oxford, Robert Scott Troup,<sup>586</sup> formerly head of the Forest

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>580</sup> Proceedings First British Empire Forestry Conference, , p. 4. In Powell, p. 858.

<sup>581</sup> J. M. Powell, 'Dominion over palm and pine: the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-47', in *Journal of Historical Geography*, xxxiii (2007). p. 858. Lovat, 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference', pp 3-4.

<sup>582</sup> Lovat, 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference', pp 3-4.

<sup>583</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', pp 13-5.

<sup>584</sup> Empire Forestry Journal, p. 201.

<sup>585</sup> 'Proceedings of the First Annual Report 1920', pp 13-5.

<sup>586</sup> Robert Troup, biographer of Professor William Schlich.

Service in India. Troup promoted state control and planning 'to avoid mismanagement' of what he regarded as irresponsible private or local exploitation of forests.

As well as centralised planning for forest development and coordination with the wood industry, the Forestry Act of 1919 also included a social objective promoted by several Scottish landowners, to support the improvement of living conditions of rural communities, with the construction of small holdings and cottages for forestry workers. As these social and wood industry integration measures were only adopted by the Forestry Commission in Britain in 1924, they were no longer applicable in Ireland.<sup>587</sup>

The Forestry Commissioners were advised by regional Forestry Councils established for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As one of four Advisory Councils, the Irish Council had twenty-four members, including former DATI forestry committee members, representatives of the Land Commission, the Congested Districts Board, land agents, landowners including Thomas Ponsonby, a labour representative, and foresters Forbes, Henry and Campbell from DATI.<sup>588</sup>

Although Raum noted that the Forestry Commission introduced 'a decisive industrialization of forestry in Britain resulting in a major shift towards plantation forestry under state management, the Forestry Commission did support the preservation of regenerated woods.<sup>589</sup> Lovat also had spoken enthusiastically about landscape and the preservation of woods, and the Forestry Commission was required to consider the amenity aspect in its afforestation policy,<sup>590</sup> although this was less evident in later reports.<sup>591</sup>

After the approval of the British Forestry Commission for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland in 1919, its agent in Ireland was represented by DATI, where the Forestry Commission policies and programs were adapted to take into account unique Irish circumstances.<sup>592</sup> Ownership of DATI land for forest development was to be transferred to London, and staff were to be managed through Westminster, but they

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<sup>587</sup> Jan-Willem Oosthoek, 'The logic of British Forest Policy 1919-1970', *Transitions towards a sustainable Europe: Ecology, economy, policy* (Vienna, Austria, 2000), p. 6; Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 145.

<sup>588</sup> *Twentieth Annual Report 1919-20*, p. 8.

<sup>589</sup> Susanne Raum and Clive Potter, 'Forestry Paradigms and policy change: the evolution of forestry policy in Britain in relation to the ecosystem approach', in *Land Use Policy*, xlix (2015), p.464.

<sup>590</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', p. 19.

<sup>591</sup> James H. Winter, *Secure from the rash assault: The Victorian environment* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1999), p. 100.

<sup>592</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 158-67.

were allowed to remain in Dublin. The DATI organizational structure of Division and District officers was to continue under the directorship of Forbes, as Assistant Commissioner for Ireland. Despite the post-war political, social economic and administrative turmoil in Ireland up to 1921, DATI still had the powers to buy and lease land, to make compulsory purchase orders, to clear and fence land, and to plant and fell trees. From 1919 to 1922, Forbes was answerable to two forest authorities. He was both an Assistant Commissioner, responsible to the Forestry Commissioners in London, and Chief Inspector of DATI, reporting to J. R. Campbell, Assistant Secretary in Dublin.<sup>593</sup> Neeson gives him credit for choosing to remain in an administration with ideals that might not have been his choosing.<sup>594</sup>

A summary of DATI land acquired for tree planting from 1900 to 1921 and forest-related expenditure is shown in the following figures and map.

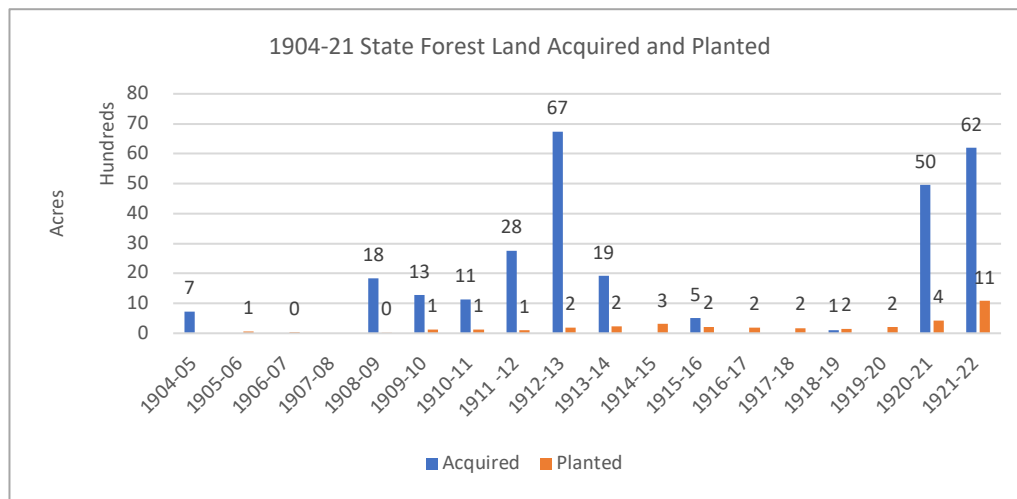


Figure 6: 1904-21 British forest area acquired and planted in Ireland.

This figure shows the gradual acquisition of land by DATI with a peak in 1912-13 and prior to Independence. Land acquisition was minimal during the war. Initial DATI planting activity was in small-scale trial plots with different non-native conifer tree species, mostly in cleared woodland.

<sup>593</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 147-148, 150.

<sup>594</sup> Neeson, p. 150.



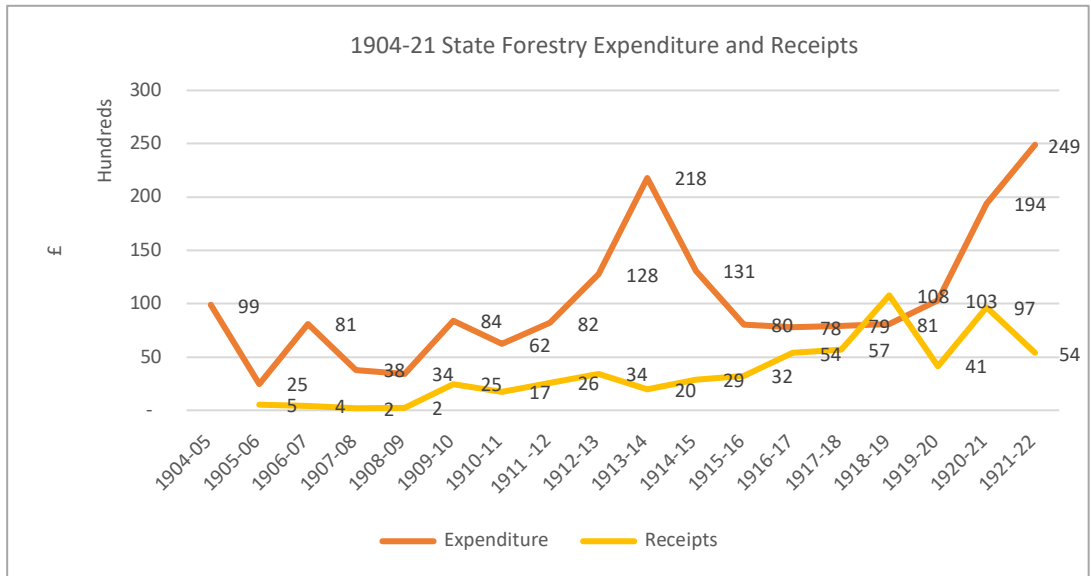


Figure 7: 1904-21 British forest-related expenditure and receipts in Ireland

This figure shows the increase in expenditure by the British government on state forestry in Ireland, up to the First World War. Reduced funding was maintained during the war for land acquisition and planting. Receipts came from the sale of hardwood from cleared woodlands, which increased prior to the war and during the war of Independence. (From *DATI and Convery, 1979*).

The following map shows the areas acquired and planted for British state forestry in 1920, from the First Annual Report of the Forestry Commission.

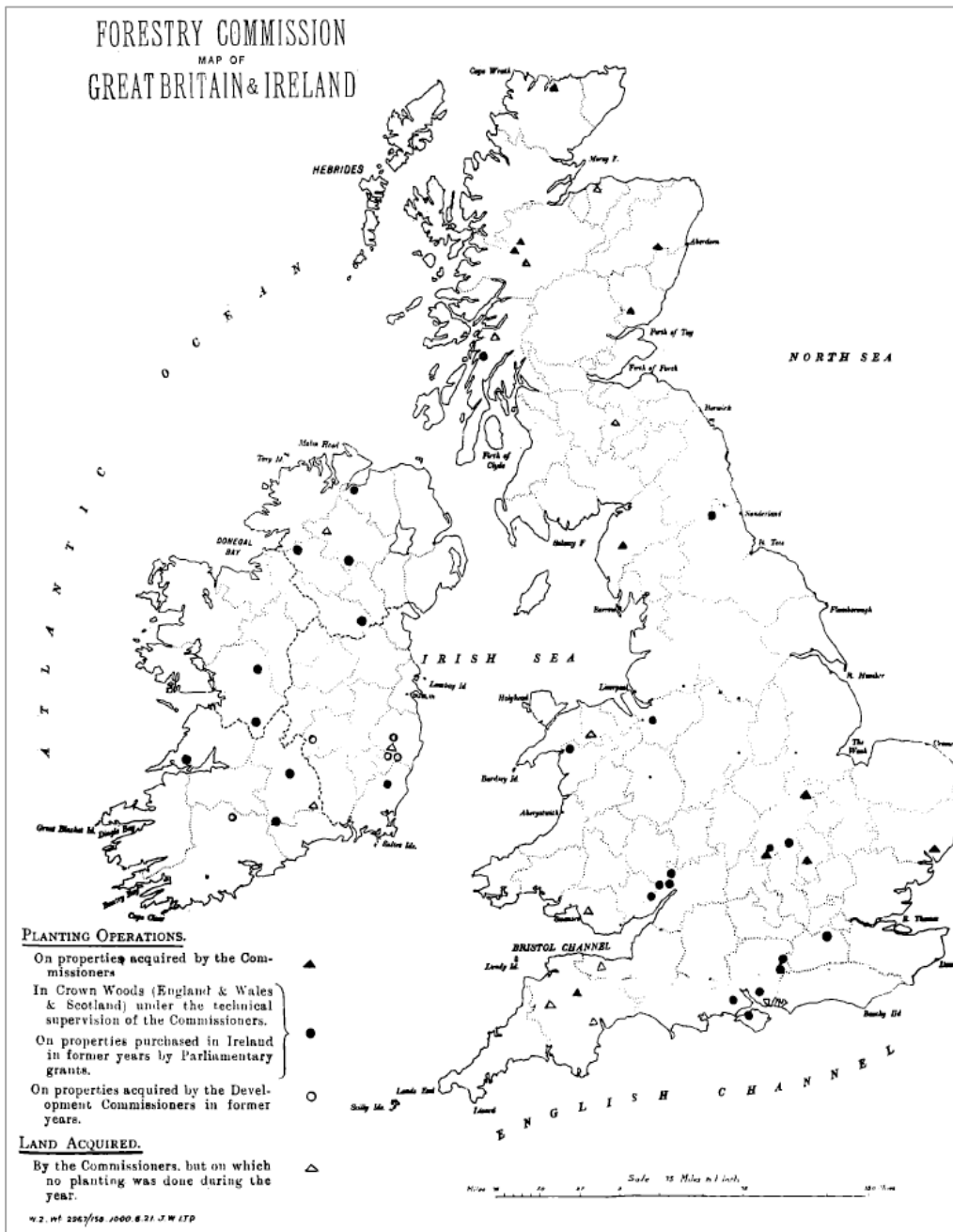


Figure 8: 1920 British state forestry estate

This map shows the extent of state forestry in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland in 1920. There were no Crown woods in Ireland, (from *Proceedings British Empire Forestry Conference, 1921*).

At this time, both the import and export of wood products through Irish ports was falling, as illustrated in the following figure.

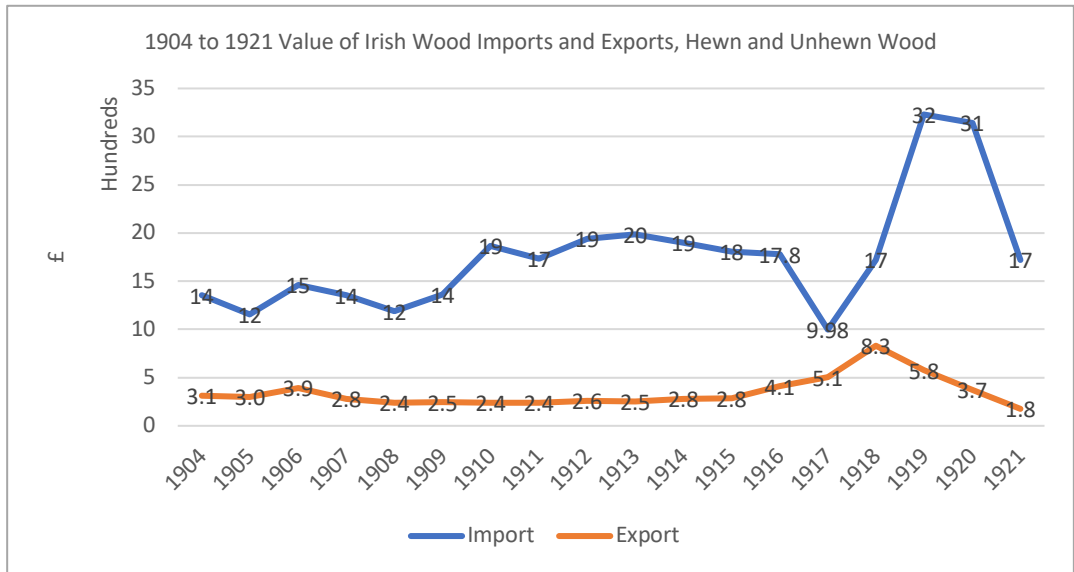


Figure 9: 1904 to 1921 Value of Irish imports & exports of wood, hewn & unhewn.

This figure shows the rapid increase in imports after the war, mostly timber and boards. Exports peaked in 1918, mostly raw timber and furniture, including personal effects. (From 'Report of the Trade in Imports and Exports at Irish ports for year ended 31 December 1921', SO, Dublin). These figures reflect a significant manufacturing industry of wood products, illustrated in the many items traded during this time, shown in the following table.

<b>EXPORTS</b>	<b>IMPORTS</b>
<i>Brushes and Brooms</i>	<i>Brushes and Brooms</i>
<i>Carriages and Cars</i>	<i>Carriages,</i>
<i>Carts and Vans</i>	<i>Carts, Waggon,</i>
<i>Axels, Shafts, Spokes</i>	<i>Handcarts,</i>
<i>Wheels</i>	<i>Wheelbarrows</i>
<i>Clogs, Clog Bocks</i>	<i>Clog Soles</i>
<i>Matches</i>	<i>Matches</i>
<i>Wood Pulp</i>	<i>Wood Pulp</i>
<i>Rough Wood Timber</i>	<i>Baskets and Rods</i>
<i>Sawn Timber</i>	<i>Rushes</i>
<i>Baskets</i>	<i>Walking Sticks</i>
<i>Willows</i>	<i>Washboards</i>
<i>Walking Sticks</i>	<i>Furniture</i>
<i>Washboards</i>	<i>Pitwood</i>
<i>Furniture</i>	<i>Mahogany</i>
	<i>Boxwood</i>
	<i>Boards</i>
	<i>Sleepers</i>
	<i>Hoops</i>
	<i>Handles</i>
	<i>Charcoal</i>

Table 2: 1904-21 List of Irish wood products imports and exports

After the war, there was much public interest in forestry across the British Empire. In 1920, the first Empire Forestry Conference (BEFC) in London brought

together the forest owning landowners of the British Isles and professional foresters from all Dominions of the Empire, to launch the First Report of the Forestry Commissioners. The national importance of the Empire Forestry Conference and its Association was illustrated by its patron, King George V. The Conference's objectives were to discuss the management of the perceived diminishing supply of world timber for the British Empire's timber requirements, particularly softwood, with the exchange of new techniques and results, and the training of the imperial forester.<sup>595</sup> It was primarily a venue for discourse, networking and the exchange of research amongst elite professional foresters who had all been trained in Britain and who regarded Schlich 'as chief and master.'<sup>596</sup> Forester Troup also supported the coordination of imperial forestry where 'State ownership could facilitate a synchronization of economic and natural systems that were in the long-term interests of Britain.'<sup>597</sup> These conferences established a unique bond of cooperation amongst forest administrators and foresters across some forty countries over most of the twentieth century. This was a bond which fostered an 'autocracy of expertise' and a heritage of service,<sup>598</sup> and a forum that sustained professional foresters in Ireland after Independence.

In 1920, the Irish delegates to the first Conference were less enthusiastic about the future of forestry in Ireland. For Forbes, Henry and Thomas Ponsonby,<sup>599</sup> the BEFC represented stability in the chaotic world of the previous three years of British administration in Ireland. Given the uncertain political climate in Ireland at the time, Henry believed in the potential for non-native conifer timber while Forbes expressed frustration about the difficulties in acquiring land for conifer plantations.<sup>600</sup> Ponsonby, the first and last Chairman of the Irish Advisory Council of the Forestry Commission in 1921, presented a gloomy forecast on the future of forestry in Ireland. He gave an impassioned speech about the loss of confidence in tree planting and the need for

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<sup>595</sup> 'Second Annual Report 1925-6', *Imperial Forestry Institute* (University of Oxford, 1926), p. 3. Powell, 'Dominion over palm and pine: the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-47', pp 854-7.

<sup>596</sup> Powell, 'Dominion over palm and pine: the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-47', pp 854, 858.

<sup>597</sup> Peder Anker, 'Ecological Communication at the Oxford Imperial Forestry Institute,' in Christina Folke (ed.), *Cultivating the Colonies: Colonial states and their environmental legacies*. (Ohio, 2011), p. 278.

<sup>598</sup> Powell p. 875, 859, 877.

<sup>599</sup> Thomas Ponsonby, landowner in Tipperary, experienced forester and advocate for native woodland forestry and its commercial potential.

<sup>600</sup> 'Proceedings of the First Annual Report 1920', p. 236.

public education. He attributed one of the three causes of the loss of interest in tree planting to Irish people's attitudes towards forestry:

... the chief thing really is the mentality of our people; the people do not care about forestry; the rewards of forestry are too remote. I think nothing will remedy this situation except publicity.<sup>601</sup>

During these transitional years, the public were kept up to date on forestry issues in Ireland with newspaper coverage of Forestry Commission Advisory Council meetings, lectures, and forestry society meetings, including the Irish Forestry Society and the Royal Dublin Society. The First World War interrupted the formation of local branches of the Irish Forestry Society, but planting lists by landowners were still being published in 1920. The post-war loss of members and civil disturbances from 1918, and the widespread thefts of young trees, featured in the last notes of the closing meeting in 1921, when members were still calling on the government to establish nurseries and to reopen Avondale Forestry School.

In 1922, in its last year of existence, the Irish Forestry Society made valiant efforts on behalf of afforestation and education, promoting annual Arbor Days to bring about 'practical good will,' and planting trees in Phoenix Park.<sup>602</sup> After the establishment of the new Department of Agriculture in 1922, the Irish Forestry Society stated its interest in meeting the Minister for Agriculture.<sup>603</sup> But this was to be a relationship which never developed. Arthur Forbes dismissed the Forestry Society members as amateurs, despite their eminent patron, Professor Schlich, but he did acknowledge their effectiveness in the establishment of a state forestry administration, saying that it had 'probably been responsible for State Afforestation being inaugurated in Ireland.' He remarked that: 'Its views were, of course, chiefly of an abstract nature, but its insistence that something should be done in Ireland to create Crown woodlands of a similar nature to those existing in Great Britain was not altogether unreasonable'.<sup>604</sup> Their views on regenerated woodland forestry would not be included in the new forestry program in DATI, which was a great loss to the future of state forestry in Ireland. This reluctant appreciation was not enough to keep the society going and it closed in 1923 'owing to the difficulty of maintaining public interest in its

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<sup>601</sup> 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference', p. 103.

<sup>602</sup> *Irish Times*, 18 May 1922.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>604</sup> 'Tree planting in Ireland during four centuries', in *Irish Forestry*, lxi, no. 2 (2004).p. 88.

work'.<sup>605</sup> The legacy of Arbor Day would briefly re-emerge in the provisional Dáil's discourse on a national forestry policy for Ireland.

It is probable that the efforts of the Irish Forestry Society could have informed the Irish nationalists in the literary revival movement who were also in favour of replanting trees and woods in Ireland. As an international botanist and forester, Augustine Henry's interest in Irish nationalism was evident in his friendships with Alice Stopford Green, A E George Russell, Count Plunkett, the Yeats family, Erskine Childers, and Evelyn Gleeson, whose cousin was T.P. Gill, founder and Secretary of DATI.<sup>606</sup>

After 1922, although the Forestry Division of DATI remained closely in contact with the Forestry Commission, their paths began to diverge almost immediately. Before the departure of the British government, the integration of the Forestry Commission objectives in Ireland did not have time to develop in DATI forestry administration, and the benefits of a national forestry policy, wider objectives and advisory councils were lost after 1922. The Irish Forest Authority was subsumed into the Department of Agriculture, with no agreed national policy or program, no industrial or social objectives, nor an advisory council.

Meanwhile, in 1922, the Forestry Commission was challenged in Westminster and existed for two years with its primary role to provide employment relief.<sup>607</sup> However, in 1924, the Forestry Commission began to purchase land cheaply for state afforestation, private forestry grants were made, and the United Kingdom's forestry development program for England, Scotland and Wales, began in earnest.

In conclusion, the long and complex legacy of British forestry administration in Ireland is seen to be intrinsically linked to land ownership, property rights, and land rental, with associated periods of rapid deforestation during changes in landownership, settlement and land use. The contribution of the landowning class to the foundation of the twentieth century state forestry administration was demonstrated as being both due to their departure, clearing woods as they went, as well as to the concerns and proposals of resident landowners about deforestation. Although the effect of extreme deforestation on the impoverishment of the soil and the local community was raised in

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<sup>605</sup> *Irish Times*, 12 June 1928.

<sup>606</sup> Henry.

<sup>607</sup> *Third Annual Report, 1922* (Forestry Commission, 1923), pp 3-5.

reports, it was only indirectly addressed by DATI in their experimental tree planting program. The work of landowners and professionals on the 1908 Report and the Irish Forestry Society represented the most far-seeing efforts to re-establish an arboreal culture in Ireland through state action which included the care and preservation of woods and plantations, and the need for organisation of the wood industry. These recommendations were shown to represent an important milestone in the development of state forestry in the British Isles, as well as a welfare delivery opportunity.

However, it is also evident that this transfer of responsibility for the management of woodland and forestry development from the landowner to the state also transferred the relationship of the landowner to his resources and to his tenants. In the post-war years of the British forestry administration in Ireland, this disconnected paternal relationship can be seen in the Forbes' approach to forestry. Although his innovative scientific forestry methods created a new arboreal environment in Ireland, his assumption of some of the perceptions of the landowner could be seen in his view of land as a 'clean slate' for experimental forestry, with no connections or understanding of its nature, its previous occupants nor its history. His belief in the civilising nature of the activity of tree planting, but not in the establishment of a national asset of Crown woods in Ireland, indicated a more imperial view of reforesting Ireland. This legacy could also be seen in the transfer of some of the landowners' long-standing convictions of the ignorance and hostility of local people towards trees and tree care, their incapacity to manage a wood, or to have a view on future woods and forests.

It seems probable that the legacy of these views contributed to the expert perception that only scientific forestry of non-native conifers of the right provenance was possible in Ireland at that time, justified by the goal of rapid timber production from non-agricultural land. Forbes' conviction that woods of regenerating hardwood tree species in Ireland were non-commercial and not worth re-establishing or managing, particularly on poor land, remained unchallenged by his peers or the government.

It is arguable that Forbes' scientific planting enthusiasm would have been balanced by the implementation of DATI broader forestry development initiatives for industry support, by the encouragement of local government interest in wood preservation and production, and by the national promotion of public education and Arbor Day, over time. However, over the first decade, only the scientific forestry approach was fostered by the combined experimental work of Forbes and the Forestry Division, and assisted by the launch of the British Forestry Commission. The Commission represented the culmination of an empire-wide increase in interest,

expertise and investment in forestry and forestry education for the post-war timber production and supply of British timber needs, an empire that was dependant on an autocracy of expertise.<sup>608</sup> The military imperative for softwood timber supplies for British mining and industry was demonstrated as possibly the most critical influence on the approach for state forestry in Britain, and also in Ireland. The hesitancy of DATI in relation to organisation of the timber and wood industries in Ireland could have reflected the historic reluctance of the government administration to 'interfere' with private industry,<sup>609</sup> despite active government involvement in development of the agriculture industries of the time. Thus, undisturbed by questions of supply of hardwood timber, and as the issues of the control of deforestation and preservation of woods receded, the scientific, plantation approach to forestry became institutionalised in Ireland over this decade, based on the British forester's perception that non-native conifers were the best tree to grow in the treeless land of Ireland for this market.

It is possible that Forbes' scheme for large-scale non-native tree planting could have evolved in tandem with the input of an active Advisory Committee, with county council cooperation, the Irish Forestry Society and ten years of DATI forestry experience. This could have been the foundation of a broad-based forestry policy in Ireland despite the particular conflicted legacies of land ownership and use in Ireland. However, the Irish Forestry Society movement inspired by Robert Cooper for the promotion of the tree within the whole of its environment, the air, water, and soil, did not survive the changes brought about by the First World War. Neither did his recommendations that native trees be preferred over non-native species in natural woodlands, nor his proposal that re-afforesting the country would reverse the poverty of the soils created by previous periods of catastrophic deforestation. But the Irish Forestry Society legacy of Arbor Day re-emerged in its revival by the First Dáil as a key element in their vision for the re-afforestation of Ireland.

### III: Provisional Dáil forest administration

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<sup>608</sup> Powell, 'Dominion over palm and pine: the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-47', p. 859.

<sup>609</sup> Observation by Professor Noel Wilkins.



For a short period over three years, from 1919 to 1921, the first unofficial Irish parliament, the Provisional Dáil discussed their vision for the re-afforestation of Ireland, in response to perceived government inactivity,<sup>610</sup> beginning with a proposal to celebrate a national Arbor Day. This legacy was also inherited by the Irish Free State, but is not discussed in the state forest histories. This part briefly looks at the nationalist interest in forestry development, particularly the views of Arthur Griffith, and at the forest-related discourse and reports in the Provisional Dáil.

During the first years of the twentieth century, the growing nationalist movement in Ireland had its own perceptions on the re-afforestation of the country, which were to become central to its goal of self-determination. The early Sinn Fein movement at this time, promoted by Arthur Griffith, had as one of their 'principal planks' an active afforestation policy, as part of the development of the resources of Ireland.<sup>611</sup> In Griffith's political history, '*Resurrection of Hungary*,' he introduced his belief in the profound impact that re-afforestation would have on Ireland.<sup>612</sup> His expansive views on the benefits of afforestation on the climate, and the role of county councils as the agents of tree planting, were presented as Sinn Fein policy on forestry at the Inaugural Annual Convention of the National Council on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1905. A motion on Afforestation proposed that:

The central plain of Ireland awaits only to raise the mean temperature of Ireland four degrees and thus render the soil of Ireland doubly fruitful; and our people are taxed not to carry on so noble a work but to perpetuate pauperism. It lies within the powers of the County Councils to at least devote a portion of the local taxation of this country to the purposes of such reclamation.<sup>613</sup>

Since 1904, as editor, Griffith was actively promoting his views in *Sinn Fein*, particularly in articles on land, its ownership and use,<sup>614</sup> and on forestry. It carried articles on trees, woods, and afforestation for their contribution to the amelioration of climate, shelter for farmland, and protection for the soil.<sup>615</sup> It promoted education to prevent deforestation and to forestall the £5 fines for felling trees on farms purchased

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<sup>610</sup> Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary government in Ireland* (Dublin, 1995), p. 89.

<sup>611</sup> McBride, *A message to the Irish people*, p. 92.

<sup>612</sup> Arthur Griffith, *The resurrection of Hungary* (3rd edition 1918 reprint, 2003 ed., Dublin, 1904).

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155. Sinn Fein, *First annual convention of the National Council 28th November 1905* (Dublin, 1905), p. 139.

<sup>614</sup> Owen McGee, *Arthur Griffith* (Dublin, 2015), pp 222, 342.

<sup>615</sup> *Sinn Féin*, 5 April 1914.

under the Land Acts, trees which were often removed in ignorance of their benefits.<sup>616</sup> Re-forestation of waste lands was also a popular topic, with an estimated two and half million suitable acres,<sup>617</sup> where the experiences in Jutland and Les Landes were to be applied to Irish dunes and marshes,<sup>618</sup> for the benefit of the local people. County council debates were reported on local rate tax increases to support re-forestation. Views on trees that would not grow on 'bad' land, and the belief that trees adjacent to farmland would shelter wild animals that would eat the crops, were also covered.<sup>619</sup> After the Home Rule Bill of 1914 was introduced, Arthur Griffith called for state action on its provisions on Irish natural resources, its land, fisheries and forestry.<sup>620</sup> In later life, General Richard Mulcahy referred to the leadership of Arthur Griffith in this area, saying: 'It was Griffith who most fully painted in his weekly writings for us, the traditions and resources of Ireland.'<sup>621</sup>

The publications of the Irish Forestry Society probably contributed to the deliberations of the influential nationalist group that met during this period to discuss forestry in Ireland. with Arthur Griffith, as recalled by Seán McBride whose mother was one of the members.<sup>622</sup> This group was composed of Bulmer Hobson, Edward Martyn, Arthur Griffith, George Russell, James Stephens and Maud Gonne MacBride. Their discussions contributed to Hobson's pamphlet on forestry in Ireland published in the 1930s, referred to in Chapter Seven. According to Maud's son, Seán, later Minister for External Affairs, they were 'always emphasising the importance of a re-forestation policy'. On reflection, and mirroring the interest of his mother, Seán McBride said: 'I think I can say that I have been keenly interested in the whole question of the re-forestation of Ireland ever since my childhood days.'<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> *Sinn Féin*, 26 April 1913.

<sup>617</sup> *Sinn Féin*, 15 November 1913.

<sup>618</sup> *Sinn Féin*, 21 March 1914.

<sup>619</sup> in *Sinn Féin* (26 April 1913).

<sup>620</sup> Government of Ireland Act 1914 (4 & 5 Geo. 5 c. 90). Arthur Griffith, *Home Rule Bill examined* (Pamphlet, Dublin, 1912), pp 11-12.

<sup>621</sup> Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, *Portrait of a revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the founding of the Irish Free State* (Cork, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>622</sup> McBride, *A message to the Irish people*, p. 92. This group reformed in the late 1930s, with Bulmer Hobson, John Busteed, Mrs Berthon Waters, Alfred O'Rahilly, Luke Duffy with Seán McBride to develop 'a substantial forestry programme,' in the 1930s, see Chapter Seven.

<sup>623</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 12. Seán Mc Bride's active interest in forestry was instrumental in obtaining a loan from the Marshall Aid funds for an expansion of the tree planting program.

### *Revolutionary Parliament, Dáil Éireann and forestry*

The Irish nationalists' vision of an Irish parliament was realized in 1919 in the founding of Dáil Éireann. From 1919 to 1922, the revolutionary government of Dáil Éireann was only one of three potential administrations responsible for the development and management of state forestry. During these three years, the Forestry Commission, DATI Forestry Division and the Provisional Dáil forestry administration had overlapping and competing roles and responsibilities in forestry development and management, reflecting the territorial uncertainties of the Irish landscape, both its land and its politics. Membership of the Provisional Dáil was made up of most of the Irish MPs elected in the 1918 election for Westminster, who decided to represent their constituents in the Dáil.<sup>624</sup>



Plate 8: First Provisional Dáil in session in the Mansion House, 1919. (From *Keogh Photographic Collection*, NLI).

After the formation of the Cabinet in January 1919 and the election of President Éamon de Valera, the First National Loan was launched on 1 April 1919 by Michael Collins, Provisional Minister for Finance,<sup>625</sup> and promptly declared illegal by the British

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<sup>624</sup> Maguire proposed that the revolutionaries of Irish nationalism that remained in politics went into electoral politics, unlike other decolonizing regimes where bureaucracy becomes the instrument of the ruling party. Martin Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2005), p. 297.

<sup>625</sup> First Dáil Irish National Loan, Pamphlet, (McCraith, London, 1919).

government. Their vision for government was based on management of national resources for the people of Ireland, expressed by Minister Collins:

... the keynote to the economic revival must be the development of the Irish resources by Irish capital for the benefit of the Irish consumer in such a way that the people have steady work at just remuneration and their own share of control.<sup>626</sup>

The £250,000 Loan Prospectus was evidence of the high priority given to forestry development in Ireland by the provisional government. This popular, over-subscribed public loan had as its main objectives the funding of the promotion of the Irish cause, the consular service, and trade and commerce, and the development of natural resources, as well as the foreign service, the civil service and the courts. Forestry development was the fourth priority, with fisheries and industries, specifically: 'To develop and encourage the *Re-Afforestation* of the country,' in addition to the recruitment of a suitable person to launch the project.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>626</sup> Michael Collins, *The Path to freedom: Articles and speeches by Michael Collins* (Cork, 2011), pp 112-22. Although forestry is high in the prospectus of the National Loan, Collins does not refer to forestry in his speech on natural resource development.

<sup>627</sup> Minister of Finance, *Dáil Éireann Loan Prospectus* (6 March 1920).

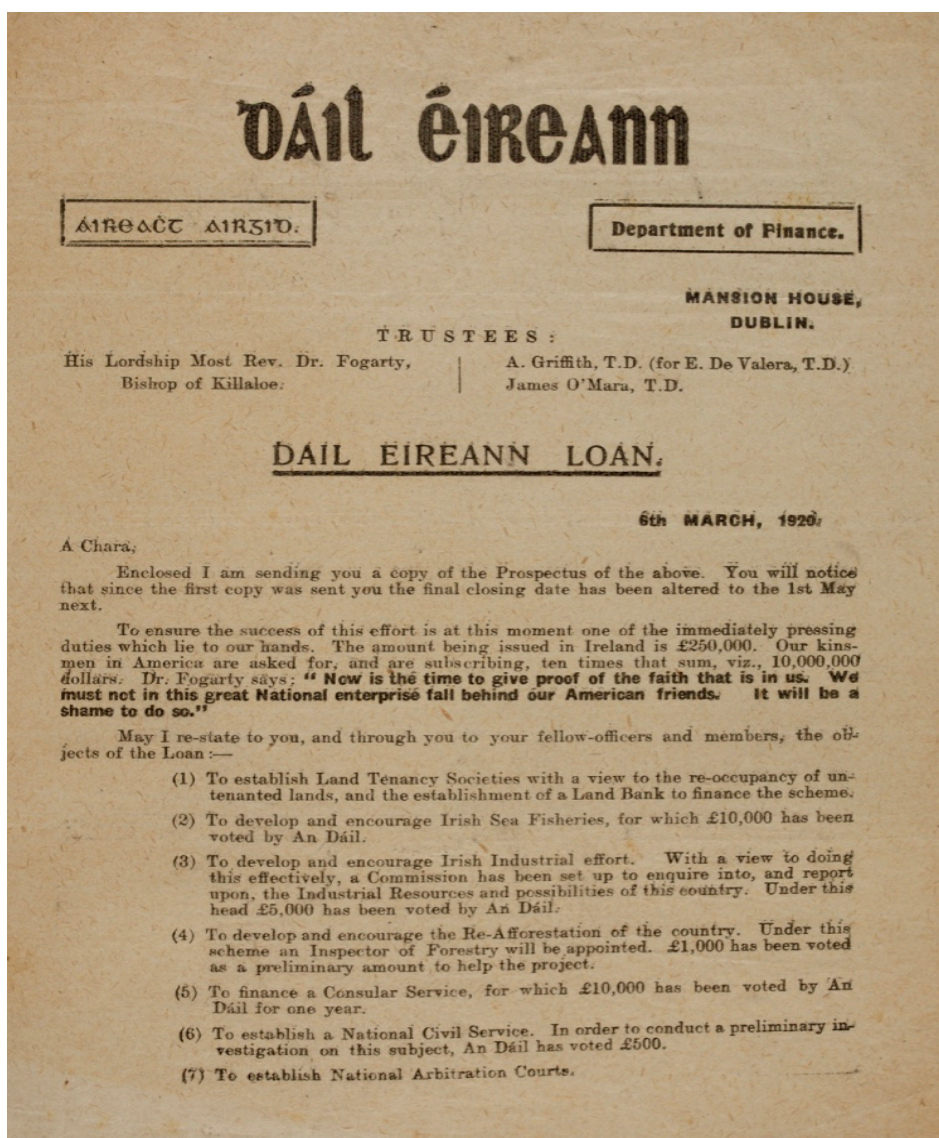


Plate 9: Provisional Dáil Loan Prospectus, 1920. (From Department of Finance, NLI).

This figure shows the importance of the development of natural resources, land, fisheries and forestry, as well as industry, to the architects of the 1919/1920 Dáil Éireann Loan, (from NLI).

With one shilling payments possible, the Loan was oversubscribed by an estimated 150,000 people, clergy and businesses in Ireland, and £370,000 was quickly raised.<sup>628</sup> The public promotion of the loan also brought the issue of forestry

<sup>628</sup> Gary Evans, 'The raising of the first internal Dáil loan and the British responses to it 1919-1921' (MLitt thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2012), pp 69-70. The loan also funded local government where rates could not be collected, Michael Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave* (Dublin, 2014), p. 67.

development to every part of Ireland. It is probable that the inspiration for the high ranking of forestry in the National Loan prospectus was due to the influence of Griffith.

During this time, Griffith's role in instigating the action that was needed to fulfil these aspirations on forestry development was evident in a letter to Robert Barton<sup>629</sup> now Provisional Director of Agriculture. His concern that this movement start with local government is evident in his 'hurried suggestions' for the development of the powers of the County Council in connection with afforestation, libraries, gymnasiums, which have been little used. He said that: 'If used to the full they would be productive of much benefit to the industries, agriculture and physical and mental education of the people'.<sup>630</sup> Meanwhile, Sinn Fein-dominated county councils had severed their connection as well as their funding from the British government in order to recognise the authority of the Provisional Government.<sup>631</sup>

In June 1919, Arthur Griffith (now Acting President) called for government action by the Provisional Dáil, to address the national scandal of tree-felling and deforestation in Ireland, at its ninth sitting. He said that:

The percentage of the area of Ireland under woodland was the least of any country before the war, and during the war fifteen years of the twenty years' supply has gone. Ireland is now worse off in this respect than any other inhabited country in the world with the exception of Ireland.<sup>632</sup> It will be the duty of the Dáil to find a remedy for this condition of affairs.<sup>633</sup>

He also proposed to the members of the Provisional Dáil (who had managed to avoid arrest), a national Arbor Day to plant trees, in addition to a Forestry Inspector with a budget of £1,000 to organize the event, and a public education campaign on tree planting.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> Robert Barton was a Protestant landowner in Co. Wicklow, military officer in the British and Irish Volunteers, and progressive agriculturalist, in Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 115.

<sup>630</sup> Arthur Griffith, 'Letter to Robert Barton', *Robert Barton Collection* (1919), IE/MA/BMH/CD/264/6/1-8.

<sup>631</sup> Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, p. 66.

<sup>632</sup> Iceland may have been intended here, text illegible.

<sup>633</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, F, (17 June 1919), Arthur Griffith, Acting President of the first Dáil.

<sup>634</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, F, 122 (18 June 1919), Arthur Griffith.

## *National Arbor Day*

In August of the same year, the Dáil was informed that William Cole, a Dublin City Alderman and grocery retailer,<sup>635</sup> had agreed to act on a voluntary basis as Forestry Inspector, to organize the national Arbor Day. This tree-planting event was rapidly politicised by the Forestry Committee who recommended that it be also a commemorative event for the executed men of the 1916 Rising.<sup>636</sup> This recommendation was passed by the Dáil as one of their first public decrees. This decree had had three unusual aspects: firstly, the provisional Dáil was about to be declared illegal by the British government, its public representatives would all be under arrest, many of whom were already in jail, and its activities would be actively thwarted by the British government. Secondly, the decree indicated the high priority that was attributed to the potential of re-forestation by the provisional government. Thirdly, the passing of the decree by the illegal assembly indicated a belief that there was enough popular support for its implementation.

The extent of local organisation for Arbor Day celebrations was evident in the correspondence, which also clarified the Provisional government's vision for the re-forestation of Ireland. A Sinn Fein circular to county councils, in August 1919, set the theme for the Day:

Let it be made clear at the outset that our aim is to restore to Ireland the kind of forests that she had. While aiming to furnish the supply for the country's needs in timber, on a business basis, we shall base our work on historical fact, and draw inspiration from Gaelic place names and native growths in the main, cooperating, in so far as we are able, with our people all over the country, and carrying to completion, a National scheme of Forestry for Ireland.<sup>637</sup>

Cole also sent a circular to all public agencies, schools and universities asking for cooperation in 'starting the re-forestation of Ireland on Arbor Day,' with planting trees, offering demonstrations and contacts for forestry, referring to pledges from public agencies to support the work, the benefits for children's woodland education,

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<sup>635</sup> William Cole, Sinn Fein founder and director of Sinn Fein Printing Press was a close associate of Arthur Griffith. His house in Mountjoy Square was the location of some of the Provisional Dáil meetings after it had been declared illegal, in 1919.

<sup>636</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, F, 149 (20 Aug. 1919), Robert Barton, Director of Agriculture.

<sup>637</sup> 'Sinn Fein Circular to County Councils on Arbor Day, August 1919', *Robert Barton Collection*, 264/16/5(a-b) (1919).

and the promotion of forestry in schools.<sup>638</sup> He also informed them of the denudation of the woodlands of Ireland by deforestation, without any serious effort being made by the British government to replace them. He referred to the damaging effects of deforestation on 'a worsening climate, deteriorated agriculture, higher prices, scarcity of timber, perennial floods and lower standard in national health', and the need for education of young people in trees and woods.<sup>639</sup>

The Acting Agriculture Minister of the Provisional Dáil, Robert Barton also sent word to the local Sinn Fein Cumainn to approach owners and public bodies, including workhouses, asylums, and orphanages, who might have suitable sites for planting, free or to let. He informed them that the Dáil Forestry Department would send information on trees available and prices bought under cooperative arrangement and sent by carriage.<sup>640</sup> He asked for cooperation from every county council for Arbor Day, also referring to deforestation which had become an acute national problem. He requested assistance from any local foresters with planting on Arbor Day, as well as input for plans for the future forests.<sup>641</sup>

In September, Cole's circular from the Provisional Dáil's Department of Agriculture Forestry Section, reiterated the long-term intention of the provisional government towards forestry development in Ireland:

We cannot too strongly impress on everybody that our work is to restore the natural forest growth of Ireland: not to have merely an annual One Day outburst of enthusiasm. The work now started must be continuous and permanent. Hence this year the work must be mainly educational and preparing the ground,' He added that it was in addition to 'the national plan to be worked out on comprehensive and permanent lines for the whole of Ireland.<sup>642</sup>

At the end of the circular, he returned to the commemorative aspect of Arbor Day:

Let us remember the motive that urges us to it – the service of Ireland and the memory of the men who, out of their love for Ireland, have given their all to her. It has been

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<sup>638</sup> William Cole, 'Circular to Public Agencies on Arbor Day', *Robert Barton Collection* 264/16/5(c) (1919).

<sup>639</sup> William Cole, 'Circular from the Department of Agriculture (Dáil) Forestry Section', *Robert Barton* 264/16/5(h) (September 1919).

<sup>640</sup> Cole, 'Circular to Public Agencies on Arbor Day'. Cole, 'Circular from the Department of Agriculture (Dáil) Forestry Section'.

<sup>641</sup> Robert Barton, 'Letter to County Councils on Arbor Day', *Robert Barton Collection* 264/16/5(f) (1919).

<sup>642</sup> Cole, 'Circular from the Department of Agriculture (Dáil) Forestry Section'.



proposed, and we request the Cumainn, in every instance, to plant 16 trees to commemorate, in a special portion of the site they plant, the memory of the 16 men executed in '16, who fought and died for Ireland. And as, with the blessing of God, the trees grow, so shall the nation work out year by year, in ever increasing and widening effort, the aims of the Patriot dead.<sup>643</sup>

Although the Dáil had been declared illegal from September 1919, by 27 October, the Arbor Day report on the preparations reflected the extent of the local organization of Sinn Fein in over 1,400 Cumainn, with public support which extended into councils and public agencies, schools, churches and other community organisations.<sup>644</sup> From September to November, notices and articles on Arbor Day preparations from the Provisional Department of Agriculture were published in over nineteen regional newspapers,<sup>645</sup> and only one reported a Councillor's preference for directions from the (legal) Department of Agriculture.<sup>646</sup> Several of them included an article by Professor T. P. Nolan, on the many benefits of tree planting for the climate, soils, water, shelter and on the countryside.<sup>647</sup> Many of the leading newspapers published arrangements for the official ceremony in Inchicore.<sup>648</sup> The Irish Times reported the planting of six oaks 'In memory of the dead'.<sup>649</sup>

The Forestry Committee Report was read by Arthur Griffith (Acting President) on preparations for National Arbor Day, where orders worth £450 for about 80,000 trees were supplied by nurseries and delivered to local bodies, colleges, convents, and Sinn Fein Cumainn. Suggestions for site preparation were made and lists of recommended native and imported trees for different locations and their prices were printed. These included native species as well as imported ones, fruit trees and

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<sup>643</sup> Ibid.

<sup>644</sup> Evans, 'The raising of the first internal Dáil loan and the British responses to it 1919-1921', p. 45.

<sup>645</sup> Examples: *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, *Strabane Chronicle*, *Mayo News*, *Ulster Herald*, *Connaught Tribune*, *Tuam Herald*, *Wicklow News*, *Irish Examiner*, *Derry Journal*, *Sligo Champion*, *Kilkenny People*, *Meath Chronicle*, *Westmeath Independent*, *Leitrim Observer*, *Nenagh Guardian*, *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, *Donegal News*, *Fermanagh Herald*, *Irish Examiner*.

<sup>646</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 27 October 1919.

<sup>647</sup> *Derry Journal*, 3 October 1919.

<sup>648</sup> John Joe Costin, 'The First National Tree Day - 1919', in *Irish Plant Society Newsletter*, no. 121 (2011), pp 23-32.

<sup>649</sup> *Irish Times*, 1 December 1919.

bushes, and suggestions for alder and willow for bogs and river banks. Cole noted in the Forestry Committee Report that:

... a vast amount of planting will take place all over the country, some nurseries being sold out weeks ago... you may feel assured that never before was the country so awake or so active in regard to afforestation.<sup>650</sup>

From September 1919, the outlawed Provisional Dáil met in private houses, including William Cole's home in Mountjoy Square in Dublin. Members raised the issue of the need for information leaflets on forestry and timber, and the need for a small rate increase for a county council Forestry Fund.<sup>651</sup> Under intense police surveillance, the Provisional government met only three times in 1920.

In August 1921, Substitute Director of Agriculture Art O'Connor,<sup>652</sup> presented William Cole's Report on Arbor Day to the Dáil, a day which had been celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1919, due to the mildness of the weather.<sup>653</sup> Cole noted its considerable success in planting between 250-300,000 trees, with 50,000 leaflets distributed, and lantern slides lectures, for a budget of £70, organised within a short time and under 'harassing circumstances'.<sup>654</sup> In his report, Cole expressed his appreciation for the widespread public response to launch Arbor Day, which was, in his opinion, primarily to raise awareness of the importance of the afforestation of the country. Newspaper reports of local arrangements for the Arbor Day celebrations arrangements were published by the *Irish Times*, *Dublin Evening Mail*, *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, *Limerick Leader*, *Munster Express*, *Drogheda Independent*, *Westmeath Independent*, *Connaught Telegraph*, *Irish Examiner*, and the *Wicklow News*, amongst others.<sup>655</sup> There was one reported objection from local councillors in Monaghan in a story linked to the police being called to prevent a Provisional Dáil deputation speaking to the council chamber.<sup>656</sup> Only a few local papers

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<sup>650</sup> Costin, 'The First National Tree Day - 1919', p. 29.

<sup>651</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, F, 203 (6 Aug. 1920), T. McSuibhne, J.J. Clancy, M. Staines.

<sup>652</sup> Art O'Connor was elected for South Kildare. He was an engineer, Gaelic scholar, and Secretary for Agriculture in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dáil 1921-2. Anti-Treaty, he lost his seat in 1923. He was also a lawyer and judge. *Irish Press*, 5 November 1950.

<sup>653</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, F, 165 (27 Oct. 1919), Art O'Connor.

<sup>654</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, S, 53-4 (17 Aug. 1921), Art O'Connor.

<sup>655</sup> *Munster Express*, 8 November 1919; *Drogheda Independent*, 8 November 1919; *Westmeath Independent*, 8 November 1919; *Connaught Telegraph*, 8 November 1919; *Irish Examiner*, 18 November 1919; *Limerick Leader*, 9 November 1919; *Irish Independent*, 25 November 1919; *Wicklow News*, 22 November 1919.

<sup>656</sup> *Freemans' Journal*, 25 November 1919.

covered the celebration of the event. Arthur Griffith was reported as having planted a tree in the grounds of St Ultan's Children's Hospital<sup>657</sup> and over forty trees were planted in the grounds of the Goldenbridge Orphanage in Inchicore, Dublin, 'for educational reasons' and to address deforestation.<sup>658</sup> Some reports of trees planted in Middleton, Devinish, Banteer, and in Newquay, Co. Waterford, directed by the urban councils were brief, possibly due to the censorship of some newspapers at the time. The Newquay trees were reported as being subsequently hacked and destroyed by unknown assailants. The *Connaught Telegraph* did report the commemoration of the executed men of 1916 in its report of Arbor Day, and included a critical comment on the custom of the Congested Districts Board to clear trees off every estate acquired by the Board<sup>659</sup>

There were no Arbor Day celebrations in 1920 or 1921 due to the imprisonment of many of the representatives, including Arthur Griffith on 20 November 1920, and the effects of war. However, it was evident that Arbor Day celebrations were intended to be an annual national political event for the Provisional government to demonstrate popular support, as well as a symbolic, national commitment to the re-forestation of Ireland. Arbor Day was also envisaged as a means of fostering public education, and ultimately to reconnect the people of Ireland to their arboreal heritage. This expansive view of forestry development is more ambitious than that proposed by forester historian Durand, who viewed Sinn Fein's forestry policy as merely mercantilist.<sup>660</sup>

It was reported in the Dáil many years later, that many of the trees planted on Arbor Day were pulled up afterwards by the Royal Irish Constabulary.<sup>661</sup>

### *Director of Agriculture, Art O'Connor*

In 1921, the Provisional Government's Director of Agriculture Art O'Connor returned to the theme of the destruction of woodland through deforestation since the

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<sup>657</sup> *Irish Independent*, 1 December 1919.

<sup>658</sup> *Sunday Independent*, 30 November 1919; *Evening Herald*, 27 November 1919.

<sup>659</sup> *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 December 1919; *Connaught Telegraph*, 13 December 1919.

<sup>660</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 168.

<sup>661</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2362 (3 June 1931), Osmunde Esmonde.

First World War, expressing his concern and the need for urgent action to control tree felling. He said that:

During and since the European War, timber merchants and land jobbers have been felling and exporting timber to England to such an extent that whole areas in Wicklow and Kerry and other parts of the country have been literally cleared of the standing timber, and, bad as Ireland's case was, it has probably suffered more in the past five or six years than in the fifty years of its previous history, and it will take generations to restore the balance of the damage done.<sup>662</sup>

He spoke about the difficulties of state forestry operations during the War of Independence, and the importance of protecting woodlands:

Although I favour and have always favoured an active State policy with regard to Forestry, the conditions last year were such that I was compelled to follow a cautious path in this matter. To attempt re-forestation in a state of war is as fruitless as setting a tent in the teeth of a gale, and it became my endeavour to conserve existing woods rather than create new ones.<sup>663</sup>

He was encouraged by the interest from the public in Arbor Day and referred to its benefits in heightening public awareness of deforestation, adding that it would not replace a state funded tree planting program: 'There is only one solvent for our low percentage of Forests—financing and direction and control by a free governing State'. He reported on attempts to control tree felling by the army during the War of Independence, and also through the county councils.

O'Connor's interest in public input into the national forestry programme was demonstrated in his remarks that public discussion on tree felling and replanting 'could be well assisted by propaganda in the public Press, discussion at Public Boards and Councils, and creation of general interest in what should be all the people's concern,' giving as an example, the work of Kildare County Council in preserving and managing its woods.<sup>664</sup> Art O'Connor informed the Dáil that it was his intent generally not to interfere with DATI but to attempt to influence agricultural policy through the county committees of agriculture. His proposal for a national Forestry Station and Forestry School for Irish foresters was rejected by his colleagues as premature and too costly.

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<sup>662</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, S, 64-5 (17 Aug. 1921), Art O'Connor. *A Brief Survey of Work Done by the Department of Agriculture, April 1919 to June 1921.*

<sup>663</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, S, 64 (17 Aug. 1921), Art O'Connor.

<sup>664</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, S, 65 (17 Aug. 1921), Art O'Connor.

Informal relations did exist between the Provisional Dáil and DATI at this time. Hoctor proposed that DATI was not targeted for replacement by the national government due to its effective representative Council and the practical necessity of its programs.<sup>665</sup> The Director of DATI's Forestry Division, Arthur Forbes subsequently recorded the regular contact of the Secretary of DATI, Thomas Gill,<sup>666</sup> with the Dáil during these years, but he did not refer to having had any relationship himself with the provisional Dáil and its members.<sup>667</sup> However, in the history of the Northern Ireland Forestry Service by C.S. Kilpatrick, he reported that these first Dáil forestry initiatives were regarded as 'interference' with the work of Arthur Forbes.<sup>668</sup>

In order to establish a forum of discussion on the immediate future of Ireland's natural resources and their management, in 1919, Dáil Éireann also established a Commission of Inquiry into the Resources and Industries of Ireland, chaired by Darrell Figgis.<sup>669</sup> One of its members, Joseph Connolly would be the Minister responsible for land and forestry in 1934. It met over three years as a 'representative, independent and autonomous committee', to report on the condition of natural resources, and manufacturing and productive industries in Ireland related to food and power, their development and support.<sup>670</sup> But woodland was not seen as a natural resource to be included in the review, neither was the re-forestation vision of the Provisional Dáil to be discussed, nor was the production of fuel from timber or the wood industry sector addressed. In 1922, after several reports were published, the work of the Commission was taken over by the Department of Trade in the Cumann na nGaedhael government.

Meanwhile, on 8 December 1921, after the crucial vote of William Cosgrave supporting the Anglo-Irish Treaty in de Valera's cabinet, the Dáil approved the Treaty and the effects of political disagreement were seen in violent incidents in every county. An election was called and Griffith was elected president in place of de Valera, and Collins and Cosgrave were included in his new cabinet.<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, pp 120-1.

<sup>666</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 169. Durand referred to Gill's interest in national self-determination

<sup>667</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 147.

<sup>668</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 18. C.S. Kilpatrick was Chief Northern Ireland Forestry Officer and a forest historian.

<sup>669</sup> Darrell Figgis, Chairman of the Commission from 1919-1921, he was an active nationalist, journalist, author, and contributor to the drafting of the 1922 Constitution.

<sup>670</sup> 'Minutes of the Commission of Inquiry into the Resources and Industries of Ireland', (1919-22).

<sup>671</sup> Michael Laffan, p. 103-5

However, the sudden death of both Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins in August 1922, changed the course of Irish history. It also ended the potential implementation of their vision for the re-forestation of Ireland. This was reflected in the more limited view of a state forestry program presented and discussed at the 1922 Irish Free State Agriculture Commission of Inquiry. The Commission were chiefly interested in the DATI work of Forbes and Henry and their forestry approach for timber production from non-native conifer plantations. The Commission agreed to the continued development of the DATI forestry program in Ireland within the renamed Agriculture Department, but there would not be an advisory board to 'be a sounding board for public opinion.'

This was in contrast to the Northern Ireland Commission of 1923, chaired by Viscount Charlemont to review natural and industrial resources and their development, which did include forestry as a natural resource. However, the outcome of support for the continuation of conifer planting programs was remarkably similar. Forbes was a witness at both committee hearings which were focused on the imports of timber, softwood production, available labour, and recommendations for state action.<sup>672</sup>

In conclusion, this brief account of the legacy of the nationalist perspective on forestry development in Ireland introduces their broad vision for the re-forestation of Ireland to reconnect people with their arboreal heritage for its many uses, in addition to supplying timber commercially. As planting trees was the first national symbolic act of a provisional government, represented by the celebration of Arbor Day in 1919, the extraordinary measures undertaken by the members of the Provisional parliament, the local representatives and their supporters during a time of war and rebellion in order to ensure that this symbolic act become a reality, demonstrates the centrality of the theme of re-forestation to their goal of achieving self-determination for the new nation. It also indicated the extent of local support across all sections of society for an Assembly which had already been declared illegal.

The second noteworthy aspect of re-forestation and Dáil Éireann was the acknowledgement of the importance of forestry to the local wood industry, seen in the recognition of the urgency for action on controlling deforestation to ensure its timber supply, but also the planting of trees to provide future timber supplies.

The re-forestation vision of the Provisional Dáil did not have time to be actualised, before events overtook the future of the provisional government. There is

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<sup>672</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 26.

the question of how they would have drawn up and implemented the details of one of their fundamental aspirations for a national re-afforestation policy, evidently in cooperation with DATI. However, on the death of visionaries, Griffith and Collins, an inclusive natural forestry policy of heritage, community and industry had not been sufficiently developed to provide a clear path to follow, but its legacy would re-occur in parliamentary debates over the following decades.

Thus, the study of two early twentieth century legacies of proposed state action to repair the profound level of deforestation prior to 1922 indicate that both were initially framed in a vision for the re-afforestation of Ireland. Both legacies appreciated the value of native and imported species of trees; both viewed timber production as an essential goal for re-afforestation; both legacies were inclusive of the social dimension in industry and employment at local level; both referred to the environmental implications of forestry development; both anticipated the development of the wood industry, both industrial and traditional. Only the nationalist vision included the understanding of the need to reconnect people to their arboreal heritage in Ireland, to re-ignite the relationship of people and trees, seen in inclusive Arbor Day celebrations and Dáil debate. This was a connection that had been retained in England, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and other European countries which was an essential element of national forestry policy. These legacies were influential in state forestry debate, but only a limited part of the legacy of state action on forestry by the British administration in Ireland was inherited by the Irish Free State in 1922.





## Chapter Five: Constraints: Irish State Forestry 1922 to 1931

This chapter presents the results of the review of discourse on forest-related issues in parliamentary debates and the published works of experts and the public on forestry during 1922 to 1932. Part one addresses the establishment of the Irish state forestry administration and its legacies, its leading participants (Ministers and forestry experts), and their perceptions on the issues of tree species for planting, land use and the public. Part two looks at the parliament, an t-Oireachtas, and the parliamentary participants, TDs and Senators in parliamentary forest-related discourse, and their main issues of interest on deforestation, tree planting and the wood industry. Part three considers the factors and forces identified in this review and analysis that have contributed to the legacy of state forestry for the next period of government.

Forestry was not the most pressing concern of the new government of the Irish Free State, An Saorstát. After the transfer of power from Great Britain under the Anglo-Irish Agreement<sup>673</sup> and the demilitarisation of the country on the 16th January 1922,<sup>674</sup> the contest for the right to rule Ireland distracted the leaders of the government from the critical economic and social issues affecting Ireland. In 1922, after the War of Independence, 'the country was close to ruin, its infrastructure and society shattered, its towns scarred and its people demoralized by years of turmoil, culminating in civil war'.<sup>675</sup> Woodland was the casualty of military manoeuvres, theft, the capital realization of the estates of departing landlords, new landowner clearances, and general neglect.<sup>676</sup> Private nurseries supplying trees to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (DATI) were also part of the frontline in civil disturbance as witnessed in a court report for compensation.<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed on 6 December 1921, effective from March 31 1922, fully implemented by 6 December 1922.

<sup>674</sup> The closing down of the 'best machine that has ever been invented for governing a country against its will,' John Morley, former Chief Secretary of Ireland, in Eunan O'Halpin, 'An Irish administration in crisis 1916-20' (Unpublished Masters thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1978), p. 2.

<sup>675</sup> Eunan O'Halpin, 'Politics and the State, 1922-32', in J. R. Hill (ed.), *A new history of Ireland: 1921-84* (Oxford, 2003), vii, p. 109.

<sup>676</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 794 (11 May 1938), Timothy Linehan. Robinson (ed.), *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916-1930*, pp 16, 185.

<sup>677</sup> *Irish Times*, 29 July 1924. In 1920, Sanders, a Tipperary landlord had established a sawmill and a nursery to plant Aherlow for the British Forestry Commission. His premises were

## I: Government forest administration: participants and Issues

Established in December 1922, the Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann), was now a post-revolutionary as well as a post-colonial state,<sup>678</sup> but the inherited administrative machinery of the government operated according to British values of 'financial probity, Treasury control and distaste for economic intervention'.<sup>679</sup> The paradox of Irish independence was evident where 'the first 'colonial revolution of the twentieth century preserved its inherited governmental machine intact',<sup>680</sup> exhibiting an administration which had been 'distinctly colonial in form and function'.<sup>681</sup> After Home Rule was suspended in 1914, the British civil service in Ireland was reformed over the following three years to create a highly centralized, bureaucratic apparatus controlled by the Treasury, with security of tenure agreed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty.<sup>682</sup> This allowed the former Castle civil service to get a foot in the door of the independent state and establish itself as a stabilizing force which was based on British administrative needs and operations, rather than responding to any Irish vision or necessity.<sup>683</sup> The Treaty requirements that legalized the vested interests of former British civil servants also blocked desirable reforms, so that William Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedhael party<sup>684</sup> created a cheaper version of the Whitehall model, not the reform that revolution had signalled.<sup>685</sup> Thus the inherited, reformed, centralized civil service, with

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burnt by the IRA and what remained was taken over.<sup>677</sup> In 1923, the Forestry Division were given the authority to manage the nursery for three years but was not able to take it back from the IRA. In 1924, the Court awarded Sanders £28,000 in compensation.

<sup>678</sup> Robert F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 524.

<sup>679</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 15.

<sup>680</sup> Farrell, *The founding of Dáil Éireann: Parliament and nation-building*, p. xvii.

<sup>681</sup> David Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and the Empire', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of the British Empire* (1999), iii, p. 494. in Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938', p. 2.

<sup>682</sup> Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938', p. 99.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 254, 258.

<sup>684</sup> Successor to the pro-treaty wing of Sinn Féin, this was the name of an organisation founded by Griffith in 1900, Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, p. 165.

<sup>685</sup> Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938', p. 375.

the hierarchical structure of Departments under Finance control, was not suitable for the administrative needs of the new Irish state.<sup>686</sup>

This conservative approach to government administration was further entrenched by the deaths of both Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins in 1922, (as the short Civil War was coming to a close), when the nationalist vision of building a new civil service was abandoned by Cosgrave.<sup>687</sup> In 1923, although the new Cabinet was seen by some as eight young men who 'were standing amidst the ruins of one administration with the foundations of another not yet laid,'<sup>688</sup> there were in fact over 21,000 British civil servants of the old Castle administration maintaining a functioning government,<sup>689</sup> in addition to the civil service of the provisional Dáil which had been transferred to the Irish Free State administration.<sup>690</sup> The military, judiciary, parliament, executive, and police were replaced by native institutions, including the Irish Land Commission which was a reserved service of the British government under the Treaty.<sup>691</sup> As provisional Minister for Local Government, Cosgrave had been able to introduce reforms from 1919 to 1921, including reduction of rates, poor-law union closure, and government jobs filled by suitable candidates rather than favouritism.<sup>692</sup> However, the dependency of rural Ireland on welfare-based unemployment programs organised under the British administration,<sup>693</sup> was evident in the continuation of similar schemes for state tree planting, which had been started in the early part of the twentieth century. The combination of these factors did not favour change and contributed to the continuation of the former DATI forestry administration within a deeply conservative civil service. The Ministers and Secretaries Act of 1924 compounded the over-centralization of government, and long-term policy was lost in departmental detail which was reflected in the bureaucratic administration of the

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<sup>686</sup> Ibid., pp 258-9, 374-5.

<sup>687</sup> William Cosgrave was the only surviving member of the 1919 cabinet of de Valera. He was a modest, devout Sinn Fein Dublin Alderman active in changing the slum housing economy of the previous century. Active in 1916, he was imprisoned three times, and as MP for Kilkenny, was appointed Provisional Minister of Local Government in the Provisional Dáil.

<sup>688</sup> Terence de Vere White, *Kevin O'Higgins* (London, 1948), p. 83.

<sup>689</sup> Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938', p. 271.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., pp 215, 247, 255.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>692</sup> Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, pp 70-77.

<sup>693</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 178.

inherited DATI forestry program in the Department of Agriculture and Lands.<sup>694</sup> Daly showed that the legacy of the British DATI administration influenced the approach to rural development of the new government, as well as the effects of civil war and land purchase.<sup>695</sup>

The Irish government also inherited the British legacy of a weak state with a 'profound distaste for government involvement in the economy'.<sup>696</sup> This distaste for state monopolies and support for market interests fostered a lack of understanding of how to run a business. This approach was poorly suited to Ireland's needs but which suited banking, financial and large agricultural exporters.<sup>697</sup> It was also an approach that was evident in the lack of government support for the local, undercapitalised wood manufacturing industries, which were potential employers in every county.<sup>698</sup>

After 1922, with no new policies besides the survival of the state, in rural Ireland it was business as usual, with 86% of total exports coming from the agricultural sector, and no change to the free-trade industrial sector.<sup>699</sup> Welfare-farming and long-term production investments were not a high priority in the Department of Lands and Agriculture (Department), nor impoverished small holders who were suffering the consequences of malnutrition due to the failure of the 1924 to 1925 potato crop.<sup>700</sup> However, it was the smallholders that were at the heart of state forestry development during the 1920s, in the conflicts over land use. They were also the people most likely to be among the estimated 75,000 people who emigrated between 1924 and 1927.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>694</sup> Eunan O'Halpin, 'Ministers and Secretaries Act', *Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford, 2013).

<sup>695</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 156. William Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, 6 December 1922.

<sup>696</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 176.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 176, 48.

<sup>698</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908'.

<sup>699</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 99.

<sup>700</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5* (Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, 1926), p. 75. As Provisional Minister for Local Government in 1922, William Cosgrave distributed food to Western regions, warning of impending famine conditions, exacerbated by unemployment in garrison towns, Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, p. 108.

<sup>701</sup> The population fell from 3,070,000 in to 2,93,300 in 1931, with a contributory emigration rate of over 4% in the 1920s, <https://www.cso.ie/en/index.html>, (Accessed 01 May 2019). John Fitzgerald, 'A hundred and fifty years: Documenting demographic change in Ireland', in *Journal of Statistical and Social Inquiry in Ireland*, xlv (2016).

Under these circumstances, and in conditions of extreme austerity, Minister Patrick Hogan<sup>702</sup> inherited DATI, its Secretary, Thomas P. Gill, (soon to be replaced by Francis J. Meyrick),<sup>703</sup> and its Forestry Division. Although DATI had been initially innovative in its establishment and objectives, it was an example of British administrative continuity within Irish government, technically retaining its name until 1931.<sup>704</sup>

In 1922, former DATI Forestry Division staff in Dublin, mostly from Scotland and England, decided to remain in the civil service of the Irish Free State, continuing the British influence that had characterised the Forestry Division since its inception.<sup>705</sup> There had been voluntary transfers of staff under the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 to the partitioned six-county region of Northern Ireland (NI) that remained under British government. In 1922, a new forestry administration in the NI Ministry of Agriculture in Belfast, under the guidance of Lord Lovat and Arthur Forbes, was established, with transfer of DATI staff and 3,843 acres of state-acquired forestry land.<sup>706</sup> Veteran DATI Scottish forester, David Stewart led the new Division and was later considered to be the Father of Northern Ireland's state forestry.<sup>707</sup> Proposals to maintain all-Ireland forestry management links were rejected by both administrations, although there were close professional relationships retained by staff.<sup>708</sup> The establishment of the all-Ireland professional foresters Irish Forestry Society in 1943, continued the tradition of cooperation.

Also in 1922, Minister for Agriculture and Lands Patrick Hogan appointed the cross-party Agriculture Commission to inquire into the causes of agricultural depression and its remedies, as well as the employment potential of state forestry in rural areas.<sup>709</sup> The Commission was briefed on forestry by forester Arthur Forbes, still

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<sup>702</sup> Patrick Hogan was an active nationalist, solicitor, farmer, TD for Galway, in Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 127.

<sup>703</sup> Francis J. Meyrick was a career civil servant in the British Administration in Ireland, having joined in 1891, from Dublin, in *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>704</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 190; Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 176. Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 102. The title of DATI was retained until 1924, when it became the Department of Lands and Agriculture, but it continued to be known as DATI until 1931.

<sup>705</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 355. Footnote 28.

<sup>706</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 182.

<sup>707</sup> Staff transferred were David Stewart, recruited in 1908, M. Byrne, J. Rogers, and M. Rogers, in C.S. Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, pp 14, 20-3, 41; Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 182.

<sup>708</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, pp 19, 20.

<sup>709</sup> *Report of the Commission on Agriculture* (Stationary Office, 1922), p. 66.

technically Assistant Commissioner for Forestry in Ireland,<sup>710</sup> and botanist and forestry professor Augustine Henry. Forbes reported on the DATI experimental planting program as a success, despite the many challenges. He proposed a state scheme of economic forestry as a rural industry, with tree planting for timber production on four to five percent of all land or 200,000 acres of upland grazing land, which would generate seasonal employment for local farmers. He referred to Arthur Griffith's promotion of forestry but believed that:

In Ireland, forestry has fallen to such a low ebb that even the conception of a forest in the true sense of the word no longer exists in the public mind.<sup>711</sup>

He recommended that every district should have around 5% of woodland land around farms and beside riverbanks, with small woods being kept by the county councils. With estate woodland still at a high risk of tree felling by the landowner, whether private or the state,<sup>712</sup> Henry urged immediate action for afforestation and employment with compulsory replanting of land after the felling of trees. He also encouraged the reopening of the Forestry School at Avondale which had been closed since before the First World War.<sup>713</sup>

The Commission noted the 'slow progress of afforestation in Ireland,' and endorsed the recommendations of the DATI 1908 Report, citing the low level of an estimated 1% of wooded land left in Ireland, the lowest in Europe. The Commission accepted that there was a potential 10% or two million acres of low-value grazing mountain land up to 1,200 ft which could be considered suitable for afforestation by the state, provided that existing woods were made fully productive in cooperation with private owners. They supported the enhancement of the powers of compulsory land purchase already available to Land Commission and the Congested Districts Board,<sup>714</sup> presumably given the difficulties of obtaining land that was held in common. They endorsed the potential benefits to agriculture of an active state afforestation policy, and added that state afforestation would be useless without protection 'from destruction

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<sup>710</sup> Forbes did not become Director of Forestry until 1925 after the passage of the Civil Service Regulation Act 1924. Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 190.

<sup>711</sup> Forbes, 'Witness statements', pp 2-3.

<sup>712</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, p. 116. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 860 (3 May 1928), Denis Gorey.

<sup>713</sup> Henry, 'Witness statements'.

<sup>714</sup> Mary Daly, *The First Department*, p. 116.

and pilfering of woods.<sup>715</sup> Although fuel wood shortages were mentioned in the Report, there were no specific recommendations for action on its provision.

Thus the Commission supported afforestation and the expansion of the DATI experimental forestry program of Forbes, while encouraging the protection of existing woods.<sup>716</sup> Although cooperative agricultural schemes were supported by the Commission, these did not extend to forestry. Without the exploration of alternatives such as cooperatives, hardwood production forestry, or additional investment in wood industries, state forestry programs would be focused on the expansion of land acquisition and the DATI non-native conifer tree planting schemes in cleared woodlands and upland grazing moors.

As the management of land use would define the future of state forestry in Ireland, the legacy of the land use management approach of the Congested Districts Board and the Land Commission, inherited from British administrative systems of land purchase and division also affected the development of the rural landscape.<sup>717</sup> The inherited Land Act provisions defined the political structures and potential of the new state, seen in the payment of British land purchase annuities which were assumed by the government,<sup>718</sup> unlike Northern Ireland or later British colonies that received financial assistance from Britain after independence.<sup>719</sup> The urgency for settlement of land issues was increased by the loosening of police control of rural areas during this period which allowed old contested land ownership conflicts to reappear, and anti-social and criminal opportunism to flourish.<sup>720</sup> With responsibility for land, Minister

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<sup>715</sup> *Report of the Commission on Agriculture*, p. 66.

<sup>716</sup> Agricultural schemes were supported by the Commission but these did not extend to forestry. *Ibid.*, pp 31-2.

<sup>717</sup> By this time the Land Commission had taken over the Congested Districts Board estates portfolio in the west of Ireland, where 'the aim of the land commission is to acquire land, rearrange holdings and abolish the 'rundale' system whereby three or more holders will have several furrows in one field; new houses are erected and small compact farms are arranged and allotted.' Anthony Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Senator Joseph Connolly 1885-1961: A founder of modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), p. 363.

<sup>718</sup> Terence Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 134 (2004); O'Halpin, 'Politics and the State, 1922-32', p. 114. In 1923, Minister Patrick Hogan estimated a cost of £30 million to complete land purchases. This is compared with German reparations in 1929 of 12.4% of government spending, with Irish annuities payments of 18%.

<sup>719</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 13.

<sup>720</sup> O'Halpin, 'Politics and the State, 1922-32'.

Hogan was at the forefront of the effort to restore law and order in the countryside<sup>721</sup> as well as the resolution of the social engineering program started in the late nineteenth century by the British government.

By mid-1921, there had been a revolutionary change in land ownership affecting every aspect of rural Ireland. These changes impacted positively and negatively over 248,000 families, many living on one to thirty acre uneconomic holdings, many of them in extreme poverty.<sup>722</sup> Dooley recorded that 9,459 estates of 9.03 million acres had been sold under the Land Acts for £85.9 million.<sup>723</sup> As national security and the threat of political and military anarchy,<sup>724</sup> were bound up in resolving the 'Land Question,' Minister Hogan directed the urgent passage of the Land Act of 1923,<sup>725</sup> and five more Land Acts from 1923 to 1931.<sup>726</sup> He estimated that there were 412,000 uneconomic occupiers of one to thirty acres, and that there was potential for great disagreement in land distribution.<sup>727</sup>

Hogan's Land Act 1923 favoured economically viable farmer rather than the settlement of all the claimants' demands for plots of land, and purchasers could obtain a state mortgage and make repayments over 66 ½ years.<sup>728</sup> The poorest land without tenants was sold to owners of uneconomic holdings, evicted tenants, migrants and labourers<sup>729</sup> for potato cultivation and grazing, and the remaining uncultivable acres were sold to the Forestry Division of the Department of Agriculture. As the most productive soils were assumed to be more economic under agriculture, and with the primacy of agriculture in land use issues, the rate of return from conifer timber

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<sup>721</sup> Joan M. Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Dublin City University, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>722</sup> Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48', pp 177, 181-3. Around 65% of all holdings were in counties outside of the Congested Districts Board.

<sup>723</sup> 13.5 million acres had been purchased by tenants from 1885-1920. Dooley, 'Estate ownership and management in nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland', p. 10.

<sup>724</sup> Hogan informed Cosgrave that house burning and shooting Land Commission officials had come to be regarded as a normal and legitimate activity, Laffan, *Judging W.T. Cosgrave*, p. 177.

<sup>725</sup> Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48', pp 177-9.. 'Its enactment 'a testament to Hogan's strength as a minister' Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 117.

<sup>726</sup> Land Acts 1922-31: no. 27, 1923; no. 24, 1923; no. 11, 1926; no. 19, 1927; no. 31, 1929; no. 11, 1931.

<sup>727</sup> Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48', p. 177.

<sup>728</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 116.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.



production on the poorest land was bound to be very low.<sup>730</sup> Rural civil disorder and violence gradually ceased, although it did not bring about the end of land disputes, and between 1922 and 1932, the Land Commission transferred 450,000 acres to 24,000 families.<sup>731</sup> As the expansion of the state forestry program required land for large-scale conifer plantations, the depressed market for hill land continued to be an essential factor in the future of Irish state forestry.

At the same time, the inherited woodland environment continued to be destroyed by felling, and planting had all but ceased on private estates due to the changing economics of land ownership. With no private planting being undertaken in a deforested landscape, and without the inheritance of ancient Crown woodlands which had been maintained in the other regions of Great Britain, the only hope for the future of trees and woods in Ireland lay in the hands of the state and its support for woodland conservation and tree planting. The inherited DATI experimental conifer planting program was seamlessly integrated into the Irish Free State forestry administration under the direction of its founder, Arthur Forbes, with the potential pit prop market in Britain for surplus conifer timber.<sup>732</sup> In 1922, despite being 'a year of anxiety and struggle' for the Forestry Department,<sup>733</sup> approximately 1,000 acres of conifers were planted, with a budget of £31,665.<sup>734</sup> This added to 3,200 acres of trial conifer plantations planted since 1908 and 3,600 acres of former estate woodland.<sup>735</sup> The area planted was still less than the area being felled, with the total woodland area of the Irish Free State reduced to 248,000 acres<sup>736</sup>

The following table shows DATI forest centres acquired from 1900, and planted by type of tree, from 1921 to 1922.

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<sup>730</sup> Thomas, 'Economic Aspects of Forestry in Northern Ireland', p. 197.

<sup>731</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 117.

<sup>732</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Twenty Second Annual Report 1921-22* (Dublin, 1922), p. 129.

<sup>733</sup> 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction* (Dublin, 1923), pp 1-3.

<sup>734</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Twenty Second Annual Report 1921-22*, p. 127.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 127, 130. In 1922, over 19,400 acres were owned or leased for forestry by the Irish Free State.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Plantations. Period 1st October, 1921, to 31st March, 1922—Ireland.															
Forest.	Area planted (acres).						Species planted, including beating up (thousands).								
	Afforested.		Re-afforested.		Total.		Scots. and Cor- sican Pine.	Eur. and Jap Larch.	Douglas Fir.	Norway and Sitka Spruce.	Oak.	Ash.	Beech.	Others.	Total.
	Coni- fers.	Broad- leaved.	Coni- fers.	Broad- leaved.	Coni- fers.	Broad- leaved.									
Aghrane ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
Aughrim ...	172	—	—	—	172	—	55	115	68	18	—	—	7	—	263
Baillieboro' ...	3	—	21	—	24	—	7	15	10	30	—	—	—	1	63
Ballykelly ...	—	—	20	—	20	—	—	8	17	—	—	—	—	8	33
Castlecaldwell ...	—	—	40	1	40	1	22	21	—	15	—	—	—	1	59
Knockmany ...	11	—	12	—	23	—	11	9	8	8	—	—	—	3	39
Ballyhoura ...	113	—	—	—	113	—	264	—	—	—	—	—	—	22	286
Camolin ...	—	—	19	—	19	—	11	5	19	5	—	—	—	1	41
Dundrum ...	—	—	52	—	52	—	7	2	7	82	—	—	—	—	98
Glendalough ...	135	—	—	—	135	—	122	59	29	12	—	—	—	—	222
Glenmalure ...	54	—	—	—	54	—	48	20	12	40	—	—	—	—	120
Kilrush ...	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	31	—	4	—	4	39
Slieve Bloom ...	75	—	—	—	75	—	11	10	29	57	—	—	—	—	107
Suir Valley (Russellstown) ...	61	—	—	—	61	—	166	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	166
Woodford ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Baronscourt ...	62	—	231	—	293	—	26	70	43	326	—	—	—	6	471
Total ...	686	—	397	1	1,083	1	750	334	242	628	—	4	7	46	2,011

Table 3: 1921-22 State forestry areas acquired & planted by type of land & species.

This table from DATI Annual Report 1922 shows the continuity of plantation planting, despite the disruptions of war. It is also clear that there was practically no hardwood trees of oak, beech and ash planted in 1920, by contrast to the percentage of broadleaved trees planted in English and Welsh state plantations in the same year of 16%<sup>737</sup> (From: *Third Forestry Commission Report, 1922*).

The following figure shows the initial rapid increase in state land acquisition and in expenditure over the decade. In 1925, over 17,000 acres of land were transferred from the Forestry Commission to the Department of Agriculture.<sup>738</sup>

<sup>737</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', p. 36.

<sup>738</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 182.

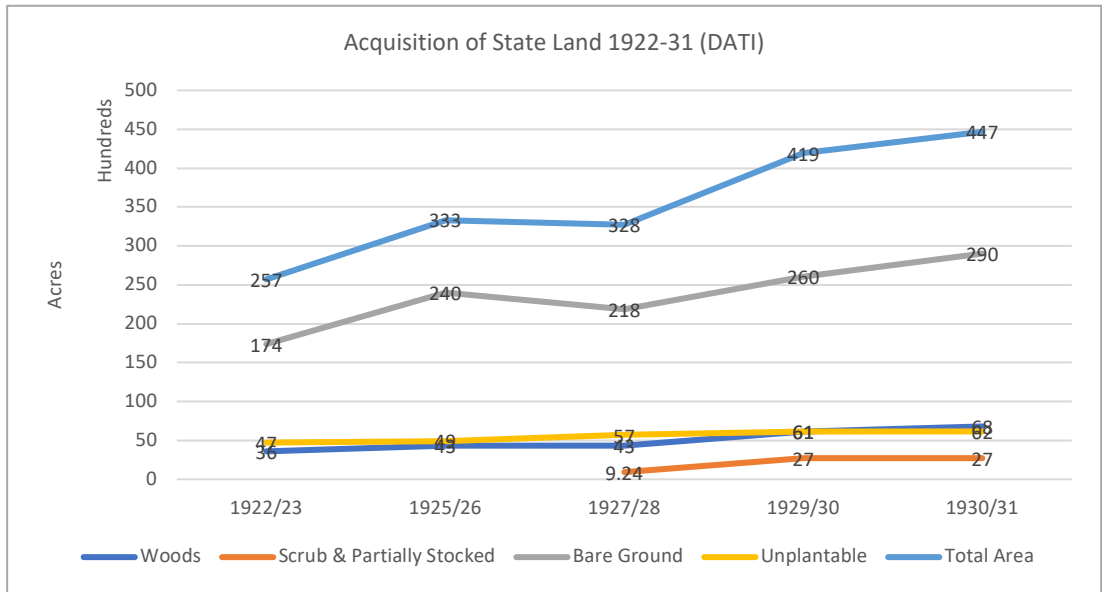


Figure 10: 1922-31 State forest land area acquired

This figure shows the predominant share of bare ground in the land acquired by the state for forestry at 67% in 1922/23, and 65% in 1940. Woodland, including scrub and partially-wooded land, amounted to around 18% of all land acquired in 1922, rising to 21% in 1930/31 (From *Department of Agriculture Annual Reports, 1922 to 1931*).

The state planted area and cleared woodland area are shown in the following figure.

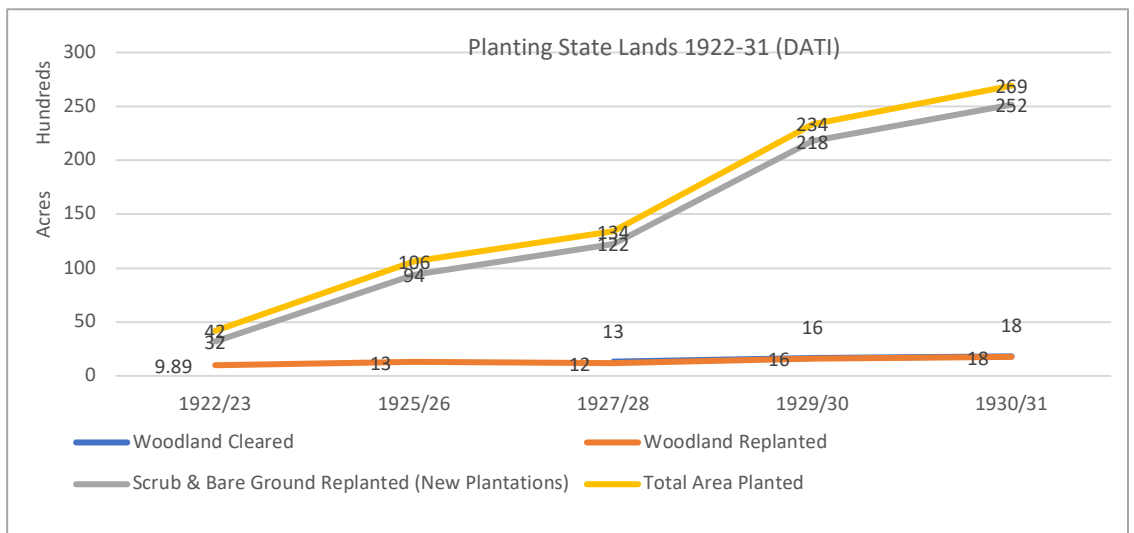


Figure 11: 1922-31 State forest area planted

This figure shows that the rate of planting grew at a steady rate of around 3,300 acres per year after the expansion of Forbes' experimental planting program. Most of the land planted in this period was in scrub and bare land, amounting to around 70% of the total. By 1931, this had increased to 93%. Woodland replanted was 23% in 1922/3,

and was less than 6% in 1930/31 (From *Dept of Agriculture and Lands Annual Reports, 1922 to 1931*).

State forestry funding was approved each year, accompanied by debate on forest-related issues. The following figure summarises the expenditure and receipts of the Department over the decade.

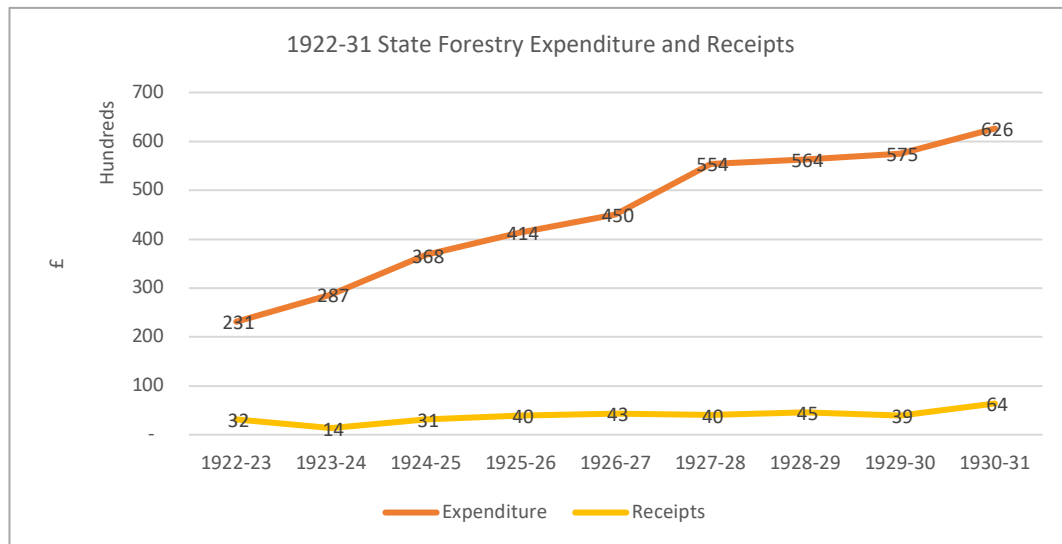


Figure 12: 1922-31 State forest expenditure and receipts

This figure shows expenditure on the state tree planting programme almost trebling from 1922 to 1932, most of which was spent on land acquisition. There was practically no expenditure on forestry education, grant-aid programs or public education (From Convery, *Forestry and Irish economic and social development*).

The leading institutional participants in forestry include the Minister for Agriculture and Lands Patrick Hogan, the Director of the Forestry Division, Professor Augustine Henry, the foresters and forest workers, the country councils and the nurseries.

### *Minister for Agriculture and Lands Patrick Hogan, 1922 to 1932*

As the most significant participant in the Oireachtas forest-related debates during this decade, and potentially the most influential participant in state forestry development, Minister Patrick Hogan was responsible for forestry from 1922 to 1931.



Plate 10: Minister for Lands and Agriculture Patrick Hogan. (From Hctor, D., *The Department's story*).

The son of a Land Commission inspector and farmer, he was 'a Galway man steeped in the lore of the land struggle and surrounded by constituents whose lives had been at least temporarily improved by the acquisition of their farms'.<sup>739</sup> He was considered to be 'one of the strongest Ministers'<sup>740</sup> and a 'complete master of all the technical and statistical details of Irish agriculture as well as being a good practical farmer'.<sup>741</sup> A pragmatist, whose goal was 'to put our people on their feet financially',<sup>742</sup> Minister Hogan was also reluctant to intervene and did so only as a last resort.<sup>743</sup> As Minister Hogan was taking office in 1922, he rejected Forbes' suggestion of an independent Forest Authority or Forestry Board, despite the perception that the operations of the Forestry Commission were considered to be the most efficient means of carrying out state forestry policy 'untrammelled by responsibility for the promotion of agriculture'.<sup>744</sup> His preoccupation with critical questions of the land market, national agricultural production and rural development, with his acknowledged ignorance of forestry,<sup>745</sup> effectively devolved the running of the tree planting program to its architect,

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<sup>739</sup> Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932', p. 244.

<sup>740</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, pp 101-2.

<sup>741</sup> George O'Brien, 'Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture 1922-1932', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, xxv, no. 99 (1936). p. 354.

<sup>742</sup> Donal O'Sullivan, *The Irish Free State and Its Senate* (London, 1940), p. 475. in Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932', p. 51.

<sup>743</sup> Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932', p. 7.

<sup>744</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 187-8.

<sup>745</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1620 (27 June 1928), Minister Patrick Hogan.

Arthur Forbes. Neeson considered that the leading foresters, Forbes and Henry, largely created the state forest culture and education of Irish state foresters, and the Departmental planting program, with its organisation to implement it.<sup>746</sup> Although Minister Hogan mused in 1925, that it should be possible 'to arrange for the co-operation of the people in the matter of forestry',<sup>747</sup> he was entirely dependent on the expertise of his mostly English and Scottish forestry officials<sup>748</sup> who did not have the interest or capacity to reach out to the public in the style of the Provisional Dáil. His biographer records his relationships with his foresters as having a 'high degree of confidence'.<sup>749</sup> No evidence of any broadening of the DATI cooperative forest development and education programme was to be found in the first five years of Minister Hogan's tenure. Rather, it is evident that state forestry development was constrained within the experimental conifer planting programme.

#### *Director of the Forestry Division Arthur C. Forbes, 1925 to 1931*

The director of Irish state forestry during the first decade of the Irish Free State, Arthur Forbes' views on trees, woods and forests, and their uses shaped future forests in Ireland for generations of foresters and people. He was later known as 'the father of Irish forestry, from whom came the 'philosophy and work ethic of the State Forest Service', and 'whose employees were in a sense his heirs',<sup>750</sup> according to Dr Mark Anderson, the Scottish director of the Forestry Division after Forbes retirement in 1933. Durand referred to Forbes as 'a remarkable man, and to him above any other is the philosophy and work attitude of the State Forest Service due'.<sup>751</sup> As Forbes had such a dominant and paternal influence on the introduction of plantation forestry and on the forestry training of generations of foresters, his views on forestry, trees and woods are considered in greater detail.

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<sup>746</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 163.

<sup>747</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1302-3 (18 June 1925), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>748</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2639 (4 December 1922), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>749</sup> Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932', p. 8.

<sup>750</sup> Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 36.

<sup>751</sup> Durand, 'Building a National Resource: Fifty Years of Irish Forestry', p. 4.

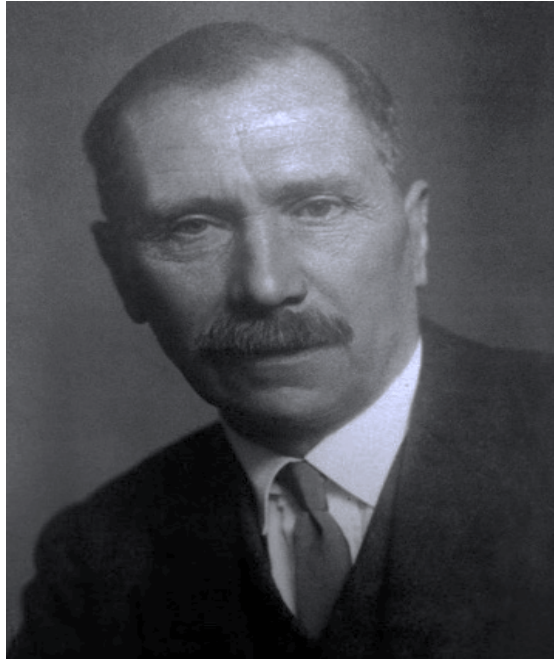


Plate 11: Director of the Forestry Division Arthur C. Forbes. (From Niall O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland*).

From the late nineteenth century, after working as an estate forester,<sup>752</sup> Forbes was an early promoter of scientific economic forestry in Britain, which he defined as 'forestry to produce ideal conditions for growing timber',<sup>753</sup> by contrast to the low quality, sporadic timber output of estate forestry at the time. As early as 1898, applying the plantation techniques from Germany and imperial forestry management, Forbes advocated a demonstration forest of 1,000 acres in Scotland to 'investigate the theories in scientific forestry' and to test arguments, with research on the comparative growth of both conifers and oaks for timber, and beech for firewood.<sup>754</sup> With British government investment, he proposed planting trees on inland hill land and the use of local seed to reduce costs.<sup>755</sup>

After Forbes' initial experiments in Avondale and in DATI forestry centres, from 1906 to 1922, he expanded his trial planting programs for the larger plots of land of decreasing quality which were being acquired by the Department of Agriculture, as the Land Commission had been reluctant to take wooded land for subdivision, and much of

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<sup>752</sup> Forbes worked for the Marquise of Bath, and the Marquise of Landsdowne. 'Appointments', in *Transactions of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society*, xiv (1895).

<sup>753</sup> Forbes, 'On establishing an experimental forest area in Scotland, for instruction and practice of scientific forestry', pp 155-178; Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?', p. 47.

<sup>754</sup> Forbes, 'On establishing an experimental forest area in Scotland, for instruction and practice of scientific forestry', p. 157.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 163-69.

it remained in private hands or sold to the Department.<sup>756</sup> His objective was the competitive production of Scots pine and spruce which at that time were being supplied from the natural forests of Sweden, Russia and Canada,<sup>757</sup> and the promotion of silvicultural knowledge on the superiority of the single-aged conifer plantation.<sup>758</sup> One of his first priorities in Ireland had been foresters' education to enhance the mostly theoretical education to include a practical traineeship in scientific forestry, and 'the abolishment or modification of old and deep-rooted prejudices' regarding estate and natural woodland forestry, for wood workers.<sup>759</sup> This apprenticeship program was still in operation under his direction in 1922.

At a critical time in the establishment of state forestry services, Forbes successfully led the transition of DATI Forestry Division into the IFS Department of Agriculture, although his far-seeing proposals for a Forestry policy and a Forestry Board were not supported by Minister Hogan, who also did not approve of the Agriculture Advisory Council. However, there was a greater challenge for Forbes, an issue 'of more significance still was the attitude of the administrative bodies or heads to various matters of policy,' in the new Irish government.<sup>760</sup> Neeson referred to the change of awareness needed by foresters of different political sensitivities that had been brought about by the administrative changes of 1922.<sup>761</sup> Forbes had to deal with people who did not share his scientific and imperial forester's perspective. His view of politicians was that they were people who offered 'discussions, schemes, and proposals which were all in the abstract, and usually drew their inspiration from some thickly wooded country in Northern Europe'.<sup>762</sup> Nonetheless, these same thickly wooded countries of Northern Europe, such as Germany, were also the source of the scientific conifer plantation system of forestry, within the natural conifer woodland.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>756</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xviv, 1009 (6 April 1927), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>757</sup> Forbes, 'On Growing timber of clean growth, fine quality and high commercial value', p. 122.

<sup>758</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 23-4.

<sup>759</sup> Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?', p. 48.

<sup>760</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 21.

<sup>761</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 156-8.

<sup>762</sup> 'Tree planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 89.

<sup>763</sup> 'Second Annual Report 1925-6', p. 12. The Imperial Forestry Institute's students included post graduate foresters from all parts of the British Empire. The Institute's representation in Europe was in Vienna, and students also visited France, Germany, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia. Forestry officers in the Irish Free State were included as potential candidates in 1924. (Imperial Forest Institute, Department of the Taoiseach, 1924).



Late in his career, in an article on land use and private forestry management by the state, Forbes mused on the potential in developing community woods to generate respect for forestry and prevent vandalism.<sup>764</sup> In 1931, Forbes retired after having directed and overseen the planting of over 50,000 acres of mostly conifer trees on mixed or poor land since 1906.<sup>765</sup>

Forbes' views on the two great questions of the early years of the foundation of the Forestry Division on acquiring land for planting trees and on the tree species suitable to plant, laid the foundation of future tree planting programmes, future forests, and future relations with communities and the nation. The first great challenge of Forbes' expansionist conifer afforestation program from 1922 was the lack of suitable land in large enough plots. He was faced with the unpalatable choice of increasingly uncultivable land for tree planting, land that had been left over from the divisions of the Land Commission. This was land that was not only considered useless for agriculture, and 'uneconomic' for forestry, but some of it was also unplatable for conifers.<sup>766</sup> Forbes observed that the Irish climate was favourable to grazing at higher altitudes, in comparison to continental conditions, which resulted in trees and sheep competing for the same poor quality hill land. In his view, the quality of this marginal land limited his tree planting choices for timber production to a few North American conifers.

Forbes was the arbiter on where trees were planted for the state. Officially, he was in full control of the operational and personnel aspects of forestry and the Minister had control of land purchases. But in practice, F. J. Meyrick, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture recorded that Forbes examined land purchase options and made recommendations to the Secretary, who made recommendations to the Minister.<sup>767</sup> With difficult judicial decisions to be made on grazing and turbary rights on mountain land, Forbes was critical of the slow pace of land purchase, the 'methods of acquisition, and dozens of inevitable obstacles were never considered'. He expressed frustration at the delays caused by the parsing of 'questions of title, private ownership, grazing-rights and customs'. His previous views on customary grazing rights in Britain

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<sup>764</sup> Forbes, 'Some factors affecting a forest policy'.

<sup>765</sup> *Irish Times*, 6 June 1931.

<sup>766</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, p. 173.

<sup>767</sup> *Interim and Final Report 1923/24* (Committee of Public Accounts, 1926). col 2247-8, 2252. Forbes, 'Some early economic and other developments in Éire, and their effects on forestry conditions', p. 6.

were protectionist, where 'the moral rights of existence vested in an ancient industry must be recognized' and ancient rights have to be settled.<sup>768</sup> But in Ireland, on the issue of multiple grazing rights on inferior mountain land, Forbes believed that they should all be removed, using compulsory purchase if necessary, as their removal was essential to the fulfilment of the state planting program, preferably on bare land rather than woodland.<sup>769</sup> When acquisition of land was the driving force of DATI Forestry Division, and powerful political forces were looking for land for agriculture, Forbes' exasperation was expressed at the first British Forestry Commission's Empire Forestry Conference in 1921, where he was representing Ireland:

We have in Ireland three great pests – the grasping grazier, who really covets the land before you have got it and takes possession away from you, the greedy goat which eats everything and the rapacious rabbit. These three things are particularly virulent in Ireland. Mr Robinson<sup>770</sup> states that our best efforts should be directed to protect the best areas. That particularly applies to Ireland where we have the finest soil on the earth and the finest climate in the universe. In Ireland the farmer's whole aim is to convert the countryside into a dismal waste of grass and he leaves the forester absolutely nothing but a few odd bits of waste.<sup>771</sup>

The second fundamental question of state forestry was the selection of tree species which would dictate the nature of the future wood or forest, and its uses. Despite having to work within a newly emerging political and social system whose constraints had to be taken into account, Forbes recorded the success of the conifer tree planting program during the 1920s, and the contribution to silvicultural knowledge on growing large scale conifer plantations.<sup>772</sup> The planting goal for conifers implemented by Forbes was an adaptation of the 1908 Forest Report recommendations for a cooperative plan of one million acres of mixed forestry to be planted by state, private and local authorities. Forbes also supported the preservation of the private hardwoods, proposed in the 1908 Forestry Report, and also a central policy of the British Forestry Commission.<sup>773</sup> He called for the preservation of small

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<sup>768</sup> Forbes, *The development of British forestry*, p. 73.

<sup>769</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Twenty Second Annual Report 1921-22*. p. 127-8. Forbes planting program required a clean slate, reminiscent of Petty's view of the land of Ireland as 'a white paper' to be written on by superior management. Petty, 'Political Anatomy of Ireland', p. 3.

<sup>770</sup> Sir Roy Robinson, Forestry expert, later Chairman of the Forestry Commission.

<sup>771</sup> *Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference 1920*, p. 116.

<sup>772</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 23-4.

<sup>773</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 154.

woodlands being sold under the land purchase scheme by the state, county council or other public body. However, the Department's unofficial goal of planting 250,000 acres of state conifer forestry had no specific objectives for private or county council forestry development.<sup>774</sup> According to Neeson, this change of approach was a result of differences of opinion between old, formerly private power and new state power,<sup>775</sup> but is more likely to relate to the limited capacity of the emerging state to develop a national forestry policy on the scale of the 1908 Report. Planting native tree species such as oak, birch, ash, willow or hazel was considered impractical by Forbes although he had originally included these species in his 'Forest Garden' trial plots in Avondale.<sup>776</sup> He had strong views on regenerated woods whose preservation for aesthetic or recreational use he considered to be the responsibility of private woodland owners.<sup>777</sup> He observed that:

Another feature of modern State planting is the tendency to use the faster growing conifers in place of broad-leaved species. Economically, again, this is probably sound, and for purposes of winter shelter, it is difficult to overlook its merits. By lovers of the picturesque and students of natural history, the rapid conversion of oak and ash woodland into dense crops of Douglas fir and Sitka spruce may be deplored... But the productive capacity of these latter species is too great to overlook their commercial value and provided oak and ash are retained where nature intended them to thrive no great harm will be done.<sup>778</sup>

Forbes believed that state management of biodiverse woodland or 'uneven-aged woods' was not cost effective, and he did not support natural regeneration silvicultural systems because of their unproven success.<sup>779</sup> Although Forbes did warn Minister Hogan that depending on private woods for hardwood timber was a risk as, in his opinion, no planting would be done unless assisted and that the past policy of leaving the preservation of existing woodlands to chance would be fatal,<sup>780</sup> he was unwilling to investigate their potential as an alternative to conifer plantations. He maintained that the silviculture of regenerated woodland was irrelevant to Ireland as it

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<sup>774</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 91.

<sup>775</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*. p. 148.

<sup>776</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 18.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 24-25.

<sup>778</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 94.

<sup>779</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 25.

<sup>780</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 184.

had not been particularly successful in Britain, except for beech woods in Buckinghamshire or Scots pine 'here and there'.<sup>781</sup>

But more than the commercial aspect of native woodland forestry, Forbes believed in the moral aspect of plantation tree planting:

Where, however, land is comparatively scarce or valuable, or the need for large quantities of well-grown timber arises as is invariably the case upon the appearance of civilisation, the natural forest with its scattered and irregular crop, loses favour with the economist and utilitarian and the question arises as to whether its retention is justifiable in the interests of the community. The settling of such questions has usually resulted in sealing the doom of the natural forests in most parts of Europe, and has led to the repeal of numerous forest laws which hindered the cultivation of the land, or its reclamation by enclosure or improvement.<sup>782</sup>

He added that the more rapid increase in population and progress of civilisation, the quicker the rate of destruction of woodlands.

In 1926, Forbes again raised the issue of the future of the remaining private woods amounting to about 84% of the total woodland area.<sup>783</sup> In later years, he did acknowledge the benefit of regenerating woodlands, both as privately-owned breaks in the monotonous vista of conifer plantations, which were becoming apparent in the 1940s, and as timber reserves which, he said, would soon cease to exist.<sup>784</sup> Forbes also advised some private forest owners on forestry and conifer plantations, and produced pamphlets and leaflets on conifer planting,<sup>785</sup> and species selection for shelter, ornament and timber production, hedgerow planting and osiers.<sup>786</sup> At the end of his time in the Forestry Service, Forbes still believed that the future of the wooded condition of Ireland depended on the private woodland owner. This was reflected in his plea for private planting support for small and large landowners:

... without the cooperation of the private planter, therefore, the wooded condition of the country as a whole must diminish, and the final result will be that few woods will be found in districts which do not facilitate State enterprise. Economically this may be an

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<sup>781</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 25.

<sup>782</sup> Forbes, *Forestry notes: Being practical hints on the formation, management and protection of woodlands in Ireland*, p. 40.

<sup>783</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, pp 115-6.

<sup>784</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 25-6.

<sup>785</sup> Forbes, *Forestry notes: Being practical hints on the formation, management and protection of woodlands in Ireland*.

<sup>786</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 11-26.

advantage, but it certainly does not tend to make the country more attractive to its inhabitants, or to the casual tourist. To the rural resident and small farmer, the absence of woodland in his immediate vicinity is a more serious feature than many suppose, whether considered from a fuel or timber point of view, and this is already being felt where demesnes have disappeared within the last half century.<sup>787</sup>

Forbes did express concern for their future and without a specific national plan for the preservation of woods, his concern was realised over the following years. In the 1930s, Forbes argued for the protection and development of oak coppices for the provision of firewood to meet the fuel shortages brought about by the Economic War.<sup>788</sup> However, his consistent belief in the uneconomic potential of regenerated woodland for state management, and the absence of a specific regeneration program would put it outside state protection and development until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After retirement, despite his initial recommendations for clearing cut-over woodland, Arthur Forbes continued his public lectures promoting afforestation and the preservation of existing forests.<sup>789</sup> Musing on his work as a state forester and his approach to forestry in 1933, Forbes considered that 'the benefits were greater than the drawbacks of the alteration to the general appearance of Ireland, during the last 300 years, with timber, increased shelter and a growing interest in trees of unknown possibilities are on the credit side'.<sup>790</sup> Dismissing potential social and environmental impacts of conifer plantations, he added that 'whether their planting has been overdone is largely a matter of taste'. On the selection of conifers over broadleaves, in Forbes' view, the commercial benefits outweighed the landscape disadvantages. He said that:

Quick results are so attractive to the ordinary human being that it is almost useless to expect him to consider any other feature, but there is no doubt that many of these species have been planted in places better fitted for broad-leaved species so far as permanent landscape effect is concerned. Their economic value is another and more complicated matter.<sup>791</sup>

Forbes considered that his stewardship of the Department planting program had been successful.<sup>792</sup> He noted that although the country was divided since 1922, the

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<sup>787</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', pp 92-3.

<sup>788</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 25.

<sup>789</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 November 1931.

<sup>790</sup> 'Tree planting in Ireland during four centuries', pp 87, 94.

<sup>791</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>792</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 23.

practical effect was not very great, saying that: 'the policy laid down in the Forestry Reports of both Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1908 Report and 1919, respectively have generally been followed, and both parts of the country are at present doing their best to increase their woodland areas'.<sup>793</sup> He concluded that:

It is satisfactory to note that no material change has been made in this programme during the last twelve years and if steadily continued, it should eventually accomplish all that is possible in the direction of State afforestation in the Free State. In the opinion of many it is not proceeding fast enough, but few appreciate the various difficulties in the way.<sup>794</sup>

In early 1930s, criticism of the work of Forbes came from Thomas Ponsonby and John Mackay, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. Mackay was an amateur forestry enthusiast, who attributed to him rather than the Minister, the absence of several essential elements of state forest administration during his tenure, including 'a definitive scheme for national afforestation', 'a consultative committee representative of the common people', soil classifications, and comparative growth tables or data on the character, economic purpose and present position of the several State forests'.<sup>795</sup> Forbes reply to critics of the slow pace of afforestation was that, had large scale schemes been implemented under British Administration, afforestation could have begun earlier.<sup>796</sup>

Neeson considered that Forbes was treated unfairly by Mackay, as he was 'embroiled in a political situation that he had little sympathy with',<sup>797</sup> and it was clear that he had not much enthusiasm for the changed political and social realities. In Forbes' opinion as a retired Director of the Irish Forest Service, his administration had been severely challenged by the politics of land acquisition and social issues. Forbes said that:

The forestry administration is ... handicapped at the outset, either by political, administrative or economic causes. If its program is to be carried out, it must secure an adequate area to work on, and this area must be free, not only from physical disqualifications, but from objections of a political, social and financial character. Politics impose considerations foreign to technique; social conditions hinder freedom of barter

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<sup>793</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 91.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>795</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 157.

<sup>796</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 17.

<sup>797</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 157.

and exchange; and financial restrictions act as a brake on a machine already clogged with rust, and attempting to surmount an upgrade.<sup>798</sup>

It is evident that Mackay's criticisms unfairly attributed to Forbes all the problems that had emerged in the absence of a national forestry policy. Despite the lack of national objectives for state forestry, Forbes did succeed in reintroducing the tree to the Irish landscape, even if it was a non-native, which was considered a great achievement at the time. His tree planting program provided the inspiration for generations of state foresters in the planting of conifer trees in every type of land, under all manner of conditions.

### *Professor Augustine Henry, 1913 to 1930*

Augustine Henry was known and appreciated as an 'outstanding personality',<sup>799</sup> and also affectionately remembered as the 'Father of commercial forestry for his work on the introduction of new tree species, his promotion of forestry in Ireland, and his interest in education'.<sup>800</sup> Henry's attribute as father of commercial forestry in Ireland relates to his enthusiastic promotion of the creation and maintenance of a productive state timber reserve with both conifers and hardwood species by plantation through his research into quick-growing hybrids which was at the forefront in the field of international botany.<sup>801</sup> He estimated that one million acres of trees were needed to supply the agricultural and industrial needs of the country,<sup>802</sup> to protect against impending timber shortages, for fuel, shelter belts and timber for local industries.<sup>803</sup> As Professor of Forestry in the College of Science and University College Dublin from 1913 to 1930, he promoted the potential of exotic conifers from the damp climates of North America and Japan, and provided new tree species for Forbes' trial planting

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<sup>798</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries'.

<sup>799</sup> 'Obituary, Professor Augustine Henry', in *Scottish Forestry Journal*, xlv-xlv (1931).

<sup>800</sup> Clara Cullen and Orla Feehly (eds), *The Building of the State: Science and Engineering with Government on Merrion Street 1920–1930* (2011), p. 20. Nelson, 'The joys and riches of Kathay': Augustine Henry and the trees of China', p. 75; Shiela Pim, *The wood and the trees: A biography of Augustine Henry* (London, 1965).

<sup>801</sup> J. O'Driscoll, 'Henry: The tree breeder', in *Irish Forestry*, xxxviii, no. 1 (1981). Henry had been researching hybridization of poplars since 1912

<sup>802</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 624. This was based on 200,000 acres of new plantations, 300,000 acres of existing woods, and 500,000 acres under county council management.

<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 621-30. *ibid.*, p. 613; Henry, 'Irish Forestry', p. 5.

plots. He is renowned for his work on the best genetic complement of non-native conifers for Irish conditions, and his contribution to foresters' education on trees, woods and forests. His botanical interests would have ensured his interest in the diversity of planting and mixed tree stands.<sup>804</sup>

From his experiences as a botanist in Chinese woods, Henry also had a deep appreciation of the 'charm of the woods,' saying that 'there is something primevally congenial in the breath of the woods'.<sup>805</sup> While he recommended planting non-native trees for rapid growth for timber, he also promoted the maintenance of wooded areas and the preservation of demesne woods for valuable wood production,<sup>806</sup> saying that in no case should wooded demesne be converted into farmland, but reserved to the state forestry authority.<sup>807</sup> He believed that 'there are valleys and alluvial spots where it will be judicious to plant hard woods, such as ash instead of conifer'.<sup>808</sup> But he did not support state development of regenerated woods. He acknowledged that, although regenerated planting was cheaper, (quoting costs per acre from the Woburn estate as £1 for natural regeneration compared with £5 for planting conifers), he did not promote their regeneration in Ireland asking disingenuously 'where are the woods to regenerate?',<sup>809</sup> possibly aware of the thousands of acres of the cutover natural woods already in state ownership.

Although Henry was known for his love of natural woodlands, he was a strong advocate of commercial forestry regardless of public opinion, and recommended to the 1908 Committee that: 'no forestry should be attempted unless it will pay'.<sup>810</sup> His robust independence of mind and his belief in the great conifer planting experiment is apparent in one exchange with Professor Campbell in the hearings of this Committee, who put it to him that: 'the popular opinion is that we are wasting our money in planting such things as exotic trees,' to which Henry answered: 'as to popular opinion on the subject in Ireland, it is worth noting, except as regards that of a few who have made forestry a special study, people ought not to talk about things they have not studied'.

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<sup>804</sup> Pim, *The wood and the trees: A biography of Augustine Henry*

<sup>805</sup> Nelson, "The joys and riches of Kathay': Augustine Henry and the trees of China', p. 86.

<sup>806</sup> Henry, 'Irish Forestry', p. 6.

<sup>807</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 622.

<sup>808</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 168. col. 4082.

<sup>809</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 4082.

<sup>810</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee', p. 164.



Campbell persisted: 'still we must have some regard to popular opinion? Henry replied: 'You must, but I need have none whatever'.<sup>811</sup> This was probably a fair representation of the scientific mind of the time. To his critics of his plans for conifer plantations in Ireland, Henry remarked on the 'innate conservatism of these islands backed up by imperfect knowledge of the remarkable and peculiar features of the climate of Ireland'.<sup>812</sup>

Henry also promoted small-scale, mixed species shelter belt planting by local bodies and associations, and as a support for Western farmers for peat bogs which would prevent frosts on potato beds.<sup>813</sup> He encouraged cooperative forestry schemes between local authorities and private landowners, an example of which was in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow.<sup>814</sup>

Henry was an advocate of a broad education for woodmen to produce well-rounded forestry operators and craftsmen, and forestry education for agricultural students.<sup>815</sup> He promoted public education in forestry and 'publicity', proposing premiums from the Forestry Commission to stimulate planting, inspired by the Royal Dublin Society prizes.<sup>816</sup> The growing negative response to the arrival of state forestry schemes was acknowledged by Henry when he said that the extra employment created in planting, fencing, thinning, carting, and sawing would 'render farmers more sympathetic to state forestry in their neighbourhood'.<sup>817</sup> His efforts to bring the benefits of forest development and the love of trees to country people through public forestry education, was evident in his frequent public lectures, pamphlets and an article on cooperation between the state and citizen in forestry.<sup>818</sup>

Henry's enthusiasm for the widespread benefits of state afforestation is evident in his conclusion that: 'the subject of afforestation has a wide bearing on the prosperity and happiness of Ireland'.<sup>819</sup> His contribution to the national development of forestry in

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<sup>811</sup> Ibid., p. 167. col. 4054; O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*, p. 25.

<sup>812</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 165. col. 4029.

<sup>813</sup> Henry, 'Irish Forestry', p. 10.

<sup>814</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 629.

<sup>815</sup> Ibid., p. 617.

<sup>816</sup> *Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference 1920*, p. 235.

<sup>817</sup> Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 623.

<sup>818</sup> Ibid., pp 613-630.

<sup>819</sup> Ibid., p. 630.

Ireland, of both state conifer forests and small scale broadleaf tree planting, has been acknowledged over the century, in addition to his international botanical reputation.<sup>820</sup>

### *Foresters and forest workmen*

From 1922, Forbes' planting program of conifer plantations grew rapidly, thanks to the increasing number of trained forest workmen and foresters who were graduating from his apprentice training program in state forest centres, into the Department workforce. In 1922, there was still no forestry training college in Ireland. Forbes' woodman apprenticeship program in Avondale Forestry School had been closed since 1914, and the premises was subsequently taken over by the Department of Defence in 1922, with no alternative made available for the reopening of the school.<sup>821</sup> During the 1920s, the appreciation of the role of trained foresters was less evident to landowners, with Wexford Senator Osmonde Esmonde<sup>822</sup> agreeing to the cuts in the forestry education budget at the Dáil Committee on Public Accounts meeting, saying that there was 'no great demand for foresters, it is not a profession that young men are likely to go in for'.<sup>823</sup>

Instead, the Forestry Service took on six men each year as apprentices, 'on the ground' in state forestry centres, where living and working conditions were said to be 'spartan'.<sup>824</sup> During the 1920's, the treatment of forestry trainees was a continuous topic of concern expressed in the Dáil, as well as the need to reinstate the Forestry School, with the addition of recognized qualifications.<sup>825</sup> Forbes' focus on the authoritarian training in practical skills for foresters, originally expounded in 1898,<sup>826</sup> was arguably a contributing factor in the successful planting of hill and boggy lands that were at the limit of the planting criteria of the day due to exposure and difficulties

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<sup>820</sup> When writing Henry's obituary, Forbes only referred to Henry's botanical career, A.C. Forbes, 'Obituary: Augustine Henry', in *Empire Forestry Journal*, i, no. 1 (1930).

<sup>821</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1004 (10 July 1924), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>822</sup> Baronet, representing Wexford, father MP, active nationalist, diplomat, interested in foreign affairs and sport.

<sup>823</sup> Interim Report and Final Report of the CPA 1927 [1924/25], col. 2176.

<sup>824</sup> Dennis Hayes, 'Some reflections on forestry in Ireland', in M. L. Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry in Ireland: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in the 20th Century* (Castlemorris, County Kilkenny, 2000).

<sup>825</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1293 (18 June 1925), Major Bryan Ricco Cooper.

<sup>826</sup> Forbes, 'Is British forestry progressive?', pp 48-9.

of access. There was no training in wood regeneration and management, nor in the wood industry at this time, reflecting the Departmental focus on imported conifer tree plantations as the future forest model.

The inherited employment 'relief' schemes in the hands of overseers from British welfare relief works were also used to pay for forestry work, schemes which paid low wages.<sup>827</sup> The former overseers were replaced by forestry foreman who were considered to be qualified after three years, and a 'full forester' in six. Over ten years, this training produced a cohort of foremen and foresters who graduated from the long school of experience. Their collegiate spirit formed under tough conditions was evident, as well as their sense of value in doing something for the future of the country.<sup>828</sup>

In 1923, university forest education was also suspended, as well as well-funded forestry research. The forestry course in University College Dublin was restored in 1926 for one student per year under Professor Henry who held the Chair until 1930, when it was suspended again. Both Forbes and H.M. Fitzpatrick were temporary lecturers after this time.<sup>829</sup> The UCD Chair of Forestry would not be reinstated until 1959 on the appointment of Professor Thomas Clear.<sup>830</sup> Although the Forestry Service was in a Department which was actively promoting agricultural education and research,<sup>831</sup> the development of professional university forestry education and training, which had been at the centre of the Forestry Commission program in Ireland, was not carried forward as a priority. By contrast, the British Forestry Commission supported college courses financially, as well as the maintenance of woods for training purposes, adjacent to the colleges.<sup>832</sup>

The Department of Agriculture was the main employer of foresters and thousands of forest workmen over the following decade. These were the men who had to develop the solutions to the problems of planting non-native tree species in difficult terrain and in some of the barest, poorest land, with the help of a spade and a horse and cart. They cleared woodland as well as prepared previously unplanted or bare land

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<sup>827</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, (10 November 1937) William Davin.

<sup>828</sup> Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century*, p. 19.

<sup>829</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 355.

<sup>830</sup> Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 44.

<sup>831</sup> Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 139.

<sup>832</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', p. 29.

for planting, mostly with conifer seedlings, with great ingenuity and commitment to the survival of the new plantation.

Recruitment to Department forestry management and administration was initially from British forestry schools, but in 1926, with the restoration of the third-level training in Ireland, recruitment was eventually based on forestry education which included years of experience and understanding of men and trees, gained through hard work on the ground as well as the classroom.

State foresters were also sent around the country to inspect plots of land that were fit for planting trees according to Forbes' criteria, as well as working the annual cycle of land preparation, planting and aftercare of the trees. Some foresters had to deal with local resistance to state afforestation, and it was clear that existence of any planting program at a time of widespread civil breakdown and vandalism depended on the great commitment of the Forestry Division staff to overcome the difficulties and challenges, both financial and on the ground. The legacy of vandalism that accompanied some state afforestation was one of the concerns raised in the 1922 Agriculture Commission Report, but was not addressed by Minister Hogan during his tenure.

There was no provision of housing for foresters provided in the early years of forest centre development, in contrast to the housing scheme for workers on the state bog development discussed as early as 1919, at Pulla, Co. Offaly.<sup>833</sup> In Northern Ireland and Scotland, conditions for forest workers were better with wages at £2 to £2.50 per week, and some housing was provided for forest workers by the NI Forestry Division from 1924.<sup>834</sup>

From 1922, forest research was carried out on the ground with little formal recording or analysis, but there was cooperation with the research agencies of the Forestry Commission and through the Commonwealth Forestry Conferences held in Britain, through Forbes and Henry's membership. Although this was a practical solution to the lack of an Irish forestry research programme, it assumed that the research needs for Ireland were similar to those of the United Kingdom and Empire. There was no research program in planting or in wood preservation or processing. There were many and constant suggestions offered in the Oireachtas for industrial wood

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<sup>833</sup> Donal Clarke, *Brown Gold: A history of Bord na Mona and the Irish peat industry* (Dublin, 2010).

<sup>834</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 40.

processing of state timber production, with examples given of successful chemical plants established in other countries. One example was from TD Professor Magennis' reference to the Canadian experience in industrial wood pulp production from poplars.<sup>835</sup>

By comparison, the Northern Irish Forestry Division founded a forestry research institute in Queens University.<sup>836</sup> It also had a broader interest in estate amenity forestry developed by unemployment schemes.<sup>837</sup> There was also an extensive forest research programme in the United Kingdom, directed by the Forestry Commission for the research needs of British forestry which supported 123 college diploma and degree forestry students, 140 agricultural students taking forestry courses, and 62 apprentice woodmen in 1922.<sup>838</sup>

In contrast with the treatment of agricultural and horticultural inspectors, who were made pensionable civil servants in 1925,<sup>839</sup> the government took over thirty years to legislate for official recognition of the commitment and responsibilities of state foresters, and foresters were finally awarded civil servant status in 1954.<sup>840</sup> However, despite hardships, according to one graduate, 'forestry as a career was unequalled for the quality of life, comradeship and the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of one's endeavour'.<sup>841</sup>

### *County councils and nurseries*

County councils and tree nurseries also contributed to the development of future forests by their views on local trees, woods and forests, and by supplying particular types of tree seedlings. The county council's role in tree planting and wood preservation had been a key objective of the DATI 1908 Forestry Report; a role which was endorsed by Minister Hogan and Forbes after 1922. Over the previous twelve years, a growing number of councils had become wood owners and were managing

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<sup>835</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 2414 (25 June 1923), Professor William Magennis.

<sup>836</sup> Kilpatrick, *Northern Ireland Forest Service: A history*, p. 24.

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 28, 34.

<sup>838</sup> *Third Annual Report, 1922*, pp 22-3.

<sup>839</sup> Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 142.

<sup>840</sup> Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century*, p. 58.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.*

and preserving woods<sup>842</sup> under a DATI scheme, adopted by some county councils. Minister Hogan anticipated that the success of the Kildare County Council cooperative woodland preservation and forestry development scheme with Lord Leinster<sup>843</sup> would be followed by all other counties.<sup>844</sup> In support of the council's role in local forest and wood development, the 1923 to 1925 annual report of the Forestry Division noted that 'the moral effect of their attitude should not be under-estimated'.<sup>845</sup> Over the decade, the Department continued to rely on the county councils to fund from rates the preservation of small local woods and planting conifers, adding grants of £20 an acre for nurseries and a forester's salary for 2 years,<sup>846</sup> with no grants for land already planted.<sup>847</sup> However, council rates were generally being reduced during this time, to lower the burden of taxation on new owners of smallholdings as well as larger farmers, but all agricultural services still had to be paid for out of rates. However, most councils were not interested, nor did they have philanthropic landlords in their counties, much to the regret of Minister Hogan, and their concerns of the cost of the preservation of woods or the economics of planting small plots of land with conifers<sup>848</sup> were not addressed by the Department.<sup>849</sup>

As the county councils' role as partners in the state afforestation objectives was very uncertain, their role in afforestation was queried in the Dáil.<sup>850</sup> TD Seamus Moore<sup>851</sup> queried what was being done to survey their attitudes or even to promote the scheme.<sup>852</sup> But neither its suitability for other counties nor suggestions on a replacement for the scheme were proposed or discussed. In 1930, when queried in the

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<sup>842</sup> 'Forestry Committee Report, 1908', p. 33.

<sup>843</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 61 (1 June 1926), John Conlon.

<sup>844</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1026 (10 July 1924), Minister Patrick Hogan; xii, 1303 (18 June 1925), Minister Patrick Hogan. Lord Frederick Fitzgerald, Marquise of Kildare was a landowner of 60,000 acres. The Chairman of the Kildare County Council, Stephen Brown lawyer and farmer was also interested in forestry.

<sup>845</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, p. 117.

<sup>846</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 65 (1 June 1926) Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>847</sup> Hoctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 163.

<sup>848</sup> Well summarized in *Irish Times*, May 9<sup>th</sup> 1914.

<sup>849</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1026 (10 July 1924), xvi, 64 (1 June 1926), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>850</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1011 (10 July 1924), Francis Baxter;

<sup>851</sup> Seamus Moore, FF, director of several companies, interested in transport and technical educations, active interest on the wood sector in Wicklow.

<sup>852</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2351-2 (3 June 1931), Seamus Moore

Dáil about why local bodies had not availed of the schemes, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, F. J. Meyrick informed the members that ‘apparently there is no local pressure to urge demand for trees – apathy on the part of their constituents’.<sup>853</sup> When asked about Department action to stimulate interest, his reply was that: ‘We do not carry on any active propaganda –staff too small. We regard the planting of trees on a large scale as the important thing’.<sup>854</sup> Without a national plan for the promotion of local re-forestation, the potential role of the county council partnership in a state forestry program seemed to be abandoned by the end of 1930.

However, nurseries were an essential element in state forestry development, whether private, council owned or state operated. Forbes’ conifer planting program depended on a steady supply of imported conifer seed and tree seedlings, as well as a minor amount of hardwood species, some of which were also imported. The choice of conifer seeds from North America, Europe and Asia was from tree species that had been initially selected in Forbes’ DATI plantation trials at Avondale, with later advice from Henry.<sup>855</sup> After 1922, there was concern in the Dáil at the level of importation of conifer seeds and seedlings at the expense of home production and the potential for importation of disease.<sup>856</sup>

Private tree nurseries had been an important supplier of trees for the former DATI county council shelter belt scheme, which still operated in nineteen counties under the restructured Agriculture Committees, but after 1922, nurseries were increasingly linked to forestry centres.<sup>857</sup> Donegal was the exception where a county council nursery was operating, and where special technical assistance for ‘residents of the Congested Districts Board area’ was supplied by horticultural inspectors.<sup>858</sup> The inspectors were viewed as the go-between for farmers and the county councils,<sup>859</sup> and were employed by the Department of Agriculture to work with the county councils to provide technical skills for farmers on land preparation and the planting of

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<sup>853</sup> Report of the CPA on AA 1928-9, col. 930-1

<sup>854</sup> *ibid.*, col. 932.

<sup>855</sup> Henry, ‘Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry’, p. 625.

<sup>856</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii 55 (1 June 1926), Richard Wilson. Wilson was a farmer in Wicklow, interested in agricultural issues, who was against rates increases, and supported self-help initiatives.

<sup>857</sup> Hooctor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 162.

<sup>858</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Thirtieth General Report 1931-2* (Dublin 1932), p. 89.

<sup>859</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 64 (1 June 1926), Minister Patrick Hogan.

recommended shelter belt trees, mostly conifers. The potential contribution of the local tree nursery in the supply of local farmers with low cost local varieties of trees for shelter belts, as well as in the production of some tree seedlings for state forestry centres, was also raised in the Dáil.<sup>860</sup>

The list of trees available to the farmer for planting as shelter belts and around the farmhouse at cost price was originally prepared by Forbes for the DATI county council shelter belt scheme and carried over after 1922. He wrote enthusiastically of the qualities of conifers, their ornamental attributes such as their grace, symmetry of outline, and varied details of flowers, leaves and fruit, and their suitability for planting a small garden or on a piece of lawn in front of a farmhouse, particularly where the space is necessarily limited. He said that:

For such a purpose many of the ornamental conifers are the most suitable and appropriate. They have a symmetrical outline, are evergreen and rarely grow to a size that renders them unwieldy and ultimately dangerous to the house itself or an obstacle to free circulation of air or to the sun's rays.<sup>861</sup>

His recommended tree list for horticultural inspectors to aid them in making a selection favoured the giant evergreen species over native species and featured *Abies nobilis*, (Noble Fir); *Tsuga Mertensiana* (Mountain Hemlock); *Cryptomeria Japonica* (Japanese Cedar); *Cupressa Lawsoniana* (Lawson Cypress) - 'A well-known tree of moderate size'; *Thuia gigantean* (Western Red Cedar) – 'wants more room as a specimen'; *Wellingtonia gigantean* (Giant Sequoia or Giant Redwood); and broadleaf species: *Quercus Ilex* (Holm Oak)– 'evergreen makes a thick bushy head without growing to a great height, can be cut back when required to be kept low'; Mountain Ash- 'may be useful in exposed situations where other trees cannot grow'. He also recommended sycamore, beech, thorn, privet, apple trees and gooseberry bushes.<sup>862</sup>

Except for mountain ash, all of the recommended conifer species and the Holm oak would grow into very large (over 70 m), light-excluding trees which grow, which would be unpleasant close to the generally modest Irish farms or houses. This indicates that the extent of the success of planting conifers in Ireland, or even their

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<sup>860</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 855 (3 May 1928), Sean Goulding ; *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1751, 1760, 1761, 1763 (26 June 1929), John Daly, Frank Fahy, Mathew Reilly. And Henry who proposed a state nursery for cost price trees in every county. Henry, 'Cooperation of state and citizen in Irish forestry', p. 618.p. 618.

<sup>861</sup> Forbes, *Forestry notes: Being practical hints on the formation, management and protection of woodlands in Ireland*, pp 14-5.

<sup>862</sup> DATI correspondence, A C Forbes to James Murphy, horticultural inspector, Castle Island, NI, AGF/92/3/91, 1924.



growth habit in their native lands, had not yet been comprehended by Forbes and Henry. The results of this planting scheme can still be seen in aging, weather-beaten, large conifers around many small farm houses in every county in Ireland, and are particularly noticeable in the Western counties. This reflects the experimental nature of non-native conifer planting being promoted by Forbes and Henry in Ireland, and the absence of discussion, feedback or choice on their proposed future trees and shelter belts at that time. This could possibly be perceived as the landlords' role being assumed by the Forestry Division in certain regions of Ireland.

In conclusion, this brief introduction to the state forest administration and the perceptions of the leading participants on land use and tree planting demonstrated that by the end of the decade, the tree planting approach was organised almost entirely around non-native conifer plantations, from forest worker training and seed supply to local shelter belt schemes. This was noteworthy in that it was achieved in the aftermath of war and civil disturbance. It is evident that the 1908 Forestry Report was to be the guiding hand for the state planting program, but only through the selective application of its recommendations on land acquisition and conifer tree planting. This was despite the efforts of the Agriculture Commission and Forbes to introduce other aspects of a national forestry policy such as the preservation of small woods in private or council ownership.

The review highlights the meaning of the title Father of Irish Forestry as attributed to Forbes and Henry, as well as David Stewart of NI state forestry, which implied a paternal approach to the creation of an entirely new resource in the ever-available land with mother nature. The paternal approach to state forestry development fostered the authoritarian approach to the training of forest workers and was dedicated to the introduction of non-native conifer plantations. This approach was exacerbated by the rigid financial control of the Department of Finance at a time of extreme austerity. This approach can also be seen in Forbes' continuation of the paternalistic legacy of the Congested Districts Board towards local people, and his perception that the public had lost even the concept of forestry and must be re-educated in the value of his introduced conifers, and told what to plant. With this perception came the disregard of local and traditional wisdom, and the consideration of woodland practices as prejudices that had to be removed. It is evident that there was no training in natural woodland management nor its timber production nor market development.

This views were inherited by the next generation of foresters in order to create the new scientific conifer forestry for timber production. Thus Forbes' students, his forest workmen and his foresters were his heirs, following loyally in his footsteps, assuming his beliefs and practices on the superiority of his plantation approach to forestry, above all others. The assumptions examined in this review included: that conifer timber production was a superior land use for natural woodland, that conifer trees were the only type of tree that would grow on hill land, that softwood timber was the only type of timber that could possibly be sold, that the selection of oak, beech and ash was only for demesne land, that natural woods were uneconomic, that the preservation of natural woods was not the responsibility of the state but was up to the private landowners. Henry's views were less negative regarding the public, seeing them as an essential part of the future of forestry in Ireland. He did have an interest in local regenerating woods, but preferred the scientific approach to plantation forestry.

The institutional perception of the public could have also influenced the relationship of the Minister with the parliament and its representatives during this period, in its devaluation of public discussion.

## II: Parliament and forestry-related discourse

After the adoption of the Constitution on 25 October 1922, and the general election in 1923, the fourth Parliamentary Session was established during civil war. With an entirely new parliament based on the Westminster model, and public representatives largely unfamiliar with parliamentary procedures, the first years of the Oireachtas created the interrelationship between the government, the parliamentarians, the Teachtaí Dála (TD), Senators and the public. Maguire proposed that, after the initial reconstruction of the state was complete, Cumann na nGaedhael intended that the Oireachtas would have little to do, that it would be 'an administrative machine rather than a source of advice and expertise',<sup>863</sup> despite a lingering suspicion about the reliability of the inherited civil service.<sup>864</sup> Such an attitude might have influenced the seeming lack of interest on the part of the Minister for Agriculture,

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<sup>863</sup> Maguire, 'The civil service, the state and the Irish revolution, 1886-1938', p. 311.

<sup>864</sup> Ibid., p. 309.

Patrick Hogan in the contributions of public representatives on forestry-related issues during the first years of the Cumann na nGaedhael government, and his reliance on his forestry experts.

In December 1922 the President of the executive council, William Cosgrave, appointed half the members of the sixty-seat Seanad (the Senate),<sup>865</sup> and their leader, prominent unionist Lord Glenavy.<sup>866</sup> Despite being seen as representing the establishment of the former administration, the Senators represented some of the diversity of society,<sup>867</sup> some of whom contributed to the debates on the future forests of Ireland. The Seanad was abolished in 1936 for holding up Government proposals for constitutional change, and reconstituted in 1937 based on election from vocational panels, which included members from Northern Ireland.

The Fourth Dáil was made up of 153 TDs, where Cumann na nGaedhael had 43% of seats. Nearly one third of the assembly was represented by the abstentionist Sinn Fein Party, giving Cumann na nGaedhael the political power to develop its agenda during the first five years, with the help of the Farmers Party and Independents.<sup>868</sup> The legacy of war and civil disturbance was transformed by the entry of Fianna Fáil into the Oireachtas when they took their seats in the Dáil after the election of 1927, creating an active opposition.<sup>869</sup> However, this period was notable for the low level of political aggression in Dáil forestry debates.

As representatives of the people of the Irish Free State and the participants in state forestry development, Senators and TDs expressed the concerns, the expectations and the hopes of their constituents which included the legacy of the national re-forestation vision of Arthur Griffith and Art O'Connell of the Provisional Dáil. From October, 1922, the first parliamentary issues raised by TDs and Senators in the Oireachtas were on state planting programs, forestry employment, and the acquisition of suitable land.

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<sup>865</sup> Stafford, 'The Senate and the Civil War 1922-1925: Prologue, Duration and Protracted Aftermath', p. 14.

<sup>866</sup> Michael Laffan, p. 127.

<sup>867</sup> Stafford maintained that the Minsters were uncooperative towards the Seanad, p. 338.

<sup>868</sup> The combined opposition parties represented 46 seats: Labour 14 seats, Farmers Party 15 seats, Independent 15 seats and Businessmen's Party 2 seats. O'Halpin, 'Politics and the State, 1922-32', p. 92.

<sup>869</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 39.

Minister Hogan rarely strayed from the Departmental stance on state forestry, with one notable exception in the year before his untimely death in 1931. He expressed his hope for the preservation of old woods, echoing the mix of practical and emotional views on forestry to be heard in the Dáil. He said:

... in my parish there was a great amount of damage done in the last ten years. I suppose it was necessary. It was one of the finest beauty spots in the country, along the glens and the valleys. I hope when the Forestry Department is visiting their big tracts of land in that particular district that they will not fail to visit those places. It would do your heart good to see them. I often walked through them when I was a young fellow and some-one else walked through them as well.<sup>870</sup>

This was in stark contrast to his strong views on the benefits of state conifer planting and the irrelevance of any other aspect of forestry or wood industry, which he expressed consistently during the 1920s.

Although Minister Hogan rarely took the advice of the public representatives in parliament on forestry, he regarded the democratic process of the new government highly, saying that: 'you have only one safeguard in this country and that is the character of the people and the character of the Deputies'.<sup>871</sup> However, his biographer, Joan Cullen, was critical of the quality of Dáil debates on controversial issues and legislation, saying that:

They can give the participant the opportunity to display their verbal skill and wit. While these show the deputies' abilities as debaters they often reveal more about their ignorance and prejudice than their competence as legislators.<sup>872</sup>

She proposed that in reviewing Ministerial contributions to Dáil debates, it is necessary to have a 'degree of scepticism in order to separate out the window dressing from the actual intentions of the minister'.<sup>873</sup> Parliamentary contributions were also criticised by independent forestry expert John Mackay, as well as some TDs' understanding of forestry issues.<sup>874</sup> As TDs were elected under the new system of proportional representation to support minorities, they were more answerable to their constituents and were expected to defend and promote local issues, which made them

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<sup>870</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2348 (3 June 1931), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>871</sup> Cullen, 'Patrick Hogan, T.D. Minister for Agriculture, 1922-1932', p. 53.

<sup>872</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>874</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 186.

more susceptible to local pressure groups over time.<sup>875</sup> It could be deduced from this that the initial contributions from TDs on forestry can be seen as being of particular personal interest, with some having greater knowledge and experience of trees, woods and forests than others.

However, while this scepticism would be necessary in political analysis of Dáil debate, ignorance, window dressing and good and bad intentions are all equally included in the results of this analysis of the issues of interest to participants in the debates. Over the first decade of the state, what was evident in these debates was the wide interest and the expertise of the participants across the political divide, in trees, timber and forests, their industries, and their future, as well as the land in which they grew.

On 4<sup>th</sup> December 1922, Minister Hogan's first speech on forestry in the Dáil during the debate on forestry estimates expressed the government's approach to the direction of state forestry in Ireland, which was essentially, one of no change of the DATI conifer planting program despite considerable public interest in the potential of forestry.<sup>876</sup> He referred to the legacy of DATI in the Forestry Division and said that:

This particular service was administered by an English Commission. We have taken it over, of course, this year, and I can assure the Deputy that within the money, £31,000 odd, we will do all the work possible this year. The amount of money which we propose to spend is more than we spent last year, considerably more. We are hampered to a certain extent by the fact that it has been found impossible to continue the work in certain areas, but the policy of the Department in this matter is to do all the work possible during the current year, and, if possible, to expend the full amount of the money.<sup>877</sup>

Although there had been as yet no agreed policy on the function of the state Forestry Division, Minister Hogan was adamant that activities beyond land acquisition and tree planting were outside its functions. He affirmed repeatedly during the decade that: 'The Forestry Branch is performing its functions if it confines itself to acquiring land and growing timber in the largest possible quantities, having regard to the amount of money at its disposal'.<sup>878</sup> These issues of land acquisition and planting conifers dominated the Minister's discourse in Dáil debates, during his term from 1922 to 1931.

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<sup>875</sup> Eunan O'Halpin and Eileen Connolly, 'Parliaments and pressure groups: The Irish experience of change', in Phillip Norton (ed.), *Parliaments and pressure groups in Western Europe* (London & Portland, 1999), p. 135.

<sup>876</sup> Rotary Club meeting on forestry, in *Irish Times* (*Irish Times*, 25 November 1924).

<sup>877</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.* i, 2640 (4 December) Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>878</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 1796, (26 June 1929), Minister Patrick Hogan.

### *Parliamentarians and forest-related discourse*

Despite widespread economic and civil difficulties during this period, the Oireachtas forest-related debates allowed other voices to be heard on issues of deforestation, land for tree planting and the future of the wood industry. For many TDs and Senators, state forest development represented both state investment in local industry for the economic renewal of deprived areas of rural Ireland, where there were few other employment opportunities other than agriculture, as well as the creation of living symbols of the nation. Waterford TD and doctor, Vincent White, referred to forestry as 'one of our most valuable national assets.'<sup>879</sup> The legacy of deforestation and the continued clearance of woods defined the debates. This was accompanied by a call for an appreciation of the hard work of the tree planting landowners,<sup>880</sup> whose skilled, often Scottish foresters<sup>881</sup> with the local estate employees planted woods for hunting and shooting and shelter, and who were all becoming unemployed, along with estate sawmill operators.<sup>882</sup>

Parliamentarians also represented the local community, and what was left of their heritage of the traditions in woodwork, of wood industries, and their knowledge about types of trees and woodland and their care. Despite being more often excluded from woodlands and its products by landowners, and associated with both a lack of education and appreciation of trees, which was often perceived as a 'hostility towards trees',<sup>883</sup> there was still a local tradition of skilled traditional woodworking of timber. Whatever its provenance, from estates, purchased in town, found in bogs or on beaches, for household use, for its use in wood manufacturing for making furniture, farm implements, and for the construction of small buildings, it was accompanied by a rich community folklore associated with different trees.<sup>884</sup> This aspect of forestry, its care of woods and the use of its by-products was anticipated in the 1908 Departmental

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<sup>879</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 871 (3 May 1928), Dr Vincent White.

<sup>880</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1289 (18 June 1925), George Wolfe.

<sup>881</sup> Even up to the 1910s, advertisements in the Irish Times for estate foresters preferred Scotsmen and generally Protestants. *Irish Times*, 31 March 1900; 16 June 16 1900; 27 November 1900.

<sup>882</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*. In reference to the 1908 Report of the Forestry Commission, Evidence of J.L. Pigot, p. 26 & 34. Pigot was a retired Head Forester of the Ceylon Forest Service. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>883</sup> *Seanad Deb.*, x, 774 (3 July 1928), John Bagwell.

<sup>884</sup> 'Dúchas'. Folklore Commission.

Forestry Report, which promoted the use of bark, charcoal, turpentine, pitch, resin, mosses, and shrubs in small community manufacturing industries.<sup>885</sup>

Senators speaking on forest-related issues were often landowners. Based on one or more contributions to forestry or other debates, with or without party affiliation, the leading speakers were landowners, with several military officers, and there were several speakers associated with Cumann na nGaedhael, listed in Appendix III.

As parliamentarians became more familiar with Oireachtas proceedings and as the numbers of TDs grew with the arrival of Fianna Fáil in 1927, participation in Dáil debates and parliamentary questions increased. It was also evident that Minister Hogan became more willing or confident to respond to the issues raised over the period. All political parties were represented in Dáil debates on forest-related issues over the decade, which is shown in the following figure.

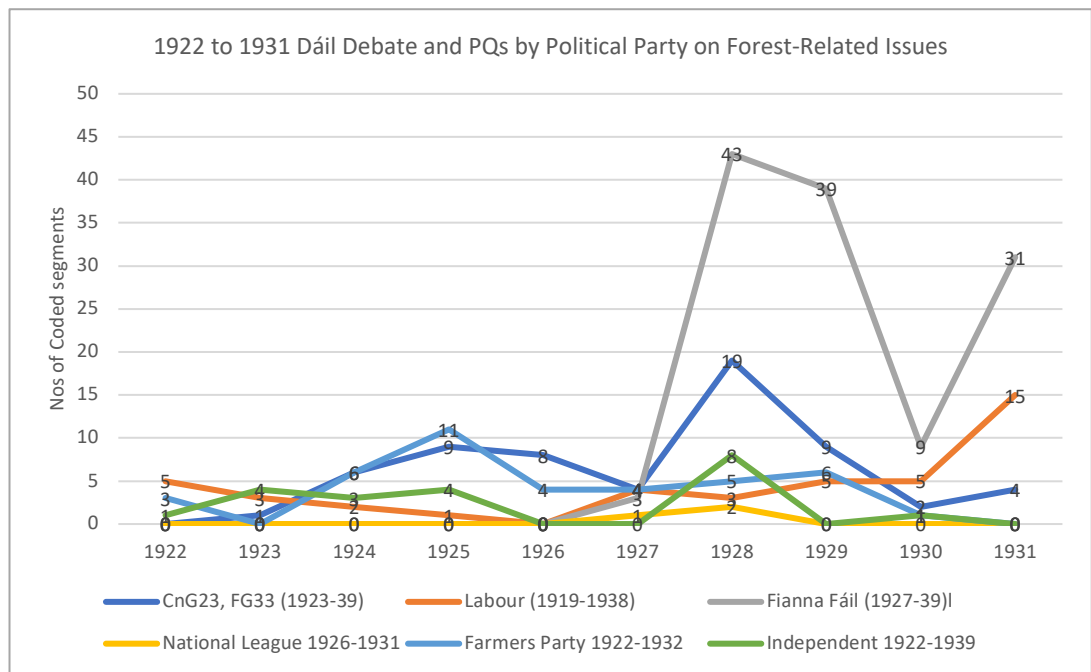


Figure 13: 1922-31 Dáil debates & PQs by political parties on forest-related issues

This figure shows that Fianna Fáil was the main contributor to debates on the Forestry Bill in 1928, but that Cumann na nGaedhael was the most consistent contributor. The Farmer’s Party member’s contributions were strong considering the few members they had relative to the other parties, at almost 2% of Dáil membership.

As parliamentarians who were members of the party in government were favoured for time to speak, an analysis of the frequency of party contributions is only

<sup>885</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee'. Evidence of H. Doran 2012-4.

indicative of the activity of speakers. During 1922 to 1931, the most active speakers in Oireachtas debates on forest-related issues were farmers, landowners, trades union officials and barristers, listed in Appendix III. The leading speakers in the Dáil on forest-related issues based on more than three contributions shows a predominance of Fine Gael TDs, with high representation of Western counties and farmers. Some representative contributors are presented below, illustrated by contributions to debates.

### ***Major Bryan Ricco Cooper 1884 to 1939***

Independent TD for Dublin County from 1923, Cooper was one of the few representatives to have also been an MP for almost a year in 1910. He was an example of the unionist Anglo-Irish Sligo landowner with associations that went back to Wolfe Tone, who had a keen interest in forestry and its future in Ireland.<sup>886</sup> Although much of his estate was sold under the Land Act of 1903, he was a farmer and supporter of agricultural excellence. He had a distinguished career in the First World War, and was also sympathetic to the national cause, inspired by Yeats. He joined Cumann na nGaedhael in 1927 and was re-elected, 'rendering good service criticising Cosgrave's legislative proposals', according to his obituary.<sup>887</sup>

Cooper spoke with experience and authority on the business of tree planting and processing, and was an experienced tree planter and owner of a sawmill on his estate, although he was not familiar with the Department's work. He was an advocate for forestry education to address people's ignorance about forestry in the country, where he had observed an inherited hatred of trees. He supported Departmental grants for tree planting, or even remissions of rates on planted land to assist the private planters' returns in an uncertain, slow market. He endorsed the 'drastic' powers conferred on the Minister in the Forestry 1928 Bill to control tree felling, concerned that hundreds of people had closed their houses and sold their timber to contractors. But as a wood owner and tree planter, he looked for assurance that felling for management and fuel purposes could be done without licences.

### ***Frank Carney, 1896 to 1932***

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<sup>886</sup> McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography. Irish Independent*, , 7 July 1930. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 19 July, 1924, 18 June 1925, 3 May 1928, 30 May 1928.

<sup>887</sup> Belfast Newsletter, 7 July 1930.



Donegal Fianna Fáil TD Frank Carney was an example of the representative who understood the practical knowledge of timber planting, selection in the winter and removing the trees from the wood. He spoke about saw millers and the uses of local timber to make coffins of elm, boat parts, handles and tool parts, and for household and farm furniture. His view was that the extensive clearance of woods during the First World War could be an opportunity to plant pine trees to produce the deal timber that was in such demand as imported wood. This was a market that was worth over one million pounds in Ireland. He promoted forestry to improve the scenery for tourism. He supported even the little valued elder which could be used for quick growing shelter belts, with seeds given to farmers, along with education in the care of trees. He referred to the closure of the spool-making industry in Enniskillen which had been supplied by local timber and where 200 men were employed.<sup>888</sup>

### ***Michael Heffernan, 1885 to 1970***

Michael Heffernan was a TD for Tipperary, a farmer with family connections to Charles Kickham MP, and leader of the Farmer's Party. Conservative and pro-Treaty, the Farmer's Party represented the larger employing farmers who would have been in farmers associations which had formed since 1919 in response to the growth of the labour organisations. He was Secretary of the Farmers Union in 1927, after which time they went into unofficial coalition with Cumann na nGaedhail, which he joined in 1932. He supported national afforestation by the state citing the long time to maturity, the beneficial effects on hydrology, soil and climate as well as on employment, and the insupportable cost in rates for the private tree planter. Heffernan also endorsed the excellent work being done by the Department.<sup>889</sup> He supported tenant purchasers cutting down hedgerow trees which were detrimental to agriculture, and replacing them with shelter belts. He favoured restricting imports of timber to support producers instead of controlling exports.

### ***William Sears, 1868 to 1929***

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<sup>888</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 26 June 1929, 26 June 1928, 13 June 1928.

<sup>889</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 10 July 1928, 26 June 1928.

William Sears was Cumann na nGaedhael TD for Mayo South, a Senator who was an example of the active nationalist, a friend of Arthur Griffith, and a TD who represented continuity with the First Dáil. He was a journalist, barrister and founder of a newspaper.<sup>890</sup> He survived imprisonment and a hunger strike and was first elected in 1921. He was a constant promoter of state forestry, referencing the 1908 DATI Report, supporting county council tree planting, and the renewal of the Irish oak as the best timber available. He spoke about the legacy of deforestation and its bare landscape, and the opportunity presented to the state to obtain and plant uncultivable land which was becoming available under the Land Acts. He particularly promoted the Western seaboard for planting to relieve the effects of unemployment in the region.

### III: Issues of interest in parliamentary forest-related debate

The results of the analysis of debates and parliamentary questions from 1922 to 1931 showed a hierarchy of issues of interest to the participants, represented as themes and summarized in the figure below.

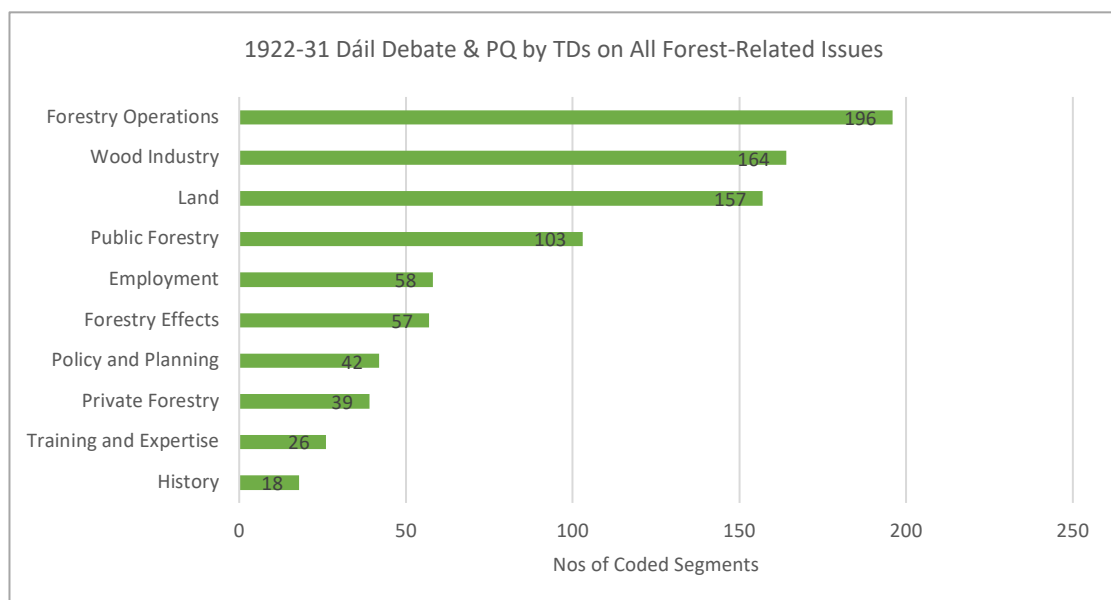


Figure 14: 1922-31 Dáil debates and PQs by TDs on all forest-related issues

<sup>890</sup> McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography. Dáil Éireann deb.*, (25 June 1923), (18 June 1925), (1 June 1926).

This figure shows that the dominant theme of interest in Dáil discourse was on forestry operations which includes the topics of tree felling, tree planting and species selection. Second in importance was the theme of wood industry which includes the traditional wood industry, timber supply and timber export. Third was the land-related theme which includes land availability and marginal land planting. Themes on public forestry, including public education, Arbor Day and public input, employment and the effects of forestry on climate and on flooding were also raised. The topics of interest, aggregated by theme are tabulated in Appendix II.

The themes on forestry operations, wood industry, land, public forestry, employment and policy and planning are addressed in greater detail in the following summary, and contributions made under the themes of private forestry, training and expertise, and history of forestry and the wood industry are included in the text.

### *National Forestry Policy and Arbor Day*

These themes and topics raised in Dáil debates and parliamentary questions were all aspects of interest in an anticipated national forestry policy, inspired by the Provisional Dáil's National Afforestation Bill.<sup>891</sup> TD Darrell Figgis,<sup>892</sup> former Chairman of the Natural Resources and Industries Commission, reminded the House of its origins. He said that:

It was one of the very earliest proposals of the political party which brought this Dáil into being. Several attempts were made to deal with it in the past and the attempts always resulted in failure because of the lack of administrative machinery by which alone it could be brought to success. Now, with the administrative machinery at our disposal, it is a matter of common consent that a properly organised system of re-afforestation should be instituted.<sup>893</sup>

However, there was no reply from Minister Hogan. In 1922, the first opportunity for Oireachtas members to address the future of the state forestry program with the Department was in the Dáil Committee of Public Accounts (CAP) annual review, with Scottish forester, F. J. Meyrick, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. This venue for forest-related discourse dwindled after three years, as most of the discussions were

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<sup>891</sup> Seanad Deb., ii, 25 (10 October 1923) Thomas Westropp Bennett, Patrick Kenny.

<sup>892</sup> Darrell Figgis was Chairman from 1919-1921, active nationalist, journalist, author, contributor to the drafting of the 1922 Constitution.

<sup>893</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 2411 (25 June 1923), Darrell Figgis.

held in the Committee on Finance debate on estimates in the Dáil. The CAP report recorded the difficult working conditions for the Forestry Department during 1922 to 1923, citing the budget underspend in the year which was due to the 'state of the country', where

... during the greater portion of the year, warfare raged in the country. The hostilities left an impress, of one kind or another, on nearly every Department of State.<sup>894</sup>

The Chairman, William Hewat,<sup>895</sup> asked for a general outline of the policy of the Department and the scope of expenditure, but Meyrick's reply showed the continued Departmental focus on the twin objectives of land and planting: 'The main purpose to which it (The Forestry Fund) is applied is to create a certain amount of State forests in the country. The expenditure is mainly on the acquisition of land, planting that land and the staff necessary to do the work'.<sup>896</sup> Meyrick's view of the forestry programme was that:

The principal Forestry Officer (Arthur Forbes) says we have so much land and we have to form a certain estimate as to the planting of this land. The forestry programme has to be formed with a view to what will be done 60 or 80 years hence. You have to arrange felling so that you will not have too much clearing in any one year.<sup>897</sup>

Meyrick noted the difficulties of estimating land availability, nursery stock and funds for the year. He said that: 'Our general idea is to establish large forest areas in suitable districts. There are places where we have got land and where it is likely we will get more land. Fellings will be coming in regularly after forty or fifty years 'so that as far as possible, there will be constant work going on'.<sup>898</sup> Wexford Senator and landowner, Sir Osmond Esmonde<sup>899</sup> inquired about the status of state-employed forestry workers, defined by Meyrick as being in the same category as casual labourers. They were

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<sup>894</sup> *Report of Committee of Public Accounts, Second Interim 1922/23 (1924)*, p. 1.

<sup>895</sup> William Hewat, Businessman's Party, 1923-27, Dublin, president of Dublin Chamber of Commerce and coal merchant.

<sup>896</sup> *Interim and Final Report 1923/24.*, col. 2243

<sup>897</sup> *Report of Committee of Public Accounts, First and Second Reports 1922/23 (1925).*, col. 2304.

<sup>898</sup> *Interim and Final Report 1923/24.*, col. 2251.

<sup>899</sup> Sir Osmond Esmonde was a Senator from 1923-36 for Wexford. From an Old English family, Former MP from 1885 to 1918 from the Irish Parliamentary Party tradition, former member of the Agricultural Council, owner of Ballynastragh House, Gorey.

'Employed indefinitely as long as they are willing to work but are not pensionable'.<sup>900</sup> There was no further discussion on a national forestry policy at that meeting.

Forbes had advocated for a clearly defined Departmental tree planting program since the early days of Avondale, saying that he was generally following the policy laid down in the Forestry Reports of 1908 and 1919.<sup>901</sup> He had also proposed the transfer of the Forest Service to the Land Commission from the Department of Agriculture, where he observed that agriculture and forestry are 'rival claimants to the same estate.. and the balance is always weighted in favour of the former'.<sup>902</sup> This proposal was eventually effected in 1933 when the Forestry Division became part of the Department of Lands.

Meanwhile, the re-afforestation vision of a national forestry policy of the First Dáil lived on in the recurring topic of Arbor Day, raised most years by TDs inquiring what was being done to revive it.<sup>903</sup> The celebration of Arbor Day in 1919 had been a symbolic and practical event to support the vision of the re-afforestation of Ireland, for the renewal of the rural economy and arboreal heritage, for timber production, public participation and education in trees and forestry. It was also seen as a commemorative event for 1916, but was not repeated after 1919, due to war and civil disturbance. Many of the Arbor Day trees planted in 1919 were removed, according to Senator Esmonde, who informed the Dáil that the Royal Irish Constabulary had pulled up a large proportion of the trees that had been planted.<sup>904</sup>

Minister Hogan was not interested in maintaining either the remaining trees or the legacy of the symbolic aspect of Arbor Day during his term of office. In his view, it was a waste of time, saying 'Everyone in the Dáil knows that in places where trees were planted, they disappeared in three years. The Arbor Day schemes, for instance, have disappeared'.<sup>905</sup> The Minister did not seem to realise the benefits of Arbor Day

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<sup>900</sup> *Report of Committee of Public Accounts, First and Second Reports 1922/23*.col. 2296. This was not achieved until 1954.

<sup>901</sup> Forbes, 'Tree-planting in Ireland during four centuries', p. 92.

<sup>902</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 21.

<sup>903</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1010 (10 July 1924), Peadar Doyle; PQ., viii, 10 (22 Oct 1924) Peadar Doyle; xii, 1303 (18 June 1925), Patrick Baxter; xxxviii, 2353, 2355, (3 June 1931), Sean Goulding; Seamus Moore.

<sup>904</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2362 (3 June 1931), Osmond Esmonde.

<sup>905</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2373 (3 June 1931), Minister Patrick Hogan.

for public education on trees and planting, possibly assuming that there was a prevailing public hostility to trees. He said that:

It is necessary to have a real change in the point of view of landowners generally before you can have a successful Arbor Day.<sup>906</sup>

In a reply to a Parliamentary Question on Arbor Day and seemingly forgetting that the first Dáil Arbor Day was organized by the substitute Minister for Agriculture, Minister Hogan said that the initiative for these celebrations lay with the 'organisers of the celebrations; any application will receive careful consideration'<sup>907</sup>

However, the public significance of Arbor Day was expressed by Wicklow TD Seamus Moore in 1931:

Over twenty years ago, the belief in afforestation as a necessary and desirable national work was almost a religion amongst the people, and for a few years we had Arbor Days. Of late years there has been very little sign of that enthusiasm or of anything to take its place.<sup>908</sup>

However, the celebration of Arbor Day tree planting was not revived during the 1920s and neither did the National Afforestation Bill of Darrell Figgis materialise. Although Minister Hogan's Forestry Bill of 1928 was to include the anticipated National Forestry Policy, its objective was the control of tree felling, and it was the first comprehensive legislation on this issue in the British Isles. During the Forestry Bill debate in 1928, there was some confusion over where the responsibility lay to prepare an agreed national forest policy that would guide the planting program and the work of the Forestry Branch. Despite requests from the Dáil for government action on policy, Minister Hogan's views were clear, namely that the formation of forestry policy was 'the proper function of the Dáil'.<sup>909</sup> There was also discussion on timber supply management and the role of the state, which was one of the objectives in the 1908 Forestry Report. Minister Hogan reiterated his view on where policy should be developed, stating that: 'If there is a national policy definitely laid down by the Dáil and adopted by the Government that all the requirements of the country in the way of woodwork must be produced from native-grown timber, it is the business of the

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<sup>906</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1303 (18 June 1925), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>907</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ix, 10 (22 Oct. 1924), PQ Peadar Doyle.

<sup>908</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2352-3 (3 June 1931), Seamus Moore.

<sup>909</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1795-6 (26 June 1929), Minister Patrick Hogan.

Minister to alter the policy of the Forestry Branch to coincide with that'.<sup>910</sup> He insisted that: 'The Dáil has never decided that the Forestry Branch should become a sort of economic grand council and take charge of national policy in that way. The Forestry Branch exists for the purpose of growing trees'.<sup>911</sup>

The question of a national forestry policy rumbled on during the first eight years of state forestry development. TDs queried the motive and the program for state afforestation,<sup>912</sup> contrary to forest historian Durand's criticism of the public representatives and the Minister for the lack of any serious review of the forestry program. Durand said that:

No attempt was made by either the Minister or the opposition to initiate any discussion of the overall economics of a forestry program. The impression is given of planting being an end in itself.<sup>913</sup>

He added, incorrectly, that 'the Dáil appeared to assume that such an evaluation was superfluous in the light of eventual return on capital, at all events'. However, requests for information on the economics of timber clearance and the tree planting program by TDs, such as Wicklow TD Seamus Moore, were not forthcoming.<sup>914</sup> It was beginning to be evident that the 1908 Forestry Report guidelines on the importance of the influence of national forestry on the 'whole prosperity of rural districts and industries and to its social, economic and climatic bearings',<sup>915</sup> were not being shelved in favour of the more limited conifer tree planting program by the Department. By 1929, re-afforestation had become afforestation with a vague Department objective to supply home timber needs, but Minister Hogan was looking to the Dáil to resolve the challenging issues of local wood industry timber supply management. During this period, neither Minister Hogan, the Forestry Service nor the Oireachtas was able to generate a review of the suitability of the DATI experimental planting program for the needs of the Irish state.

Thus parliamentary attempts to re-establish the symbolic place of trees and woods at the heart of the nation as envisioned by the first Dáil were subsumed into the

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<sup>910</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1796 (26 June 1929), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>911</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1795, *Ibid.*

<sup>912</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 901 (11 June 1930), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>913</sup> J. Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland' (PhD. thesis, University College Dublin, 1969), Footnotes to p. 242.

<sup>914</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1784 (26 June 1929), Seamus Moore.

<sup>915</sup> 'Report of the Forestry Committee'.in Gray, 'The economics of Irish forestry', pp 18, 20.

experimental conifer planting program inherited from DATI. Despite Minister Hogan's romantic hope that old woods would be preserved by the Department, it was evident that the forest restoration vision of the first Dáil, with both native and non-native species, was not supported by him. The discontinuity that emerged between his perceptions and those of some public representatives on state forest development could be summarised by an exchange in the Dáil at the end of 1930, between Dr James Ryan, TD for Wexford and Minister Hogan. Ryan was a former colleague and friend of Arthur Griffith, who had promoted the high priority of forestry in the first Dáil. Ryan said that:

Forestry was, I think, one of the big ideals that Arthur Griffith held out to us years ago when speaking of what a free Ireland could do. He showed the great faith that he had in the planting of this country, and in order to test the faith of individual Sinn Feiners throughout the country as well as in their enthusiasm. Arbour Day was established—that was a voluntary planting of trees by the people throughout the country in or about the 1st November each year. Now it is an extraordinary thing that having got the power to plant trees as much as we like, we have not made the use we should have made of that power. To the casual observer, at any rate, there does not appear to be nearly as much land under timber, even under young timber, taking the country as a whole, now as there was before the Free State came into being. It would appear that there has been more land cleared of timber within the last ten years than there has been land planted. The Minister gave figures about the amount of land acquired during the period since the Free State was established.<sup>916</sup>

Ryan also queried the deforestation of acres of woodland and whether forestry could be made an economic proposition. In his reply, Minister Hogan focused only on the funding of planting, and did not refer to the national vision of Arthur Griffith or public participation. In 1930, he reiterated his view on the work of the Forestry Division:

The policy of the Forestry Branch is to plant 200,000 acres at the rate of about 4,000 acres a year. That policy is being carried out. Last year, however, only 3,000 acres were planted. The policy is to have 200,000 acres of timber State controlled and State-owned within 50 years. So far as timber diminishing is concerned, the Forestry Act is to deal with that. It came into operation on 1st April. I was asked was forestry economic. It is, if you are prepared to wait fifty years, and it is only the State can carry out forestry on a big scale. I claim that with the finances we have at our disposal we could not go much faster.<sup>917</sup>

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<sup>916</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 901 (11 June 1930), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>917</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 904, (11 June 1930), Minister Patrick Hogan.



And:

The business of the Forestry Branch is to decide what are the most suitable trees that can be grown on the land they are likely to get and to grow as many of them as possible at the smallest possible price.<sup>918</sup>

These statements reflected the limited perception of state forestry as a large-scale conifer planting program by Minister Hogan.

### *Public Education*

In the absence of Arbor Day, the issue of public education in forestry was also raised each year in the Dáil where there was evidence of frustration at the lack of any effort to reintroduce the idea and practice of forestry. This was succinctly expressed by Seamus Moore in his call for public forest education, especially for children because: 'The people appear to have lost all forestry sense'.<sup>919</sup> The lack of education on tree planting for farmers on the new private planting grant aid was also queried by some TDs who stated that their constituents were unaware of grant aid being available from the Department for private afforestation.<sup>920</sup> TD Bryan Cooper expressed concern at the ignorance of the farmers about trees, how hard it was to get information on forestry, and the lack of funding. He referred to '...the ludicrously low vote for forestry education'.<sup>921</sup> Professor Magennis TD<sup>922</sup> and Professor Alton TD<sup>923</sup> promoted cooperation in technical education and public education in forestry. But there was very limited Departmental interest in ensuring the continuation of the former DATI technical education schemes in rural industries for the wood industries.<sup>924</sup> Minister Hogan did continue to provide limited support for the DATI public education programs of three exhibitions in the RDS and two country fairs.

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<sup>918</sup> Ibid.

<sup>919</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2360 (3 June 1931), Seamus Moore.

<sup>920</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2332 (3 June 1931), Timothy Murphy.

<sup>921</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1007 (10 July 1924), *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1292 (18 June 1925), Bryan Cooper.

<sup>922</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 2414 (25 June 1923), Professor William Magennis.

<sup>923</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2642 (4 Dec. 1922), Professor Ernest Alton.

<sup>924</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 103.

## Forestry operations, deforestation and tree felling

From the first Dáil debate in 1922, and over the decade, there were also high expectations for the Irish Free State to end the continuous removal of trees and woods in every county.<sup>925</sup> The issue of deforestation was raised in practically every debate and in the Oireachtas.<sup>926</sup> Tree felling was taking place in a landscape which had already been devastated by decades of estate wood clearances and for First World War military needs. The topic of deforestation was included in the theme of forestry operations, with the topics of planting trees, species selection, forest maintenance and nurseries also of interest, summarised in the figure below.

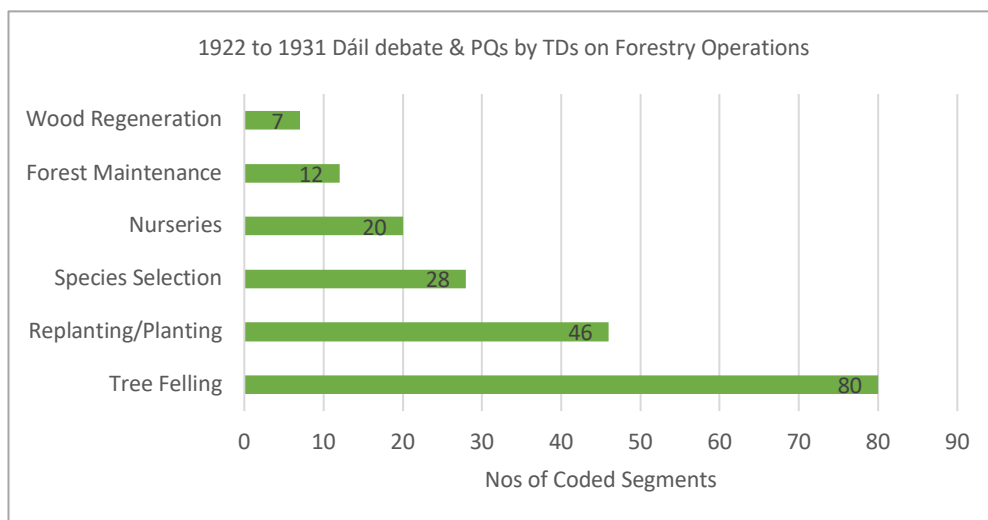


Figure 15: 1922-31 Dáil debates and PQs by TDs on forestry operations

This figure indicates the major concern in the Dáil about tree felling, and its companion topics of tree planting and species selection.

One of Minister Hogan's first commitments to the Dáil on forestry, apart from the continuity of the DATI planting programme, was proposed legislation to stop the 'plunder' or 'wanton cutting' of woods,<sup>927</sup> which was his main intention for the 1928

<sup>925</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 844 (3 May 1928), George Wolfe; *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 852 (3 May 1928), Bryan Cooper.

<sup>926</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, ii, 24 (10 October 1923), Patrick Kenny; *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 260 (4 December 1922) John Lyons; iii, (25 June 1923), William Sears; viii, 1010, 1013 (10 July 1924), Peadar Doyle; Richard Corish; xii, 1286, 1289 (18 June 1925), William Hewat; George Wolfe; xvi, 62, 63 (1 June 1926), John White, Michael Heffernan; xxiii, 845, 852, 855, 856, 864, 871, 876 882 (3 May 1928), Michael Heffernan; Bryan Ricco Cooper; Sean Goulding; John Gorey; James Fitzgerald Kennedy; Vincent White; John Corry; George Wolfe; xxx, 1751 1779 (26 June 1929), John Daly, Frank Carney, George Wolfe.

<sup>927</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2643 (4 Dec. 1922), Minister Patrick Hogan; *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 843, 883-5 (3 May 1928), Minister Patrick Hogan.

Forestry Bill.<sup>928</sup> Although there was evidence of looting of whole woods, for example the woods adjacent to the Landsdowne Estate near Kenmare,<sup>929</sup> there was no official state survey on the area, quality and condition of woods and their timber and the actual impact of wood clearance in Ireland during this period. Meyrick did acknowledge that forestry officers would have a general idea of tree cover but that there was not enough staff for a full survey as they had 'no roving commission- We have not enough men or time for that'.<sup>930</sup>

Who was responsible for the devastation was another frequent debate, with landowners being considered the chief culprits. Minister Hogan acknowledged that: 'There are a number of people selling demesnes and timber lands and they are anxious to get rid of them quickly.'<sup>931</sup> TD Bryan Ricco Cooper<sup>932</sup> said that: 'There are many cases, possibly tens, possibly hundreds of people who shut down their houses and go away having sold the timber to some contractor to cut it down or take it away'.<sup>933</sup> The response of communities to the clearance of entire woods in the neighbourhood was raised by Donegal TD John White,<sup>934</sup> who was concerned about 'local people who object to it very much'.<sup>935</sup> Incoming tenant purchasers were also accused of unnecessary tree felling by removing shelter belts and hedge trees,<sup>936</sup> although this was prohibited under the Land Act where farmers who had inherited trees on land purchased from the Land Commission could not dispose of them until the loan had been paid.<sup>937</sup> The state's role in felling woods was raised by Leitrim/Sligo TD John Jinks<sup>938</sup> who was concerned about the Lough Gill woods which were cleared by the

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<sup>928</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, iii, 2419, 2421 (25 June 1923), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>929</sup> 'Criminal Injuries', *Minister for Finance Files* (National Archives, 1923), FIN/1/2882. Replanting requirement should be part of compensation.

<sup>930</sup> *Report of the Committee of Public Accounts, 1929-30* (1931). Col. 3921.

<sup>931</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 837 (3 May 1928), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>932</sup> Bryan Ricco Cooper was from an old Sligo landowning family, ex-unionist and pro-business.

<sup>933</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 851 (3 May 1928), Major Bryan Ricco Cooper; xx, no. col. (2 August 1927), John Jinks.

<sup>934</sup> Advocate of community interests in natural resources, support for legal costs of individuals.

<sup>935</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 62 (1 June 1926), John White.

<sup>936</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 865 (3 May 1928), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; xvi, 62 (1 June 1926), Michael Heffernan.

<sup>937</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxiii, 2224 (30 May 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>938</sup> John Jinks, Local entrepreneur, concerned about unemployment.

state despite protests by locals, where even requests to 'leave the bushes for artistic beauty' had been ignored.<sup>939</sup> He also inquired about state lands rented to English and Scottish saw millers, but there was no reply from Minister Hogan.<sup>940</sup> Tree felling continued, officially and unofficially through the decade, with clearing going on at a greater rate than planting.

### *Forestry Bill 1928*

Minister Hogan's response to the critical haemorrhage of woods and trees in Ireland was to introduce state control of tree felling by legislation. In 1928, even though the plantation of conifers had increased the forest area of the state, the national woodland area was reduced to an estimated 220,000 acres of woods,<sup>941</sup> from an estimated 248,000 acres in 1922. By 1930, the private woodland area was optimistically estimated at 200,000 acres 'of mixed and inferior crops',<sup>942</sup> or potentially less than 1% of all land. Thus the highlight of Minister Hogan's forestry career was the passage of the Forestry Bill through the Dáil and Seanad in 1928. This Bill was intended to control the felling of woodlands, and also to establish state compulsory purchase powers to facilitate land acquisition.<sup>943</sup> In place of the Forestry Commission Advisory Council, Minister Hogan met with forestry stakeholders by invitation. In 1923 and 1925, he consulted the Irish Farmers Union, the Land Owners Convention, the Irish Forestry Society, the Irish Seedsmen and Nursery Trade Association, and surveyors, on proposed legislation to control tree felling.<sup>944</sup> Resolutions were also received from public agencies and clubs from around the counties in support of state action to control tree felling, which prompted the preparation of the draft legislation.<sup>945</sup>

The first Forestry Bill of the Irish Free State was greeted with some disappointment as there were expectations of a more extensive national re-forestation policy, reflecting the Arthur Griffith's re-forestation proposals, and those

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<sup>939</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xx, no col. (2 Aug. 1927), John Jinks.

<sup>940</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>941</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 841 (3 May 1928), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>942</sup> Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, *Twenty Ninth and Final General Report 1930-1* (Dublin, 1931), p. 132.

<sup>943</sup> Forestry Act, no. 34, 1928.

<sup>944</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 188. Seanad Deb., x, 764, (3 July 1928) Michael Hanlon.

<sup>945</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

of the Provisional Dáil.<sup>946</sup> Carney claimed that the original purpose of a re-forestation Bill was also to affect the climate and to beautify the landscape.<sup>947</sup> But Minister Hogan dismissed ‘past propaganda,’ describing it as ‘hot air’ and not worth considering.<sup>948</sup>

The Forestry Bill also raised the question of state interference with private property rights which had prevented any British government action to control tree felling. This was in contrast to the continental tradition of state intervention in private forestry management where obligatory planting of trees was required after felling.<sup>949</sup> Some Irish landowners were concerned over the transfer of power to the state with the transfer of the right to cut privately owned trees.<sup>950</sup> TD Bryan Ricco Cooper referred to the ‘drastic powers of the Minister.’<sup>951</sup> These landowners’ rights had been an essential principle of British administration in Ireland, and still were at the heart of traditional British attitudes to the private property of woods and trees. These views were summarised by a landowner writing to the Irish Times referring to a House of Lords’ Report on state forestry and private forest management:

The adoption of the socialistic policy in respect to forests would conflict with British tradition and it would involve a rural revolution. Who save an economist without a soul could contemplate with satisfaction the disappearance of England’s private woodland and the nationalization of all the spinneys and demesnes that beautify her counties?<sup>952</sup>

These objections to the curtailment of landowners rights over tree felling and replanting were rejected by Minister Hogan, citing similar practices used in other countries to control deforestation.<sup>953</sup> He assured the Dáil that the Bill was not intended to interfere with the right of the owner ‘to fell trees when ripe’, but that every intention to fell a tree had to be notified with the local Gardaí.

TD Ricco Cooper informed the Dáil that newly purchased small holders were felling trees on recently purchased land.<sup>954</sup> However, Mayo barrister James Fitzgerald-

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<sup>946</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 867 (3 May 1928), Seamus Moore; xxxv, 900 (3 June 1930), James Ryan.

<sup>947</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 493 (13 June 1928), Frank Carney.

<sup>948</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2364 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>949</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 865 (3 May 1928), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>950</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, x, 773 (3 July 1928), John Bagwell, John Keane

<sup>951</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 852 (3 May 1928) Bryan Ricco Cooper.

<sup>952</sup> *Irish Times*, 15 March 1928. *Irish Times*, 4 May 1928.

<sup>953</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xxii, 880-881 (5 July 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>954</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1007 (10 July 1924), Bryan Ricco Cooper.

Kenney noted that prior to the Land Acts, the tenant had almost never had the power to cut trees on his holding,<sup>955</sup> nor indeed the opportunity to learn how to care and maintain them, and added that the tenant purchaser was not allowed to fell trees under the terms of his land purchase. Other concerns were expressed by some TDs representing the group most affected by the Forestry Bill, the farmer and his right to fell single trees around the farm.<sup>956</sup>

Minister Hogan's responses to Dáil and Seanad criticisms of the proposed Forestry Bill were initially positive, and finally exasperated, as issues outside the objectives of the Bill were raised regarding increased State power and its incursion on private property rights, and the urgent need to control raw timber exports.<sup>957</sup> The voice of the wood industry was also raised to protect tree felling contracts already issued, and attempts to propose a saw miller's exemption to the provisions of the Forestry Bill were rejected over concern for the creation of a monopoly.<sup>958</sup> Speaking about the export of the timber supply for local industries, Carney proposed that a prohibition on the export of unsawn timber would cause tree felling, except for domestic use, to stop as the deforestation was being caused by the wood exporters.<sup>959</sup> Minister Hogan reiterated the need to prevent the wholesale cutting down of woods,<sup>960</sup> with mandatory replanting, but that timber export control was not in the purview of the Department. Rather it was under the remit of the Minister for Industry and Commerce, given that it was a 'fiscal matter'.<sup>961</sup> In response to TDs' queries, he affirmed that the Department did not deal with unemployment in the sawmill industry nor would it address the effects of the Bill on climate.<sup>962</sup>

The 1928 Forestry Bill was also an opportunity for the Department to forge better public relations, particularly in relation to the compulsory purchase of land. However, communication with the public was limited to official notices. Prior to 1922, DATI had published notices of its intention to extinguish land use rights in the Official Gazette, normally only seen by local solicitors and land agents. An amendment in the

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<sup>955</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 864 (3 May 1928), James Fitzgerald-Kenney.

<sup>956</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 849, 877 (3 May, 1928), Bernard Maguire, Michael Heffernan.

<sup>957</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, x, 764 (3 July 1928), Michael O'Hanlon

<sup>958</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii 2233 (30 May 1928), Major Bryan Cooper.

<sup>959</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1624 (27 June 1928), Frank Carney.

<sup>960</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 891 (3 May 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>961</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1623 (27 June 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>962</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 891 (3 May 1928), Patrick Hogan.

Forestry Bill required these notices to be printed in local newspapers to allow the affected person, usually a smallholding farmer, if they had access to newspapers, to be informed of the Department's interest in his grazing land, in order to be able to register land use rights.<sup>963</sup> This established a legalistic relationship between the Department and its farming public who were the owners of land and land use rights that were of interest to the Department. Discourse and resolution of conflict were to be the domain of the courts of the Land Commission.

The Forestry Act was passed in December 1928 and provided the machinery to control tree felling outside normal forestry operations, with a small grant aid program for private planting and data collection requirements from the saw millers.<sup>964</sup> As the Forestry Act was not implemented until 1930 due to insufficient numbers of civil servants for its administration, it was not until 1931 that Minister Hogan could say that he was 'satisfied that not too much timber was being cut at present.'<sup>965</sup> It effectively halted private wholesale wood clearance, but some woods continued to be destroyed as part of the Departmental wood clearance and a conifer replanting programme during this time.

### *Wood industry and timber supply*

The traditional wood industry and its companion issues of timber supply generated the second most frequently raised themes in Dáil debates during this period, particularly during the Forestry Bill debate in 1928. The future of this important rural sector in every county was reported to be in jeopardy through wood clearance, with the local sawmill, the local wood industry and the woodworking sector starved of local timber, and many going out of business. This theme includes the topics of timber supply, export and import, and wood fuel, shown in the figure below.

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<sup>963</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 832 (3 May 1928), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>964</sup> Forestry Act 1928, No. 34 of 1928, Stationary Office, Dublin.

<sup>965</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2376 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

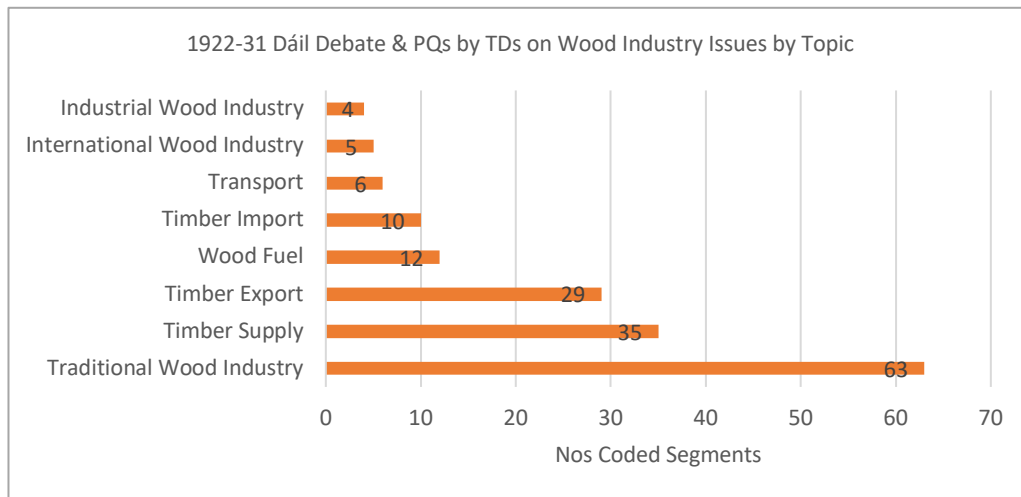


Figure 16: 1922-31 Dáil debates and PQs by TDs on wood industry issues

This figure shows that there was great interest in the Dáil in the topic of the traditional wood sector and its history, particularly its companion topic of the export of quantities of unprocessed tree trunks to England and Scotland. This was having a detrimental effect on the viability of the wood industry, according to the TDs, due to the loss of its timber supply.

Since the beginning of the century, it was generally believed that Ireland could grow enough non-native timber to replace much of the imported product, but the organisation of this primary industry by the state was neglected,<sup>966</sup> and the wood sector barely featured in the economic history of the period.<sup>967</sup> The accepted Departmental view after 1922 was that the purpose of state forestry was the supply of home timber needs to the extent that it was possible to grow the trees supplying the timber,<sup>968</sup> but there were no surveys to identify these needs. Minister Hogan also believed that there was enough hardwood in the country to meet requirements,<sup>969</sup> leaving the uncertainties of the market to private buyers and sellers. Forbes' few references to wood users refer only to the difficulties of matching timber supply to local needs, with limited species on land of poor quality, basing his perspective on non-native conifers, where the timber quality of the planting trials of firs, pines and other species was still unknown.<sup>970</sup> The

<sup>966</sup> J. Scott Kerr's article on Professor John Nisbett's view on Irish forestry, *Irish Times*, 11th June 1901.

<sup>967</sup> Andy Bielenberg and Raymond Ryan, *An economic history of Ireland since Independence* (London & New York, 2013).

<sup>968</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 125.

<sup>969</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1794-5 (26 June 1929), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>970</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', pp 23-4.



five nascent papermills of the 1920s employing 150 people were not mentioned in Dáil debates.<sup>971</sup>

From 1923, most of the standing timber woodland on estates purchased by the Department from the Land Commission had been picked over or clear-felled by saw millers. The remaining standing timber was gradually felled and sold locally by the Department,<sup>972</sup> and the land was then cleared and replanted, generally with conifers. The Departmental sawmill in Dundrum on the former Earl de Montalt estate, Co. Tipperary,<sup>973</sup> resumed operation in 1924, processing the remains of the woodland timber and clearings, as well as thinnings from the growing conifer state plantations.<sup>974</sup> The aims of the Department in clearing and felling trees, the final use of the timber, and the economics of state timber production were all queried by Wicklow TD Seamus Moore, who was concerned at the missed opportunity for state forest production to integrate with the wood industry. He observed that:

We will some time or other have to link up the question of afforestation with the saw-milling industry, and I think it is a great pity that the Minister did not see his way to do that in the present measure.<sup>975</sup>

But there was no response to his query. Neither was there information on the impact of the Department's sawmilling facilities near Dundrum and Portarlinton on the local wood industry.<sup>976</sup> In some localities, the traditional wood manufacturing in every small town was as important for employment as agriculture when taken from start to finish, according to TD John Lyons.<sup>977</sup> He reminded the Dáil of the purpose of planting native species of ash, elm, oak and beech to support the timber supply of many small local sawmills and traditional wood manufacturers.<sup>978</sup> He described the hardwood timber required to make traditional wooden objects for every farm and home, for handles, kitchen utensils, building timber, carts, farm timber. Lyons referred to the small manufacturing industries which used elm for coffins, oak for wheels, beech for

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<sup>971</sup> *Report on the paper and paperboard industry* (Committee on Industrial Organisation, 1964), p. 17.

<sup>972</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, p. 112.

<sup>973</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, xiii, (11 December 1925), Michael Heffernan.

<sup>974</sup> *Twenty Fourth General Report 1923-5*, p. 108.

<sup>975</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 869 (3 May 1928), Seamus Moore.

<sup>976</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2327-8 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>977</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2640 (4 December 1922); John Lyons, Labour TD, Longford/Westmeath.

<sup>978</sup> *Ibid.*

furniture, chestnut and lime timbers, deal (spruce) in building, even naturally regenerating elder for clog soles, all depending on local timber to supply these industries.<sup>979</sup> Wexford TD Dr James Ryan supported the state management of the local timber supply to prevent the closure of small manufacturers around the country, with the potential loss of skilled and semi-skilled jobs in carpentry and woodwork,<sup>980</sup> particularly in Dublin.<sup>981</sup> Waterford TD Sean Goulding<sup>982</sup> estimated that one hundred local men in his constituency had emigrated due to the closure of traditional wood manufacturers.<sup>983</sup> In 1928, the Waterford beech block industry making clog blocks for Lancashire closed due to the export of local round wood from the port, also with a loss of jobs.<sup>984</sup> Donegal TD Frank Carney<sup>985</sup> informed the Dáil that the woodturning industry of spools and bobbins for the English mills was also nearly gone.<sup>986</sup> By contrast, in Britain, the Forestry Commission's National Forest Policy objectives included 'Encouragement of forest industries,'<sup>987</sup> as well as the coordination and guidance on the commercial development of timber resources in Britain and throughout the Empire.<sup>988</sup>

Timber supply and the import and export of timber were interlinked issues of great importance to the sawmilling and woodworking industries, and concern was expressed about the export of raw unsawn timber or roundwood affecting the timber supply of the local timber merchants. This was a sector considered to be 'in extremis' by Frank Carney TD, who said that in his opinion, there was only an estimated ten to twenty years of timber supply left in the country.<sup>989</sup> As cleared estate woodlands were

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<sup>979</sup> Ibid.

<sup>980</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1464 (26 June 1928), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>981</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 854 (3 May 28); Bryan Ricco Cooper; xxiv, 499 (13 June 1928), Bernard Maguire ; xxiv, 1463,1476 (26 June 1928), Dr James Ryan; Gerald Boland.

<sup>982</sup> Sean Goulding, businessman with interest in local government, education and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>983</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxvi, 1463-4 (26 June 1928), Sean Goulding.

<sup>984</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 855, (3 May 1928), Sean Goulding; xxx, 1782 (26 June 1929), Frank Carney;

<sup>985</sup> Frank Carney, military career, fishery inspector and teacher, interested in fisheries, justice and pensions.

<sup>986</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1474,1475 (26 June 1928), Frank Carney; Gerald Boland.

<sup>987</sup> 'First Annual Report of the Forestry Commissioners, 1920', p. 15.

<sup>988</sup> 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference', p. 261.

<sup>989</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 869 (3 May 1928), Seamus Moore; xxx, 1791 (26 June 1929), Patrick Little. *Irish Times*, 1 May 1928.

rapidly exported as roundwood to Britain, he proposed that a prohibition of the export of unsawn timber would immediately stop the excessive felling of trees, except those for domestic use.<sup>990</sup> Proposals to control the export of raw timber were put to Minister Hogan by several TDs, with James Ryan noting that the control of exports by other countries was already in place.<sup>991</sup> He estimated timber exports as having a value of £215,000 which were generally sold as pitprops.<sup>992</sup> But there were also concerns expressed about the potential for a saw millers' monopoly of prices if timber exports were controlled.<sup>993</sup> The view of the other side of the timber trade was given by Dr James Ryan TD, who informed the Dáil that during the first eight years of the government, an estimated £1.5 million worth of timber for construction and manufacturing was imported. He remarked on the outsourcing of employment to other countries' manufacturing industries, instead of keeping the employment in Ireland.<sup>994</sup>

From 1922, the long-standing issue of poor quality home-grown Irish timber was raised in the Dáil in order to prompt Minister Hogan to introduce regulations for timber drying and preservation.<sup>995</sup> The effects of the absence of national standards on agricultural markets was evident in the example of Irish egg box production. Manufacturers had to source timber from abroad<sup>996</sup> because local saw millers could not provide suitably seasoned timber.<sup>997</sup> In an industry worth over £8 million in 1932,<sup>998</sup> the locally sourced timber caused many problems with eggs being rejected by wholesalers because of mould from damp wood in the box contaminating the eggs. Butter packers faced a similar problem and in 1931, two shiploads of timber landed in Cork with timber

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<sup>990</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1624 (27 June 1928), Frank Carney.

<sup>991</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, xxii, 824-5 (7 March 1928) Seamus Moore; xxiii, 2243 (3 May 1928), Seamus Moore; xxx, 1747-1749 (26 June 1928), Dr James Ryan; xxiv, 1618 (27 June 1928), Gerald Boland.

<sup>992</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1747, 1761 (26 June 1929), Dr James Ryan; Frank Fahy, Fianna Fáil and barrister.

<sup>993</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 2233, 2238, (30 May 1928), Maj. Bryan Ricco Cooper; George Wolfe.

<sup>994</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1745, 1747-8 (26 June 1929), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>995</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2641 (4 December 1922), John Lyons; xxx, 17677, 1756, 1772 (26 June 1929), Donal Buckley, Michael Heffernan, Denis Gorey; xxxviii, 2345 (3 June 1931), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>996</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, xx, 364-5 (5 July 1927), Thomas O'Connell; xxi, 369-70 (26 October 1927), Mathew Reilly; xxiv, 485 (13 June 1928), Mathew Reilly; xxxviii, 2363 (3 June 1931), Denis Allen.

<sup>997</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ xx, 364-5 (5 July 1927), Thomas O'Connell.

<sup>998</sup> Alisdair MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938* (Dublin, 1939).

for butter boxes.<sup>999</sup> Minister Hogan admitted that local saw millers did not have the facilities for seasoning wood but did not offer any proposals for action to ensure national standards, even for products being exported, seeing it as the responsibility of another Department.<sup>1000</sup> This was in contrast to the keen interest of the Department of Agriculture in the improvement of the standards of agricultural produce being exported to Britain.<sup>1001</sup>

But by 1928, Minister Hogan's lack of interest in the urgent concerns of the wood industry was evident during the Forestry Bill debate, when he dismissed them saying that they were a matter for the Minister of Industry and Commerce, despite the efforts of the wood industry representatives to meet Minister Hogan.<sup>1002</sup> He said: 'This is a Forestry Bill to promote the growth of timber. This is not a Bill to promote the manufacture of wooden articles. This would be entirely out of place in a Forestry Bill'.<sup>1003</sup> Despite active intervention in the agricultural markets by the Department of Agriculture and assistance to agricultural enterprises, Minister Hogan was adamant that such action in timber markets in the forestry sector was not his responsibility, saying that the Department is 'concerned with the economics of forestry as such, but they are not concerned—that is the business of other Departments—with the use made of the trees afterwards'.<sup>1004</sup> He was also very clear that he did not consider it the role of the Forestry Division to address the potential to improve prices and marketing through organisation of the native hardwood industry.<sup>1005</sup>

The lack of institutional awareness of the wood industry sector was highlighted by Kildare TD Donal Buckley, who called for support for traditional wood industries and the use of native timber at this time, and criticised the use of imported timber in the Dáil restaurant renovations by the Office of Public Works.<sup>1006</sup> TDs were also acutely aware

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<sup>999</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2363 (3 June 1931), Denis Allen.

<sup>1000</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 365 (5 July 1927), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1001</sup> O'Halpin, 'Politics and the State, 1922-32', p. 117.

<sup>1002</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 2242 (30 May 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1003</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1622 (27 June 28), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1004</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1005</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1795, Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1006</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1766 (26 June 1929), Donal Buckley, FF, retailer, last Governor General in Ireland.

of the local need for wood fuel,<sup>1007</sup> a product that was also under-valued by the Department. With no national policy for the local fuel wood production from clearings or thinnings from state forests, arrangements for wood for fuel were made on a wood-by-wood basis. In 1930, in response to a question from TD Seamus Moore about the fuel crisis in Wicklow, General Mulcahy, on behalf of Minister Hogan, was adamant that turf supplies were sufficient for national fuel needs.<sup>1008</sup>

### *Land-related issues*

The first step in re-forestation was the acquisition of land, whether wooded, unplanted or bare of trees, by lease or purchase, for planting trees. Land, its acquisition and its use was the third most frequently raised theme in Oireachtas debates on forestry during this period. For rural TDs, the topics of land management, drainage, reclamation and land acquisition for forestry were critical issues for their constituents, many of whom were participating in the land division schemes. Denis Gorey TD<sup>1009</sup> proposed that a separate Ministry be established to deal with these issues.<sup>1010</sup> As the initial focus of the Department was on the acquisition of land and the continuity of the DATI planting program,<sup>1011</sup> the question of obtaining suitable land and the planting choices for that land were two interlinked issues in forest-related debates in the Dáil, and the most frequent topic of parliamentary questions. With the added issue of inherited state-run welfare employment schemes such as those managed by the Congested Districts Board and the Board of Works, there was also an expectation of the creation of forestry development schemes to give employment to the rural labourers in every county, especially in the Western regions. Each year, TDs promoted local sites and areas in Cork, Laois, Kerry, Wexford, Connemara and Galway, Mayo, Wexford, Wicklow and Tipperary. The land issues theme and related topics are illustrated in the figure below.

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<sup>1007</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 850 (3 May 1928), Bernard Maguire, FF, Leitrim/Sligo, farmer, company director; xxx, 1782 (26 June 1929), Frank Carney; PQ, xxxvi, 325 (20 November 1930), Seamus Moore.

<sup>1008</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxvi, 329 (20 November 1930), General Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Local Government and Public Health.

<sup>1009</sup> Denis Gorey, Leader of the Farmers' Party, then CNG, Carlow/Kilkenny, interested in land issues, agriculture production, GAA.

<sup>1010</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, ii, no col (6 Dec. 1922), Denis Gorey. Nominations to Executive Council.

<sup>1011</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2643 (4 December 1922), Minister Patrick Hogan,

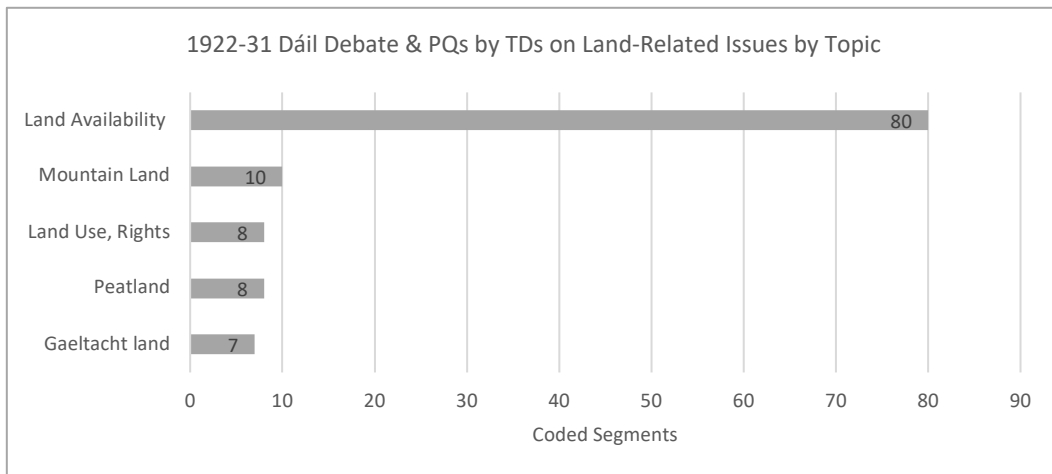


Figure 17: 1922-31 Dáil debates and PQs by TDs on land-related issues

This figure shows that the topic of land availability for state tree planting was most frequently raised in this theme, generally in reference to the location of state forestry tree planting, whether actual or potential. The topics of Gaeltacht land and peatland were usually related to the suitability of land for tree planting, and employment in the region.

As land purchases by the Department were increasingly limited to non-agricultural land over the decade, there was correspondingly increasing interest in the purchase of hill grazing land which offered more potential for forestry, according to the foresters. In order to assist the Department requirement for large plots of land for plantations, reference was made to the community effort of farmers, priests, local agencies and representatives to gather enough plots of hill and other low grade land to offer as a large land parcel to the Department. But Minister Hogan's response was not enthusiastic: 'We have been offered land in all parts of the country, but a very high proportion of the land offered is quite useless for forestry (conifer plantations), and a very high proportion of the useless land has been offered in small lots which are entirely uneconomic.'<sup>1012</sup>

The disagreement over the rejection of these land parcels by Department inspectors as unsuitable for planting was a contentious topic of debate in the Dáil during these years. With little public information available on the Department's acquisition plans for land purchase, the annual forestry debate in the Dáil became a question and answer session on particular estate acquisition or planting plans in certain areas of Ireland. As TDs being the only contact for public information on the

<sup>1012</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2369 (3 June 1931), Minister Patrick Hogan.

activities of the Department, frustration was expressed when there was little official response to local proposals or requests for information.<sup>1013</sup>

Accompanying this discourse, there were proposals made in the Dáil for large national afforestation schemes on the scale of the Shannon electrical scheme and funded by land bonds,<sup>1014</sup> on a million acres of mountain land.<sup>1015</sup> There were also great expectations for state planting of coastal areas, many inspired by the internationally renowned nineteenth century French Landes afforestation scheme on impoverished former marsh land in South West France.<sup>1016</sup> As well as planting thousands of acres of native pines, the French government encouraged pine wood industries of turpentine and resin production, and the resettlement of local communities. This successful scheme had also been used as an example of effective state afforestation by many promoters of state forestry in the British Isles, including Lord Lovat, founder and Chairman of the British Forestry Commission in 1920.<sup>1017</sup> Another proposal was from Cavan TD Patrick Baxter, who offered to gather information on tree planting on the Western seaboard.<sup>1018</sup> But Gaeltacht or coastal schemes were not on the Minister's agenda when he affirmed that the idea of planting seaside land in Connemara was 'out of the question,'<sup>1019</sup> possibly reflecting Forbes' view on Connemara peatland planting from Knockboy trials. The large scale afforestation projects were also rejected by Carlow-Kilkenny TD Denis Gorey who was concerned that: 'people would have to emigrate to make room for forests.'<sup>1020</sup>

During the 1920s, land use conflicts grew as state forestry expanded onto hill and mountain land that had been formerly used for grazing stock or cutting turf. Fianna Fáil's political agenda at the inaugural meeting of April 1926 restated the goal of the Sinn Féin movement and the first Dáil 'to establish as many families as practicable on

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<sup>1013</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2331 (3 June 1931), Timothy Murphy.

<sup>1014</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1299 (18 June 1925), William Sears.

<sup>1015</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1793 (26 June 1929), Michael Kilroy.

<sup>1016</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2643 (4 December 1922), Vincent White; xii, 1302 (18 June 1925) Joseph McBride Patrick Baxter, William Sears, John Conlan; xvi, 67 (1 June 1926), William Sears. The Landes area, South of Bordeaux was a sand and marshy area successfully planted with maritime pines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which had 500 sawmills by the 1920s; xxxviii, 2353, 2356, 2364 (3 June 1931), Sean Goulding, Michael Kilroy, Denis Allen,

<sup>1017</sup> Lovat, 'Proceedings of the First British Empire Forestry Conference'. Simon Fraser, 14th Lord Lovat, Scottish landowner, Chairman of the Forestry Commission from 1919 to 1927.

<sup>1018</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1278-9 (18 June 1925), Patrick Baxter.

<sup>1019</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1793 (26 June 1929), Minister Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1020</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1769 (26 June 1929), Denis Gorey.

the land as possible'.<sup>1021</sup> Cumann na nGaedhael land policy also increased the numbers of homesteads on barely productive land, land which had also been identified by the Forestry Service as wasteland suitable for planting conifers. This exacerbated conflicts with farmers who were the new owners of the land, most of whom were mortgage payers, with rights for seasonal grazing for their stock. For many small holders, communal hill land was not considered waste, as it was used in a traditional cycle of seasonal grazing for grazing cattle and sheep. Minister Hogan noted this contest for hill and mountain land where the traditional farming system made the smallholder of five or six acres in the valley 'well off' because of their ownership of grazing rights held on common land on the hill. Afforestation schemes on these common lands, in his opinion, would have created opposition and would have been 'unsound'.<sup>1022</sup> He confirmed that he would not use compulsory powers on mountain land as a general policy, due to the cost of planting where 'opposition would have been intense'.<sup>1023</sup> But as some of the mountain land had already been acquired by the CDB and the Land Commission, possibly 20-30,000 acres in Western counties, according to Joseph McBride TD,<sup>1024</sup> it was considered to be available for tree planting by the Department. Minister Hogan referred to the challenges of acquiring land at the lowest price allowed by the Land Commission to exclude agricultural use, the extra cost of planting in the Congested Districts Areas and the continual dilemma of purchasing low quality land that was needed to improve the lot of 'hundreds and thousands of congests'.<sup>1025</sup> This was a term used for former tenants on small holdings and farm labourers by the previous administration. Despite Minister Hogan's caution, the perceived solution to the challenges of land purchase for state forestry was an increase in Ministerial powers for the compulsory purchase of land similar to those of the Land Commission in the Forestry Bill of 1928.

Some of the complexities of acquiring state land for planting conifer trees on mountain summer grazing land can be illustrated by the Forth mountain planting proposal in South Wexford, which seemingly had the support of local communities, the church and public agencies. From 1927, this was raised every year in the Dáil by

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<sup>1021</sup> Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48', p. 187., and footnote 61.

<sup>1022</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 68 (1 June 1926), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1023</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, *ibid*; liii, 2366 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1024</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1294 (18 June 1925), Joseph McBride.

<sup>1025</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 2366 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.



Wexford TDs,<sup>1026</sup> with only one TD expressing a query about commonage rights, reflecting the interest of the establishment in local afforestation.<sup>1027</sup> The rambling story about Forth Mountain, which could be repeated in every large scale hill and mountain afforestation project, was told in 1931 by Dr James Ryan, TD for Wexford:

The people who owned the mountain and who had an interest in the mountain had to be bought out, and we were told that the recent Forestry Act had to be passed before that could be done. The Act has gone through, and we thought that the next step to be taken would be to have the people bought out and compensated. They were willing to be bought out and compensated, thinking that if they could get work through the Forestry Department they would be better off than they are at present, in the position of struggling small farmers, but it does not appear that much has been done. We were told again that the Forestry Department could do nothing until the Land Commission moved and that the Land Commission would have to take over the land and hand it over to the Forestry Department. So that every year we find we are getting further away, and that new difficulties arose and new barriers stood in the way.<sup>1028</sup>

However, Minister Hogan's explanation for the delays in taking over Forth mountain was that they were due to the number of objectors who claimed rights to grazing and turf,<sup>1029</sup> adding that the numbers increased fourfold after the passage of the Forestry Act.<sup>1030</sup> This increase in objectors could also have occurred after the Act required the Department to publish a notice of their intent of purchase in the local papers, to inform local owners of land use rights in the area in question.<sup>1031</sup> Minister Hogan doubted the value of the grazing and was confident that the rights claimed could be disposed of when the case came before the Land Commission, and the land could be planted in the next planting season. He assured the Dáil that compulsory purchase powers would only be used where there was no real hardship. In 1930 he applied compulsory powers to the acquisition of land on Forth mountain, informing the Dáil that: 'it has been found to be impossible to come to an agreement with anybody'.<sup>1032</sup> In defence of the use of state power to compel landowners to sell land,

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<sup>1026</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, xxi, 176 (19 October 1927), Richard Corish; xxx, 1749 (26 June 1929), James Ryan; ); xxxvi, 570 (27 November 1930), Richard Corish; xxxiii, 2346 (3 June 1931), James Ryan; *Irish Times*, 23 February 1926.

<sup>1027</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2362 (3 June 1931), Denis Allen.

<sup>1028</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2346 (3 June 1931), James Ryan.

<sup>1029</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2367 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1030</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1800 (26 June 1929), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1031</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2367 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1032</sup> *Ibid.*

he said: 'I do not think that any interest is sufficiently organized to object to the acquisition'.<sup>1033</sup>

In some rural constituencies where there was the possibility of the afforestation of potentially arable land and change of land use, there were strong objections from the local community. Where afforestation was to proceed on contested arable land, Galway TD Mark Killilea<sup>1034</sup> informed Minister Hogan that: 'When you are finished planting it, you will find all the plants will be taken up'.<sup>1035</sup>

Planting trees on the mostly peat, heath and hill land in the new Gaeltacht region made up out of former Congested Districts Board areas, had become a constant issue for TDs from Western counties. These lands were not considered suitable for conifer tree planting by the Department due to the quality of the soil which was often very poor.<sup>1036</sup> But many TDs referred to former or existing woods in these areas and promoted the potential of tree planting in the many sheltered areas of the region, challenging the fixed Departmental attitude against it. TDs from the Western counties referred to the presence of abundant tree cover in sheltered areas and on estates in Connemara,<sup>1037</sup> and other Western counties. Some TDs cited the presence of preserved pine in the bog as evidence of the legacy of trees and the possibility of trees growing there in the future.<sup>1038</sup> Bernard Maguire cited planting success on Leitrim bogland where gravel was added to the peat, which had produced useful timber.<sup>1039</sup> But despite evidence offered by Maguire, such an event was contradicted by Minister Hogan as highly unlikely. He repeated the Departmental belief that conifers would not grow in peatland, a belief perpetuated by Forbes from the ghost of the 1880s state

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<sup>1033</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1034</sup> Mark Killilea, FF, Galway, active nationalist, farmer, shopkeeper, interested in land issues, relief schemes, rural issues, transport.

<sup>1035</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., xxi, 1375 (16 November 1927), Mark Killilea on lands in Aughrane, Ballygar.

<sup>1036</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2338 (3 June 1931), George Wolfe, CnG, Kildare and farmer.

<sup>1037</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1300 (18 June 1925), William Sears referred to the well wooded estate of the Marquise of Sligo at Cong; Kylemore Abbey was a wooded estate in a treeless part of Connemara, built by Mitchell Henry MP, Home Ruler in the 1850s. It was an estate of 15,000 acres with 125 tenants who had been devastated after famine and cholera. It employed 300 people. It was sold in 1903, bought by the Duke of Manchester and sold to Benedictines in 1920.

<sup>1038</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1300 (18 June 1925), William Sears, CnG, Mayo South, Newspaper proprietor and barrister; xxx, 1760, 1780-1, (26 June 1929) Frank Fahy; Frank Carney.

<sup>1039</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2370 (3 June 1931), Bernard Maguire; Patrick Hogan.

trials in Knockboy, Carna, Connemara.<sup>1040</sup> Other reasons for not acquiring land in the Western counties was the large budget that would be needed to prepare the land, the scale of planting needed on mountain land and the knotty issue of land use for grazing.<sup>1041</sup>

After the Forestry Bill was passed in 1928, the land-related questions increased in Dáil debates during the discussion of the Gaeltacht Commission Report which was published in 1931 recommending tree planting by the state in these regions.<sup>1042</sup> Meanwhile, Western TDs from Mayo and Kerry reminded Minister Hogan of the absence of any state planting in their counties.<sup>1043</sup> He maintained that it was a political issue and referred to the poor but usable agricultural quality land that was needed by hundreds and hundreds of former tenants, whether upland or lowland, who needed the land more than the trees.<sup>1044</sup>

In 1931, Minister Hogan did announce a research budget of £500 to fund a ten-year research program into conifer tree planting on peatlands, reflecting a lack of interest within the Department in any alternative tree species for peatland planting.<sup>1045</sup> Peatland conifer planting was one of the first research subjects to be addressed by the British Forestry Commission in 1922, with reports from North America and Norway peatlands.<sup>1046</sup>

### *Tree planting and species selection*

The planting of trees and the tree species to be planted were topics that were continually raised in Oireachtas debates, as this was a decision which would determine the type of forest and its use in the future. In addition, TDs continually urged the state to require the mandatory planting of trees after felling,<sup>1047</sup> and referred to tree

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<sup>1040</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 68 (26 June 1929), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1041</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 68 (1 June 1926), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1042</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2335 (3 June 1931), Archie Cassidy, Donegal, Labour.

<sup>1043</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, xxvii, (21 November 1928), James Crowley, CnG, Kerry, former Sinn Féin MP, veterinary surgeon; xxxviii, 2355 (3 June 1931), Michael Clery, FF, North Mayo, teacher, solicitor.

<sup>1044</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2366 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1045</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2328 (3 June 1931), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1046</sup> Anon, 'Peat Research', in *Journal of the Forestry Commission*, i (1922), pp 22-5.

<sup>1047</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ, i, 2547 (1 Dec 1922), Domhnall O'Mochain.

replanting regimes in continental countries;<sup>1048</sup> Waterford TD Patrick Kenny proposed that replanting be controlled by the army.<sup>1049</sup> The Forestry Bill of 1928 did require mandatory replanting at the discretion of the Department, where woods of a scenic or strategic aspect for landscape were felled. Minister Hogan was reluctant to make a replanting rule for every tree felled, noting the difficulties of quality control and ensuring the aftercare for those trees planted.<sup>1050</sup> Exemptions to replanting requirements were requested by farmers<sup>1051</sup> but only the needs of wood or plantation owners were taken into account whereby licences could be issued for the management of woods or working forests.<sup>1052</sup>

The companion issue in replanting debates was the perennial discourse on the most suitable tree species to plant in state forests, whether hardwood, for example: ash, oak and beech or elm, or softwood conifers, or a mix of the two. The annual report on the Departmental selection of tree species being planted did not refer to their potential timber use but rather their fast-growing properties on poor quality agricultural land, which included species such as Douglas fir, Scots pine, larch and spruce,<sup>1053</sup> an approach supported by some TDs.<sup>1054</sup> It is possible that the inheritance from the previous administration of the expectation that conifer trees could supply the British pitwood market contributed to the lack of interest in market research.<sup>1055</sup>

The Department view on planting woods was based on the belief that after a wood has been picked over for timber, where trees are not replanted, the wood was effectively destroyed and thus regarded as 'waste' land which has to be cleared and replanted with conifers. Donegal TD John Lyons also saw a cutover wood as 'waste' but with a different response to its restoration. He said that:

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<sup>1048</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, x, 790 (3 July 1928), Patrick Kenny; xxiii, 865 (3 May 1928), James Fitzgerald Kennedy.

<sup>1049</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, ii, 25 (10 Oct 1928), Patrick Kenny.

<sup>1050</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxiii, 884 (3 May 1928), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1051</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, ii, 850 (10 Oct 1923), Patrick Kenny; viii, 1017 (10 July 1924), Michael Heffernan.

<sup>1052</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 852-3 (3 May 1928), Bryan Ricco Cooper.

<sup>1053</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xvi, 58 (1 June 1926), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1054</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1019 (10 July 1924) Conor Hogan, Clare, Farmers Party.

<sup>1055</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 855 (18 June 1925), Bryan Ricco Cooper; xxx, 1744 (26 June 1929), Dr James Ryan.

I find that saw mill owners in Ireland when they buy a portion of a wood and fell the timber do not plant one single tree. The land where these trees grow is then waste. It is fit for nothing but for re-afforestation.<sup>1056</sup>

Although natural forestry and the self-regeneration of woodlands was promoted by several TDs,<sup>1057</sup> most of the natural wooded land received by the state was cleared for replanting with conifers. TDs tended to be more interested in the future uses of a natural wood and its amenity value, and the longer term view of planting was expressed by Donegal TD Frank Carney who was concerned about the importance of planting trees for the next generation, citing the many uses of hardwood timber, despite the problems in selling a tree.<sup>1058</sup>

From 1922, the traditional wood industry was represented in the Dáil in search of state support for the production of local hardwood, which was an ever-dwindling resource of variable quality,<sup>1059</sup> even though there had been continuous vague Departmental references to the supply of home timber needs without specifying the particulars. Sligo TD Bryan Ricco Cooper, estate and sawmill owner, informed the Dáil on the need to replace imported construction timber with home-grown hardwood trees rather than limit planting to early maturing varieties, such as conifers. TD Denis Gorey referred to the need for softwood roofing and flooring timber, supplied by import markets at the time.<sup>1060</sup> By the mid-1920s, the traditional timber industry began to realise that their needs might not be supplied by the state planting program, with several TDs continually reminding Minister Hogan about the importance of hardwood planting and the local woodworking crafts and industries that depended on their timbers, as well as providing wood for fuel.<sup>1061</sup> Referring to both hard and softwood timber, Mayo TD Michael Kilroy observed that 'there are very few products that from the beginning to the finished article would give more employment than the production of timber'.<sup>1062</sup>

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<sup>1056</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2642 (4 December 1922), John Lyons.

<sup>1057</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 1762 (26 June 1928), Mathew Reilly; xxiii, 863 (3 May 1928), James Fitzgerald Kenney; xxx, 17762-3 (26 June 1929), Mathew Reilly; Frank Carney.

<sup>1058</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1777-8 (26 June 1929), Frank Carney.

<sup>1059</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, i, 2640-1 (4 December 1922), John Lyons.

<sup>1060</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1772 (26 June 1929), Denis Gorey.

<sup>1061</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 177-8 (26 June 1929), Frank Carney; xxxviii, 2342-3 (3 June 1931), Dr James Ryan.

<sup>1062</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 238 (3 June 1931), Michael Kilroy.

Minister Hogan did not address the concerns of the industry and informed the Dáil that the very small amounts of ash and beech that were being planted on better land was due to the low price offered for the timber.<sup>1063</sup> He did not refer to the potential for planting native species that would grow in sheltered areas of poor land, ignoring information on the success of such trees from TDs.<sup>1064</sup>

### *Public Forestry and Forestry Effects*

The scenic and aesthetic aspects of tree planting and woodlands of concern to TDs, particularly the loss of the place of the wood in the landscape, the impact of this on rainfall in the local area and its associated topic, the visual effects of deforestation on landscape, rivers and climate.<sup>1065</sup> Waterford TD Sean Goulding referred to the loss to the scenic appearance of the country and denudation of the countryside, caused by the deforestation of a former wooded area that he considered to be one of the most beautiful areas of Ireland.<sup>1066</sup> He called for state planting policy not to be based on economic policy alone.<sup>1067</sup> The topics addressed in this theme are summarised in the figure below.

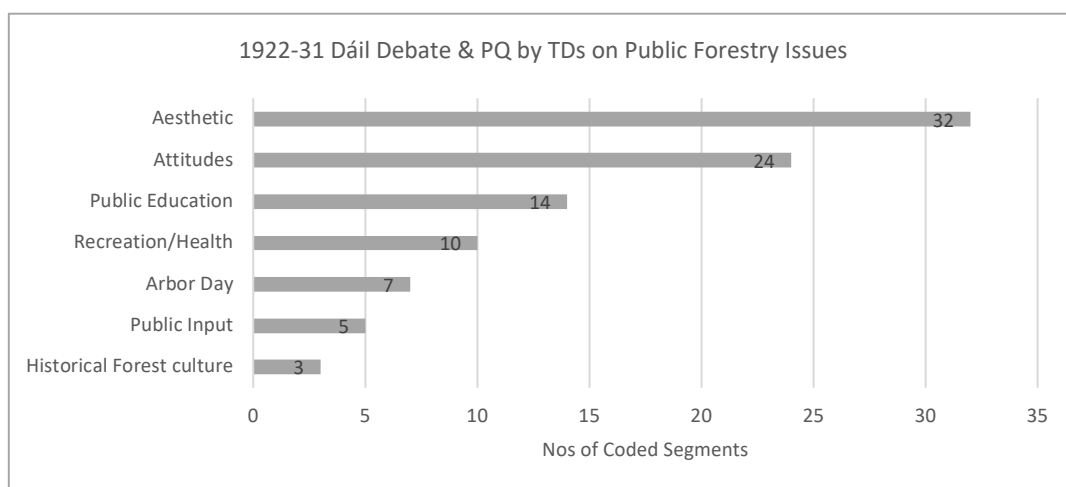


Figure 18: 1922 -31 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on public forestry issues.

<sup>1063</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1794-5 (26 June 1929), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1064</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1777-81 (26 June 1929), Frank Carney.

<sup>1065</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, S, no col. (17 August 1921), Art O'Connor; viii, (10 July 1924), Peadar Doyle, Richard Corish, Thomas Johnson, Michael Heffernan; xxx, 1745, 1750, 1775, 1786, 1790, (26 June 1929), Frank Carney; James Ryan, John Daly, George Wolfe, Thomas O'Reilly, Patrick Little; 2343, xxxviii, (3 June 1930), James Ryan.

<sup>1066</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 855 (3 May 1928), Sean Goulding.

<sup>1067</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2345 (3 June 1931), Dr James Ryan.

This figure shows the interest in the place of trees, woods and forests in the landscape, as a beautiful part of the countryside. Attitudes includes references to the participants' beliefs about forestry such as landowners views on farmers and trees,<sup>1068</sup> Minister Hogan's view of the value of woods,<sup>1069</sup> or of public ignorance regarding trees and forestry.<sup>1070</sup>

In contrast to the widespread belief in the negative attitudes towards trees attributed to farmers, Meath farmer TD Mathew O'Reilly<sup>1071</sup> spoke about the appreciation of trees and nature by farmers, during the Forestry Bill debate in 1928:

This Bill assumes that farmers have not cultivated a taste for landscape; that they have no taste for ornamentation and are materialistic purely and simply... farmers are in constant touch with nature. They are constantly in communion with Nature... and they would beautify the landscape and ornament the country.<sup>1072</sup>

This was also seen in the remarks of Leitrim-Sligo TD Patrick Reynolds, who noted that farmers appreciated their trees, whether for fuel or timber, and thus were generally careful of them.<sup>1073</sup> Patrick Baxter referred to the importance of education in woodwork for the farmer working with timber.<sup>1074</sup> However, farmers' appreciation of nature had few champions in state forestry.

Since 1922, Minister Hogan's view on the improvement of scenery, amenities and tourism, even with the associated small increase in employment, had been that these issues were not important in the state forestry development plan for the production of timber. He stated that these aspects of forestry were 'a luxury item compared to other urgent needs'.<sup>1075</sup> At one of the first CAP Committee meetings, F.J. Meyrick, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture<sup>1076</sup> informed the members that:

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<sup>1068</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, viii, 1007 (10 July 1924), Bryan Cooper.

<sup>1069</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1800 (26 June 1929), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1070</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2360 (3 June 1931), Frank Aiken.

<sup>1071</sup> Mathew Reilly, FF, Meath, farmer, interested in land issues, tobacco growing, agricultural education.

<sup>1072</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiv, 486 (13 June 1928), Mathew O'Reilly.

<sup>1073</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 850 (3 May 1928), Bernard Maguire. Patrick Reynolds, CnG, Leitrim/Sligo was a merchant, farmer, formerly a teacher, local government and the Land Commission. He was later murdered in Leitrim during the election of 1932.

<sup>1074</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xii, 1297-8 (18 June 1925), Patrick Baxter, Farmers Party, Cavan.

<sup>1075</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1799-80 (29 November 1928); xxx (26 June 1929), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1076</sup> F.J. Meyrick Scottish Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, 1925-33.

‘Timber for scenery was not part of the state government program which is to produce timber at a profit in about 60 to 100 years’.<sup>1077</sup> Minister Hogan stressed that the use of cleared native woodland, considered as ‘scrub land,’ or planting land in Connemara, or on seaside land, to improve the amenity was not a job for the Department.<sup>1078</sup> In comparison, the Northern Ireland Forestry Division had broader interests in amenity forestry which was specifically developed with the help of unemployment schemes.<sup>1079</sup>

The wider impacts and effects of woods and forestry on climate and on flooding, as well as the effect of deforestation on the landscape, were also raised during the annual forestry debate. Senator George Sigerson referred to planting trees for their many benefits, for fruits and nuts for birds as well as humans, for their sap, charcoal and other by products, and the great amount of employment from these activities and industries.<sup>1080</sup> He also reminded the Seanad of the legacy of the ‘island of woods’.

The topics in this theme of forestry effects are summarised in the figure below.

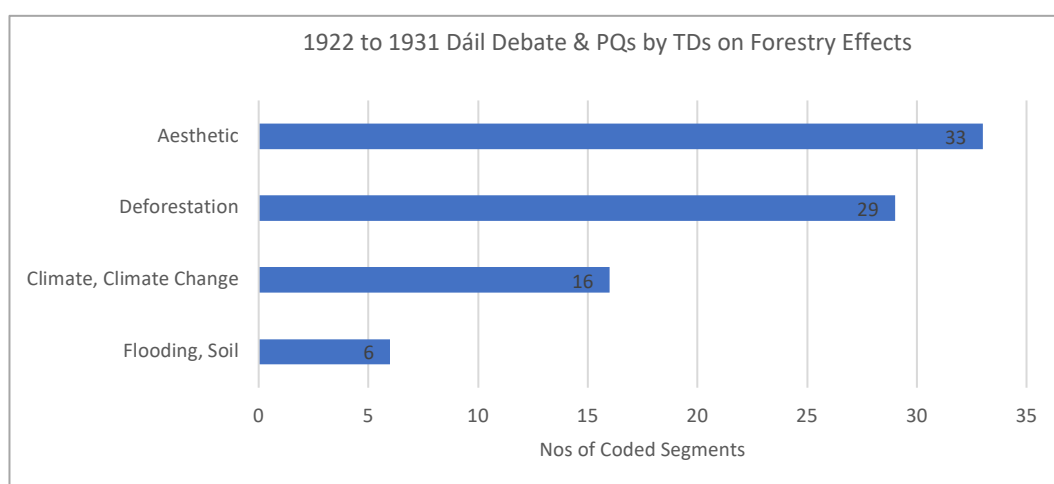


Figure 19: 1922-31 Dáil debates and PQs on forestry effects

This figure shows the level of interest evident in Dáil debates on the topic of scenery and the aesthetic aspect of trees, woods and forests, and the topic of deforestation, the ‘denuding’ and ‘devastation’ of the countryside and the landscape. It also shows an awareness of the impact on the local climate, soil erosion and the potential for flooding when woods are removed.

<sup>1077</sup> Report of the CPA AA, 371-2. (1931-32).

<sup>1078</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 903 (11 June 1930), Patrick Hogan.

<sup>1079</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 341-3.

<sup>1080</sup> Seanad deb., iii, 941-2 (24 July 1924), George Sigerson. Born in Tyrone, Sigerson was a physician and professor of biology in UCD, a journalist, poet and author. He was an active nationalist.



## *Employment*

The employment of the unemployed agricultural labourer in private planting schemes was one of the first questions posed in the Dáil in 1922 and a theme which was raised in many debates and questions over the decade.<sup>1081</sup> The state conifer tree planting program was increasingly seen as a factor in reducing the high numbers of people who had no other choice but to emigrate to find work, and over half the state forestry budget was spent on labour.<sup>1082</sup> Many of the contributions on forest-related issues in the Dáil related to the promotion of an area of land to be planted by the state for its potential employment in the planting schemes.<sup>1083</sup> The agricultural labourer was the workforce for state planting schemes, whose skill in forestry was not appreciated by the Department until much later in the century. State forestry schemes also had potential to increase the rural wood industry employment, and TD Michael Kilroy reminded Minister Hogan of the benefits of an integrated wood sector on local employment from timber to finished article.<sup>1084</sup> By 1931, the effects of almost a decade of state forestry schemes were being seen in state forestry centres where TD John Daly expressed his gratitude for the employment in his district.<sup>1085</sup>

## IV: Findings and discussion

This study of forest-related discourse in parliamentary debates and expert publications shows that even in the midst of extreme civil disorder, there was remarkable stability at the heart of the novice representative government of the Irish Free State. The findings show the galvanizing effect of the inherited legacy of wood clearance on remedial action by the state, which was limited to expanding the existing DATI program of non-native conifer plantation development. The keen involvement amongst participants in parliamentary forest-related debate demonstrated a range of interests and understanding of trees, woods, forests and their uses, and an expectation

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<sup>1081</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., i, 2049 (15 November 1922), Thomas Johnson.

<sup>1082</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1767 (26 June 1929), Donal Buckley.

<sup>1083</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2342 (3 June 1931), James Ryan.

<sup>1084</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 2358 (3 June 1931), Michael Kilroy.

<sup>1085</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxv, 902 (11 June 1930), John Daly.

for legislation on national forestry policy. Although the Oireachtas was the only public forum for debate on state forestry after the Advisory Council was disbanded, it is clear that it did not replace Forbes' former relationship with the Irish Forestry Society and the Advisory Council for discourse and debate on forest-related matters. An Advisory group could have been restructured around the County Council Agriculture Committees but this was not evident in the material available.

In the context of the institutional perspectives discussed in part one, what was remarkable in the findings of this study was the absence of any change of Ministerial views over the period, from the initial endorsement of the inherited the British administration land acquisition program, to the continued expansion of the experimental DATI conifer tree planting program of Forbes. This was a reflection of the minimalist relationship between Minister Hogan and parliamentarians, seen in his disregard for the continual parliamentary expectation of discourse on the national forestry policy for the re-forestation of Ireland that had been initiated in the Provisional government. His dismissal of one of their leading priorities represented by Arbor Day as 'propaganda' without engaging with its vision for reconnection with national arboreal heritage, was possibly due to its association with the protagonists of the civil war, and the deep divisions in rural communities around land and its management. It is also clear that his attention was taken up with the critical events of post war civil breakdown and the passage of the Land Acts . His success in passing the 1928 Forestry Bill to control tree felling at this time, was an achievement for the British Isles. Minister Hogan's intransigent stance began to change towards the end of the decade, when he allowed his appreciation for old woods to emerge in Dáil debate, expressing his hope that the Forestry Department would look after them. Meanwhile, it is clear there was a growing assumption that these trials had become the state forestry development program.

The findings show the extent of the Minister's dependency on his experts, particularly Forbes, given the experimental nature of the inherited tree planting program, although it was the 'great speculation' with an unknown impact or outcome, without a national forestry policy to guide it. This dependency could have been a reflection of Cosgrave's' view of the value of the civil servant's expert contribution compared to that from parliament. But it is arguably a symptom of the perceived need of a post-colonial nation to retain the technical expertise of the previous administration. With confusion evident over the institutional role of formulating state forestry policy, or even the review of the existing program, there was no opportunity for scrutiny of the real cost or its implications. The uncertainties of state forestry objectives became

clearer as the decade progressed, although these objectives were initially justified as planting for economic or commercial reasons for the supply of home-grown timber or for export. These objectives were eventually conceded as experimental, leading to the observation that the state was planting for planting sake.

Without an agreed system of national review of the state planting programme, based on a national policy, (despite Forbes' initial recommendation), it was evident that Forbes was developing his large-scale conifer tree planting programme on all habitats available for planting, including woodland as well as treeless land. Forbes was not required to consider the broader aspects of state forestry development in woodland regeneration, hardwood timber industry support, public education and involvement, nor the reconnection with arboreal heritage. His particular interest in contributing to scientific knowledge of conifer forestry, exemplified by the work of the Imperial Forestry Institute and Conference, furthered the charge of 'planting for planting sake'.

Forbes' assumptions about the superiority of conifer tree planting over any other type of forestry, on any type of habitat, particularly degraded hill was instilled in his training program for future foresters, evident in the absence of any alternative approach in the training or nursery production. His views on the difficulties of planting conifers on peatlands that were formed after the Knockboy trials became the fixed institutional view, with the added assumption that planting peatlands with non-timber native trees was outside the perceived purview of the Forestry Division. Without effective challenge, Forbes' views on public negativity towards forestry, on the valueless nature of regenerated woods and their timber, on the worthlessness of local knowledge or untrained experience, all became fixed institutional beliefs intrinsically linked to state forestry, which were carried on into the twentieth century.

However, the findings also illustrate the unrecorded keen interest in different approaches to state forestry in the Oireachtas debates. The universal acknowledgement of the profound effect of deforestation on the landscape, on timber supply, on the speaker's sense of personal loss in relation to a wood in question, framed the debates. Although it is clear that there was the potential for superficiality, the parliamentarians' contributions show a constructive effort to contribute to the development of state forestry policy and programmes, from across the different sectors of society represented. It can be seen that parliamentarians were also the intermediary between a sometimes autocratic Department and the public. The study showed that their role as conduits of information for their constituents, and as promoters of localities, as well as their considerable expertise in the growing of trees, the wood industry and its people, including the native woodland and its heritage, was ignored by

Minister Hogan, possibly influenced by Forbes' disregard of all opinions on forestry unless professionally trained in Britain. The parliamentarian's interest in reinstatement of the re-afforestation vision of the Provisional Dáil represented by Arbor Day evidently waned over the period with no response from Minister Hogan, and was gradually replaced by a keen competition for state conifer forestry schemes in representatives constituencies.

The potential of the regenerated mixed wood was always in the background of the issues raised in debate, particularly its relationship to the future of the traditional wood industry. It was made very clear in debate that the decimation of estate woods and the export of raw timber was having a critical effect on the traditional small wood industries based on estate timber, as well as larger wood industries, putting local employment at risk. But the Minister did not address the questions of timber supply or employment across the forest and wood industries except to say that it was not his responsibility. The disconnection created at this time between types of forestry suitable for state support and their associated industries was not recognised then, nor since. The traditional wood sector has also largely been neglected in industrial history of Ireland for this period. It is arguable that the forest administrators directing the forestry program were not trained in wood industry management, believing that it could be left to private interests. However, in contrast, the agricultural sector in Ireland was already closely interlinked to the Department of Agriculture, through investment in the agricultural industrial sector and its organisation. Despite representation in the Oireachtas, the wood industry was left to fend for itself without state support, its woods and their timber supply seen by Minister Hogan as a 'luxury'. Thus a vital opportunity to modernise and revitalise the traditional wood industry for the supply of raw material for both public and private wood industries was missed, despite the best efforts of parliamentarians.

The predominance of the theme of land acquisition and tree planting reflected the exclusive focus of the Department on this issue. The findings highlighted some of the complexities and conflicts around Forestry Division land purchase and use which was a topic that dominated discourse during the 1920s due to the limited but locally significant local employment in the context of extreme rural poverty and emigration. Some conflicts evidently arose out of different perceptions on the objectives of state forestry, which would have required a clear national forestry policy to set and fund other priorities. It is also evident that the complexities of land acquisition occupied so much of staff time that other aspects of state forestry management, such as land surveys and education were neglected.

The findings identified some Dáil debate participants' perceptions of local hostility towards trees where there was competition for land use, or as an aspect of a legacy issue of landlord and tenant. What was more evident was the perceived need for public education by parliamentarians to bring back the love for the trees, to reduce vandalism, to reintroduce the value and benefits of trees and tree planting, and to educate the workers in forests, and in the wood industries. The minimal public forestry education program which was dedicated to the conifer plantation approach, was indicative of the already exclusive Departmental approach to state forestry.

It is possible that uncertainties over woodland management and the public contributed to the lack of interest by most county councils in retaining the DATI woodland preservation and development scheme after 1922. It is more likely that with critical local demands for services and assistance at this time, county councils were reluctant to fund woodland schemes without state financial assistance, where only advice on plantation establishment was available. However, the continued success of the county council shelter belt scheme under Forbes' direction reintroduced the tree to the farmer, but at the expense of the native species, where many inappropriate non-native conifer trees were recommended by the county horticultural inspectors in locations where native trees (timber or non-timber) might have been more suitable.

Thus the findings show that within a forestry administration insulated from parliament's expectations for a national re-forestation forestry policy by an absent, preoccupied Minister, Forbes' experimental conifer plantation approach to forestry became the default state forestry program, representing the entire Irish national investment in forestry for the Cumann na nGaedhael government. Minister Hogan's intransigence, the inexperience of the representatives and the passionate belief of the professional foresters in the potential of monoculture exotic conifer plantations, meant that this narrowly focused forestry approach went unchallenged on behalf of the needs of the new state during this decade. Thus the opportunity for the development of an integrated state forest policy that included the restoration of regenerated woodland, its multifunctional uses, and community involvement with local wood industries was constrained. What is also clear is the consequence of the lack of political support for Forbes' initial recommendations for a Forest Authority and a forestry policy, which left him free to expand his experimental planting program without an inbuilt mechanism for annual public review.

Forbes' successful achievement in establishing the state conifer tree planting program did reignite the awareness of arboreal environments in areas where none had existed for long periods both for their production of timber, and their capacity for short-

term employment. It was evident that the triumphs of surmounting the challenges of planting in heath land and cleared woodland in harsh conditions were a matter of pride for foresters, local workmen and their parliamentarians. These successes contributed to the unexamined institutional assumptions formed at this time on the superiority of exotic conifers and the plantation approach to forestry, and its associated belief in the inferiority of native woodland and its products, including the acceptance of their replacement by plantations. These assumptions were to be carried over as core tenets of state forestry for the next decade.

It is possible to conclude that this demonstrated a state forestry administration that enthusiastically embraced the vision of softwood timber production using the scientific forestry approach of the former British administration, characterised by its dependency on technical expertise, its coercive aspects, and its exclusion of the public.

By the end of 1931, the most important environmental issue of tree felling was finally being addressed, and the question of tree planting was also becoming less contentious. It was evident that the long debate on which species to plant for local industries had begun to subside in favour of parliamentary pleading for state forest investment in every county. Thus without sufficient challenge, with 'mistakes cleared away and funded by an inarticulate taxpayer', the state forestry experiment of small and large-scale conifer plantations expanded into uncharted territory.

## Chapter Six: Opportunities: State forestry 1932 to 1939

This chapter reviews the results of the second study of the discourse analysis of Oireachtas debates and expert publications on state forest-related issues, during the Fianna Fáil government from 1932 to 1939. Part One addresses government administration and forestry and its legacy, and the perceptions of the leading participants. Part Two considers the contributions of expert members of the public to forestry, and Part Three addresses the parliament and forestry, the participants and issues of interest in Dáil contributions on forest-related debates.

The aftershocks of international economic crises, added to the national trade war with Britain impoverished rural Ireland, where economic survival competed with the re-emergence of civil war harassment and violence for political prominence. Under these unlikely circumstances, state forestry began to expand during this period of de Valera's Fianna Fáil government from 1932 to 1939. This expansion continued despite the political and administrative turmoil of five elections, four Ministers in charge of forestry, and four Directors of Forestry, during this time. This period of intense political transition came to an end on 8 September 1939, when the Cabinet and government policy were transformed in preparation for the 'European war'.<sup>1086</sup>

### I: Government administration and forestry

With populist, nationalist programs aimed at reviving the economy and ending emigration, Fianna Fáil based their economic policy on self-sufficiency and protectionism.<sup>1087</sup> Their strong rural constituency reflected Ireland as a country of small farms where around 77% of all farms were under fifty acres, and one third of all land area was mountain and moor in 1932.<sup>1088</sup> A high percentage of these holdings were in

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<sup>1086</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', *Annual Report of the Department of Lands* (Dublin, 1944), pp 3-4.

<sup>1087</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 60-1.

<sup>1088</sup> MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938*, p. 15. Size of Holding 1-5 acres 30.3%, 15-30 acres 27%, 30-50 acres 19%, 50-100 – 15% ,and >100 8.9%, Mountain and Moor 31%.

the Gaeltacht areas, where Minister Seán Lemass,<sup>1089</sup> considered the Gaeltacht as ‘an economic problem arising from considerable congestion of population’, reflecting the inherited views of the British administration.<sup>1090</sup> The rate of land distribution increased during the 1930s under Fianna Fáil,<sup>1091</sup> in favour of tenants, former employees of estates, and landless men of the locality. Land purchase was accompanied by annual rates tax paid to the local county council, which was a payment too far for some by the middle of this decade.

This period in Ireland was marked by the effects of the Fianna Fáil Economic War with Great Britain caused by disagreements over the Irish Constitution, and the repayment of tenant land purchase loans and landowner grants. This annual payment of £3 million or almost one fifth of annual revenue, was to be retained by the state according to Eamon de Valera,<sup>1092</sup> in common with Northern Ireland whose repayments had already been annulled under the Government of Ireland Act of 1920.<sup>1093</sup> Although British self-sufficiency and some trade protection programs had predated the economic war, Britain imposed increased duties from 20 to 40% on the major Irish agricultural products of butter, eggs, live animals, bacon and poultry, in a trade war that Ireland was expected to lose after economic collapse.<sup>1094</sup> These tariffs exerted a major influence on Irish economic policy, particularly on the agricultural sector, causing great financial hardship in rural Ireland, and increasing the already high level of unemployment and emigration,<sup>1095</sup> particularly for the sheep and cattle hill farmers who had no alternatives for production.<sup>1096</sup> Without a market for their sheep and cattle and no income, relief works for farmers were organised in some regions by

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<sup>1089</sup> Seán Lemass was Minister of Industry and Commerce up to 1939. He was less sympathetic to the revival of the Gaelic language and culture than some of his fellow Cabinet members.

<sup>1090</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 111.

<sup>1091</sup> Tony Varley, 'Gaining ground, losing ground: The politics of land reform in twentieth century Ireland', in Fergus Campbell and Tony Varley (eds), *Land questions in modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2013), p. 25.

<sup>1092</sup> The repayment of £3.13 million annually for land loans and grants was negotiated by Cosgrave in 1922-3, Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 110. Dáil Éireann deb., Bank of Ireland Bill (2 May 1929), Éamon de Valera.

<sup>1093</sup> Government of Ireland Act (1920), 10 & 11 Geo. 5 c. 67.

<sup>1094</sup> Michael O'Sullivan, *Sean Lemass: A biography* (Dublin, 1994), p. 74; Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 165.

<sup>1095</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 155-156.

<sup>1096</sup> Daly, *The first department : A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 179.



the county council and the Board of Works, to supplement the small unemployment benefits recently introduced.

As the inherited legacy of landowners' tax payments to the local county council was assumed by the new former tenant purchasers, this additional financial burden proved too heavy for some and there were many who were unable to pay the rates as well as the monthly loan repayments. Some councils took stock and stores from farmers in lieu of rates, and others were dissolved due to the volume of unpayable arrears.<sup>1097</sup> The economic instability of the time added to the continual movement of country people overseas due to unemployment and poverty. Emigration was considered a national tragedy and rural emigration had become one of the most important political issues of the decade.<sup>1098</sup> The scale of the movement of people contributed to the falling value of hill land which was being sold by small holders unable to make a living on their allocated plot. It was this vacated hill land which was of interest to the Department for acquisition for its conifer plantation program.

To counteract the effects of the Trade War, Fianna Fáil promoted increased industrial employment by fostering a self-sufficient industrial sector under native control and the establishment of state-owned companies such as the Turf Development Board in 1934 for peat production.<sup>1099</sup> However, this organised approach to peat and turf did not extend to forestry, despite repeated calls inside and outside parliament for a Forestry Authority or Board.<sup>1100</sup> Forestry remained within the centralised control of the civil service under the rigorous financial supervision of the Department of Finance.

In 1937, after a national referendum, Fianna Fáil succeeded in passing a new Constitution which rejected King George V as head of state and which established the state of Ireland or Éire. In 1938, with the prospect of an international war, the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement was signed, ending the economic war with a settlement of £10 million to the British Treasury for land dues,<sup>1101</sup> after the removal of the emergency duties imposed by both states.<sup>1102</sup> But also in this year, although international collapse

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<sup>1097</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>1098</sup> MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938*, p. 18. Population in 1936 was almost 3 million people in Éire, at 2,965,854; Net emigration (emigration less immigration) was 169,316 people between 1926-36. There were 26,000 emigrants in 1937,

<sup>1099</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 65, 75, 90.

<sup>1100</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvii, 1520 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall.

<sup>1101</sup> Although retention of land annuities had been ceded to the two governments of Ireland under the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, this was not implemented in the Irish Free State.

<sup>1102</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 159-60, 163.

had been averted, emigration had increased, and Fianna Fáil government programs were not producing the hoped-for revitalisation of Irish rural society.

These government programs were to be found in the Official Handbook of the Saorstát government of 1932, edited by Bulmer Hobson which did not include the state forestry program. Although the legacy of deforestation in Ireland was acknowledged, it did not refer to state forestry development, rural timber production nor traditional wood industries.<sup>1103</sup> This could be viewed as an unofficial abandonment of the nationalist re-forestation vision by Fianna Fáil, particularly as Hobson published separate pamphlets on the importance of national forestry policy in 1931.<sup>1104</sup> However, in the same year, as a consequence of the Economic War, tariffs on timber were introduced to encourage the neglected primary industry of the manufacture of wood products in Ireland, by companies that had struggled to survive the flood of imports from Britain.<sup>1105</sup> By 1937, these tariffs were set at a level one-third higher than in Britain, benefiting Irish assembly businesses over integrated manufacturing companies.<sup>1106</sup> For some timber and wood products, there was also a quota system of imports which protected certain sectors, such as the brush-making industry, by creating a guaranteed market which enabled large and small manufacturers to purchase the latest machinery to produce better and cheaper brushes.<sup>1107</sup> By 1938, all sectors except furniture doubled in output, and those who did well during these years were generally export oriented farmers, protected industrialists,<sup>1108</sup> and larger manufacturers with capital, such as Walsh's furniture factory, Navan who employed 130 people,<sup>1109</sup> or the paper mills.<sup>1110</sup> However, native timber was still poorly seasoned and less useful to the wood manufacturer than imported Scandinavian timber.<sup>1111</sup> Imports of timber increased to under £1.8 million in

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<sup>1103</sup> Bulmer Hobson (ed.), *Saorstát Éireann, Irish Free State: Official Handbook* (Dublin, 1932).

<sup>1104</sup> Hobson, 'Irish Forest Policy'.

<sup>1105</sup> 'Furniture making in the Free State', in *Cabinet Making Review*, i, no. 6 (1935).

<sup>1106</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 66-70.

<sup>1107</sup> *Report on survey of the brushmaking industry* (Committee on Industrial Organisation, 1964), pp 23-4.

<sup>1108</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, pp 69, 70, 170.

<sup>1109</sup> 'Our Fast Growing Industries', in *Furniture Trades Magazine and Cabinet Making Review*, i, no. 3 (1935).

<sup>1110</sup> Killeen, Newbrook and Swiftbrook mills. *Report on the paper and paperboard industry*, p. 15.

<sup>1111</sup> 'Timber Cargoes and Prices Commission', in *Furniture Trades Magazine and Cabinet Making Review*, ii, no. 2 (1936).

1937, whereas the export value of timber was just over £75,000,<sup>1112</sup> reflecting the scarcity of timber predicted by the wood industry in the last decade due to the excessive tree felling and exportation.

Despite the potential for hardwood timber supply, as private tree planting in Ireland at an unprecedented low level, and tree-felling still evident, it was not clear how the remaining woodlands would survive. The long-awaited institutional response to tree felling, the 1928 Forestry Act, was finally enforced by the Gardaí in 1930.<sup>1113</sup> The Gardaí also conducted a rough survey of the total Irish tree cover, woods and forestry in 1933, which resulted in an estimate of 244,355 acres. The private wooded lands were reduced to an estimated 180 to 190,000 acres, or less than 1% of total land area,<sup>1114</sup> some of which were also being purchased by the Land Commission and Forestry Department who were often the only buyer in the market. Minister Gerald Boland informed the Seanad of the Department's role in the depressed land market of the 1930s:

I would repeat ... that a lot of the land that has been divided has been offered to the Land Commission. Some of those big estates that have been giving a lot of employment would never have been acquired compulsorily any more than the Forestry Department would have acquired the Guinness estate in Cong. The Land Commission would never have dreamt of going to estates like these, but we were the only purchasers. I would say the majority of these big estates were not confiscated. The owners were very glad that the Land Commission came in and took them off their hands, because the house and a lot of the lands were going derelict. It was, and is, good national work to proceed with division of that land.<sup>1115</sup>

Meanwhile, over the previous decade, under the stewardship of Arthur Forbes over the Department had become the owner of an expanding estate. In 1933, the inherited Irish state forestry land from the previous administration had increased to nearly 60,000 acres. A considerable portion of this land portfolio was wooded land, amounting to over 10,400 acres of woodland, and nearly 9,500 acres of cleared woodland. Over 3,500 acres were scrub, and over 27,000 acres were of bare land. This is summarised in the figure below.

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<sup>1112</sup> MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938*, p. 104.

<sup>1113</sup> Forestry Act, no. 34 of 1928.

<sup>1114</sup> *Agricultural Statistics 1927-33* (Department of Agriculture, 1934), p. vii.

<sup>1115</sup> *Seanad Éireann deb.*, xxiii, 693 (19 July 1939), Minister Gerald Boland. Some untenanted land was acquired compulsorily during this period.

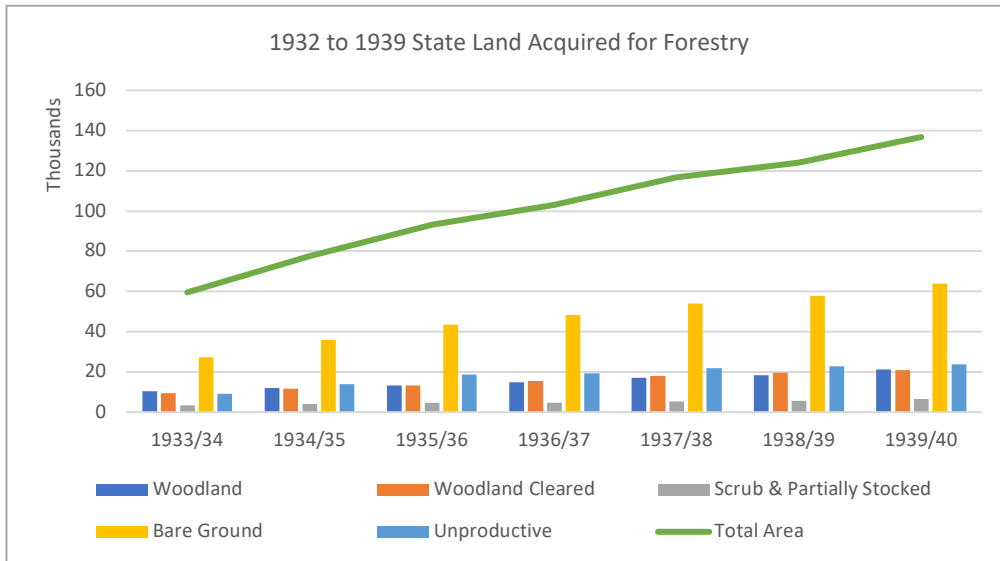


Figure 20: 1933-40 Acquisition of land for state forestry

This figure shows that the state acquired around 57% of its total as bare land without trees or shrubs. Former and cleared woodland amounted to an average of 36% of the total. Around 17% of the land was considered unproductive for trees. (From DATI Annual Reports).

The planting of the state land was measured by the rate of planting of conifer trees by acre by year. On state planted land, there was an annual planting rate of 4,100 to over 7,300 acres of new plantations, from 1933 to 1938.<sup>1116</sup>

The amount and type of land planted by the state is summarised in the figure below:

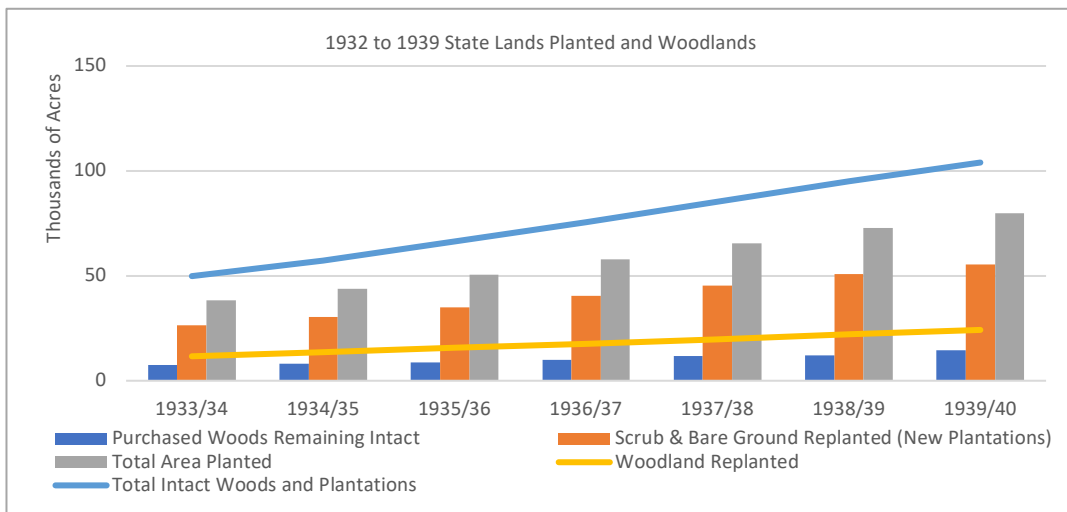


Figure 21: 1933-40 State land planted for forestry

<sup>1116</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', *Annual Report of the Minister for Lands* (Dublin, 1939), pp 5, 6 and 13.

This figure shows the doubling of the amount of land planted with trees during this time, mostly on scrub and bare ground. Scrub includes small bushes, young or mature native trees. Former woodland makes up 30% of state lands planted in 1933 with the same share in 1940. The percentage of intact woodlands is recorded for the first time in 1933 at over 19% of state lands and remaining at 18% in 1940. Scrub and bare land planting make up around 70% of state planting in 1940 (from DATI Annual Reports).

By 1939, the Department was the largest landowner in the state with a productive land area of over 113,000 acres. Almost 60% was planted with conifers on former waste or scrub land, 19% was planted with conifers on former woodland, and 18% was intact woodlands.<sup>1117</sup> The species of trees planted were mostly imported conifers, made up of Scots pine and other pines at 41%, Sitka and Norway spruce at 32%, and European and Japanese Larch at 15%. With a change in appreciation of hardwoods, beech, oak and ash tree planting increased to 11% during Minister Connolly's term.<sup>1118</sup> After several years of trials on different types of lands acquired, the non-native conifers were found to grow on coastal and upland areas as well as on more favourable lands.<sup>1119</sup> The amount of spruce planting was reduced due to the effects of infestations of aphids and hardwood trees being planted in better ground.<sup>1120</sup> The foresters' belief in Douglas fir as a species of great potential gradually lessened as the results of the early years of planting began to show a tendency to disease.<sup>1121</sup> The effects of disease on other conifers such as pine, spruces, and larches, and their treatments were also noted.<sup>1122</sup>

By 1939, according to the Department's Report, conifers were planted in most lands both due to 'the prejudice on the part of many people in favour of conifers', and the tendency of the state foresters to replant wooded areas with conifers instead of hardwoods due to the difficulties with securing stocks of young hardwood plants.<sup>1123</sup> The Department continued to plant mostly conifers in woodlands cleared of commercial

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<sup>1117</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 18.

<sup>1118</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>1119</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 18.

<sup>1120</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 23.

<sup>1121</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 252.

<sup>1122</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 24.

<sup>1123</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 52.

timber rather than reconstitute the woodland by natural regeneration, even if the woodland had formerly produced hardwood timber, but in some areas, where a partial crop of native trees was left standing, there was some natural regeneration.<sup>1124</sup> By early 1940, there was also an increase to almost 1,600 acres in the acreage of conifer plantations owned by private landowners that had been assisted by the small Department grant,<sup>1125</sup> but the planting rate had slowed down on both public and private land due to restrictions on the supply of seeds and fencing materials.

Up to 1927, annual government expenditure on forestry had been around £60,000 over five years, which increased to over £215,000 under Fianna Fáil management by 1939.<sup>1126</sup> This is shown in the figure below:

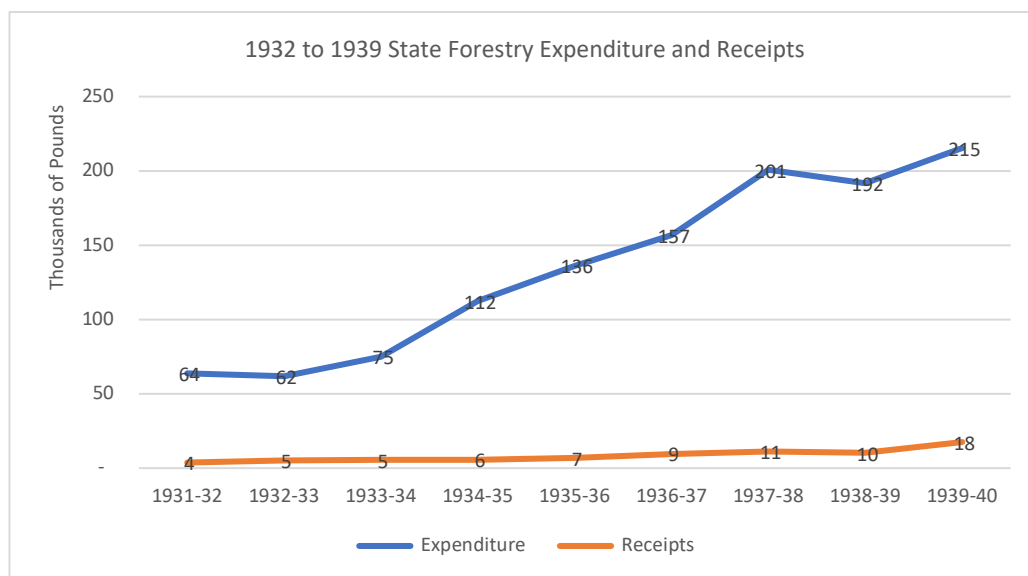


Figure 22: 1932-39 State forest expenditure & receipts

This figure shows the increase in state forestry funding upon the arrival of Minister Connolly in 1933, and the three-fold increase by 1939. During this period, the Department also reported for the first time the total income from forestry. (From Convery).

During this period, there was neither a formal review or financial cost benefit analysis of state forestry by the Ministers, although the topic was raised in the Dáil by individual TDs. By contrast, one of the important factors in the ten-year success of the

<sup>1124</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 22.

<sup>1125</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 52.

<sup>1126</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland'. Appendix I

British Forestry Commission, according to Robert Maxwell, one of its founders, was the adoption by Parliament of a well-considered plan for its operation.<sup>1127</sup>

In Northern Ireland, similar rates of planting to the Irish state were being accomplished. Up to 1937, on a total land area of over 3.3 million acres,<sup>1128</sup> 21,072 acres were acquired by the British government, with total state planted lands at 12,211 acres; 978 acres were planted in 1937.<sup>1129</sup> In the same year, wood and timber imports into Northern Ireland were also high at £929,000.<sup>1130</sup>

### *Participants in state forestry administration*

In 1932, after the change of government and the retirement of Director Arthur Forbes, the state forestry conifer tree planting program continued as before under the Fianna Fáil Minister for Agriculture James Ryan, who had been an active promoter of a national forestry policy during the previous administration. In 1933, the Forestry Division was transferred to the Department of Lands, and the subsequent Ministers of Lands, Joseph Connolly, Frank Aiken, and Gerald Boland's contributions to Dáil debates reflected the political challenges of the period. Their interest in forest-related issues varied but their potential influence on the direction of the state forestry program was evident in the many new initiatives started during Minister Connolly's tenure. As the public face of the forestry administration, their contributions illuminate both Ministerial and personal perceptions of trees, woods, forests and their uses. An indication of the extent of their annual contributions is shown in the figure below.

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<sup>1127</sup> Maxwell, 'A decade of state forestry and its lessons', p. 2.

<sup>1128</sup> MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938*, p. 193.

<sup>1129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>1130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

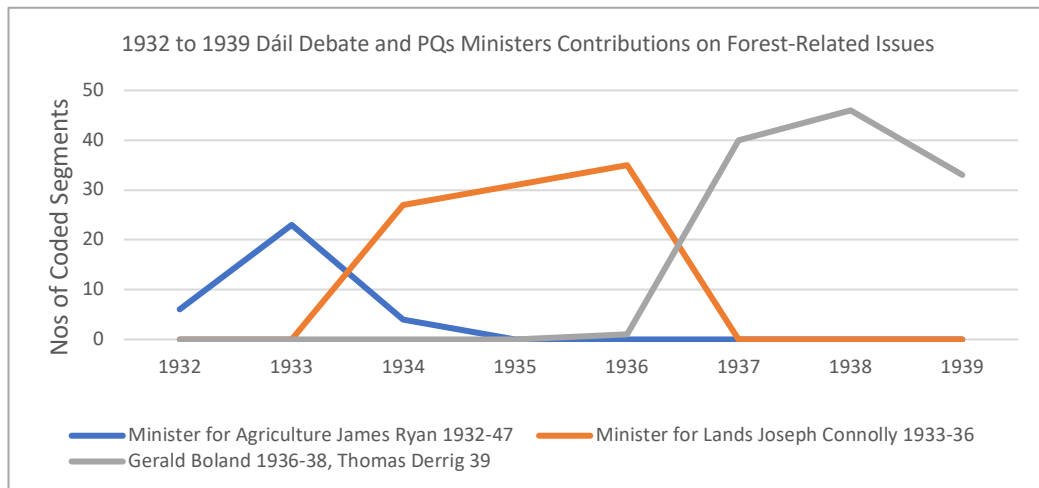


Figure 23: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by Ministers all contributions.

This figure shows the relative contribution of Ministers to Dáil debates after their Annual Report to Dáil Éireann. Minister Boland's contributions reflect the increased participation on forest-related issues in the Dáil during this period.

### **Minister for Agriculture Dr James Ryan, 1932 to 1947**

On 23 June 1933, Fianna Fáil's Minister for Agriculture, Dr James Ryan's first presentation and debate on forest-related issues in the Dáil demonstrated his interest in the expansion of the inherited planting program with no new initiatives, despite his previous support for a national forestry policy.<sup>1131</sup> He limited his Dáil report to updates on the land acquisition and tree planting program, the three-year expansion plan for the nursery supply of trees from local and imported seed, and the research trials with North American and European conifer species. He also referred to planting hardwood species, but only on demesne lands rather than regenerating woods for timber production, as the planting program had to be 'commercial.'<sup>1132</sup> He maintained the Department stance against small plots of 100 acres, which he were more suitable for private planting with help from the county councils' horticultural inspectors. Regarding the choice of species in particular locations, he confirmed his reliance on his experts over local experience.<sup>1133</sup> An update on the long running saga of Forth mountain tree

<sup>1131</sup> James Ryan, doctor and businessman, active nationalist in the 1916 uprising and as an Anti-Treatyite in the Four Courts. Fianna Fail Minister for Agriculture in 1932 in Eamon De Valera's government, promoted small farms as well as modernisation of agricultural industries. Ministers of Health and Finance. McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

<sup>1132</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 1215 (23 June 1933), Minister James Ryan.

<sup>1133</sup> *Ibid.*, 1198-99, 1212-7.



planting completed his report. By December 1933, Minister Ryan had persuaded Senator Joseph Connolly, now Minister for Lands and Fisheries, to exchange the Fisheries Division for Forestry, a proposal for administrative change that had originally been made by Arthur Forbes in 1922 to preclude competition for land in the same Department.<sup>1134</sup>

### ***Minister for Lands Joseph Connolly, 1933 to 1936***

In 1933, when Senator Joseph Connolly<sup>1135</sup> became the Minister for Lands and Fisheries with responsibility for Forestry, he admitted that he did not know about life on the land. However, he did have practical experience from his years in the wholesale furniture business of Belfast, and from managing two large coach and furniture construction businesses at Aylesbury in Edenderry, which closed creating an economic crisis in the town, and in Navan, which survived.<sup>1136</sup> His stated 'his acceptance of his ignorance and willingness to learn'.<sup>1137</sup>

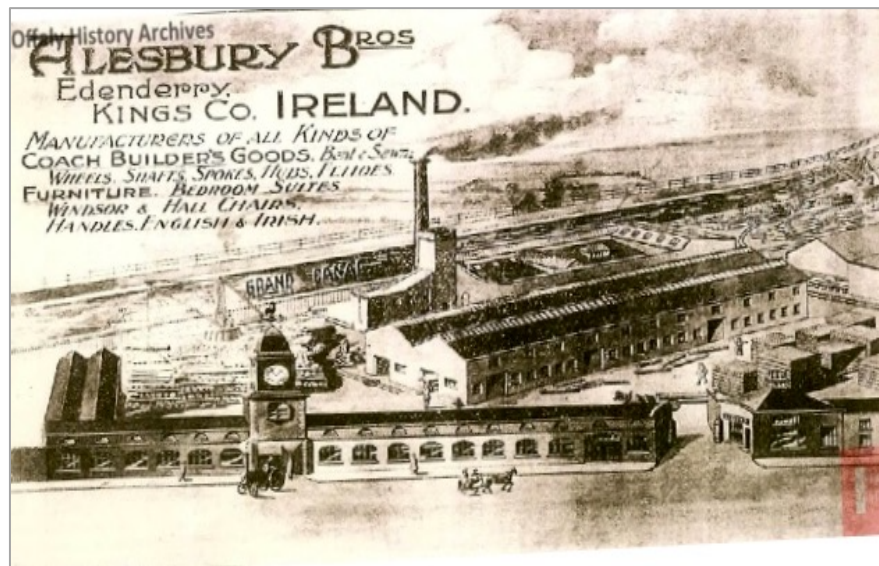


Plate 12: Aylesbury Furniture Factory (From Offaly History Archives).

<sup>1134</sup> Forbes, 'The forestry revival in Eire', p. 21.

<sup>1135</sup> Joseph Connolly was a politician, businessman and civil servant and playwright, an active nationalist and Irish Volunteer, involved in the Land Bank, Fianna Fail, Director of the Irish Press, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Lands, and Chairman of the Office of Public Works. McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

<sup>1136</sup> Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Senator Joseph Connolly 1885-1961: A founder of modern Ireland*, pp 13, 15, 55. <https://offalyhistoryblog.wordpress.com/2017/10/14/the-closure-of-alesburys-timber-factory-in-edenderry-by-dr-ciaran-reilly/>

<sup>1137</sup> Ibid. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 165.

With a long history in Sinn Féin, and as a member of the Commission of Inquiry into the Industries and Natural Resources Committee in 1919, Connolly could have contributed to the vision for re-forestation of Ireland held by Arthur Griffith.<sup>1138</sup> As a Cabinet member from the Seanad in the first Fianna Fáil government, he proposed not only to reform the cautious Forestry Division and integrate land acquisition procedures with the Land Commission,<sup>1139</sup> but also to introduce a national forestry policy. Although in office for only three years, Minister Connolly said that it was ‘the most interesting period of my life’ for the ‘opportunity to make a contribution to the welfare of thousands of my own people, by establishing them in their own homes and farms’. He said that:

Our centuries of struggle centred on the land... The ultimate in all that history is the Land Commission and with it rests the final responsibility for the final chapter.<sup>1140</sup>

His views on reconnecting local people to the land included reconnecting them to trees, woods and their uses, and in 1934, Minister Connolly’s representative to the Dáil informed the TDs that the ‘large scale expansion of re-forestation through the State is being examined’.<sup>1141</sup> In his first speech to the Dáil, he launched his vision that state forestry should be ‘a big economic business’, similar to the ESB, with an afforestation goal of 500,000 acres over a twenty-year period.<sup>1142</sup> The new objective for state forestry was to be based on a national forestry policy as well as an unemployment relief scheme.<sup>1143</sup> He was concerned that there had been a ‘neglect of forestry over the last ten to twelve years’ and that he intended conducting a review of the whole policy of forestry expansion, optimistic that there would be proposals to debate in the near future. He proposed a Forestry Bill for an independent Forestry Board which would establish similar administrative structures to the Forestry Commission of the United Kingdom, to be introduced before the Dáil adjourned. The Forestry Board ‘would have the freedom to develop and to go on with a long-term policy,’ guided by the Minister, and subject to the government in power. It would have

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<sup>1138</sup> Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Senator Joseph Connolly 1885-1961: A founder of modern Ireland*.

<sup>1139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 20, 366.

<sup>1140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 358, 365. By 1935-6, there were 1,019 people working in the Department of Lands. *Ibid.*p. 361.

<sup>1141</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, I, 905 (31 January 1934), Sean Grady, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Connolly.

<sup>1142</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1184-1190 (27 June 1934), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1143</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 165.

long-term continuity of investment and promote the employment of people, particularly in the Gaeltacht.<sup>1144</sup>

However, the Department's lack of enthusiasm for change was evident when Minister Connolly referred to his Director, Mark Anderson in 1934 as 'obdurate' in his attachment to his maximum planting policy of 4,000 per year, as 'anything more would be uneconomic'.<sup>1145</sup> Minister Connolly criticised the 'Go Slow' policy of the Department, inaccurately referring to its foresters as being 'men who had grown up and were trained in Demesne Forestry'.<sup>1146</sup> But he did succeed in increasing the annual planting area to 5,500 acres in his first year in office.

As well as the re-establishment of the arboreal environment, Minister Connolly had the interests of the wood industry in mind when drawing up the planting objectives, saying that:

... apart from the climatic and aesthetic advantages of having our lands planted with trees, there is an urgent economic need for timber for our own requirements. It will take years to repair the ravages of the past and denuding of our stocks and it is to that end that the whole activity of the Department is being devoted.<sup>1147</sup>

As the first Minister with experience in the wood industry sector, Connolly had particular recommendations on the species of trees to be planted which could replace imports where possible. Certain trees would supply the pulp requirements, and other timbers such as ash, elm and hardwoods which were so scarce, would also be planted, from a nursery with a new seed extractor.<sup>1148</sup> He was interested in 'increasing the acreage of good hardwood in the country,' estimated by the Department to be at 8 to 10% of the total forest lands.<sup>1149</sup>

As the economic impact of government trade policies fell most severely on farmers of small holdings, Minister Connolly's special interest was the development of

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<sup>1144</sup> Ibid., 1185. This aspect was not reflected in historian O Carroll's view that the Connolly's forestry expansion program was based on a cost-benefit commercial objective rather than for unemployment relief. O Carroll, *Forestry in Ireland: A concise history*.

<sup>1145</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 166, 168; Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Senator Joseph Connolly 1885-1961: A founder of modern Ireland*.

<sup>1146</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 13.

<sup>1147</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2633 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1148</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1162 (27 June 1934), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1149</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2443 (7 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly.

the former Congested Districts portfolio of land, now held by the Land Commission.<sup>1150</sup> He accepted the view that the western lands presented 'the forester with almost insuperable difficulties'.<sup>1151</sup> In his opinion, given the scientific views on the difficulties of planting peatlands, 'it was almost now impossible to overcome the technical prejudice of foresters against doing anything in that area'.<sup>1152</sup> Aware of the experience in forestry amongst parliamentarians, Minister Connolly asked for their input on the issues of tree planting in suitable sheltered peatland sites. He gave a commitment that the Department would 'stretch to the limit the development of forestry where trees can be grown at all'.<sup>1153</sup> In contrast to the approach of the previous administration, he was against the compulsory purchase of land as he believed that:

... forestry requires the goodwill of the people. It can suffer very severely from interference, and unless you have the goodwill and the good disposition of the people all around, all your fencing will be wasted.<sup>1154</sup>

Having worked in the furniture sector, Minister Connolly was also interested in improving the supply of timber for the wood industry. His intention was to modernise the Department sawmills to process timber, and invest in travelling saw mills that would prepare the timber for drying and seasoning, but which would not be in competition with the timber manufacturers.<sup>1155</sup> He also acknowledged that skilled sawyers were being underpaid.<sup>1156</sup> His interest in administrative cooperation was evident when the Department was represented at a Conference of timber merchants organised by the Department of Industry and Commerce to control supplies of timber,<sup>1157</sup> but there was no more information on how this impacted the Department's production. On the question of wood from state forests for fuel, his view was that 'rubbish' timber from state forests could be used for firewood, but the organisation of firewood supply remained local, with no assistance for transport from difficult sites.<sup>1158</sup>

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<sup>1150</sup> Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Senator Joseph Connolly 1885-1961: A founder of modern Ireland*, pp 20, 363.

<sup>1151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 366-7.

<sup>1152</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2641 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1153</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1188 (27 June 1934), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1154</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2443-4 (7 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1156</sup> *Ibid.*, 2398. 2447.

<sup>1157</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 36.

<sup>1158</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1189 (27 June 1934) Minister Connolly; PQ., lxxiv, 968-9 (17 November 1937), Nicholas Wall.

At this time in Britain, the Forestry Commission was coordinating policy on the utilisation of state timber, the formulation of national quality standards for seasoning timber, and information on local timber needs and timber use, with the Timber Products Laboratory.<sup>1159</sup>

Minister Connolly's response to the lack of trained scientific foresters and inspectors to guide the expansion of state forestry<sup>1160</sup> was to increase the forestry education budget from £137 in 1933, to £1,456 in 1936. He reopened the pre-war forestry training schools of Avondale, Emo and Dundrum, with university placements and short courses abroad for new recruits to the forestry service.<sup>1161</sup> Trainees increased from ten to forty from 1933 to 1938.<sup>1162</sup> Irish state forestry research needs were still being inspired by technical research achievements in Britain, through association of state foresters with the Commonwealth Forestry Conference.<sup>1163</sup> He also promoted public education in forestry and reintroduced Arbor Day in 1934 in conjunction with the Minister for Education, to be celebrated with tree planting in 1,524 schools around the country.<sup>1164</sup> Minister Connolly also referred to the lack of publicity on government grant aid for forestry, even with the new improved grant of £4 per acre, since 1932.<sup>1165</sup> He promised more advertising, asking parliamentarians for advice 'to explore possibilities' to increase the take up of private grant aid for shelter belts and county council schemes.<sup>1166</sup> However, by 1936, there were still no new public education initiatives and the funding for public education was still only £50 for occasional lectures and three exhibits at county shows.<sup>1167</sup>

After only three years in office, Minister Connolly had not only improved communication with the Dáil on the expansion of the state forestry planting program, but had also initiated improvements in the conditions of employment for forest workers,

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<sup>1159</sup> Forestry Commission, *Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th, 1933* (London, 1934), p. 44.

<sup>1160</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2632 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1161</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2399, 2396 (7 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1162</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 30.

<sup>1163</sup> Clear, 'A review of twenty-one years of Irish forestry', p. 39.

<sup>1164</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 32. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2631 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1165</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 164-5. Neeson proposed that this scheme was at the instigation of Arthur Forbes, modelled on a similar scheme under the British Forestry Commission. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1163 (27 June 1934), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1166</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lviii, 1179 (27 June 1934), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1167</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 2400 (7 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly.

and in the state sawmilling capabilities. Despite the lack of enthusiasm of his first Director of Forestry, and with the help of his second, Minister Connolly did achieve some of his initial objectives. Although he was not able to establish a Forestry Board, despite support in the Dáil for its implementation, he did increase the land acquisition and planting rate almost threefold, expanded hard wood planting, and restarted state forestry education and an Arbor Day. His proposed national survey was not undertaken due to the lack of time available to Department foresters, according to Minister Boland.<sup>1168</sup>

Minister Connolly's expansive view of the integrated state forest was evidence of what was possible under an enlightened Ministry of Forestry. It is not known whether his plans were delayed by the Cabinet or the forestry administration. Unfortunately for national forestry development in Ireland, his time in office ended in 1936 when he lost his Seanad seat after its dissolution, and as a consequence, his Ministry.

#### ***Minister for Lands Frank Aiken, June to November 1936***

As acting Minister for Lands, Frank Aiken<sup>1169</sup> generally left his forestry duties to his Parliamentary Secretary, Séan Ó Grady, and Dáil debate reverted to previous minimalist Ministerial responses. His prior comments in Dáil debates as a TD reflected his interest in forestry employment, the aesthetic benefits of forestry, and the need for public education. He referred to people's lack of forestry sense, their need for good propaganda and the need for teaching about forestry in school.<sup>1170</sup> Aiken also proposed a five-year 'Russian style plan to speed up the planting of trees', and supported private planting with a scheme whereby if a half-acre was planted by 100,000 farmers, the country would be replanted.<sup>1171</sup>

#### ***Minister for Lands Gerald Boland, 1936 to 1939***

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<sup>1168</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ li, (20 March 1934), Patrick Hogan (TD); lxxi, 820 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland; lxxv, 1566 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1169</sup> Active nationalist, leader of the IRA up to 1925, close associate of Eamon de Valera, held five Cabinet positions, interested in defence and foreign affairs.

<sup>1170</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxviii, 2359-60 (19 June 1931), Frank Aiken.

<sup>1171</sup> *Ibid.*

From 1937 to 1938, as Minister for Lands and Forestry, Gerald Boland<sup>1172</sup> did not disturb the work of the Forestry Division with any new proposals, although he was an active participant in Dáil debates. He also referred to himself as not being an expert on forestry.<sup>1173</sup> His response to Dáil requests for a national forestry policy was that such a plan required the land to carry it out and, in his view, the land was not available.<sup>1174</sup> During his short tenure, he published a summary Forestry Division Report from 1933 to 1938, after a five-year gap. This Report followed the outline of Annual Reports from the previous 10 years but was considerably more expansive in its discussion of the topics being reported,<sup>1175</sup> and included some of the new initiatives that had been introduced by Minister Connolly. Minister Boland spent much of his time fielding questions about the availability of land for afforestation, species selection, employment issues and Arbor Day.

Although much work had been initiated by Minister Connolly to develop a broader objective for state forestry, Minister Boland returned to the vague objectives for state afforestation 'for the supply of raw timber sufficient to meet home requirements, so far as it is possible to grow in this country the types of timber required.'<sup>1176</sup> He supported the increased state planting goal of 10,000 acres per year to produce 200,000 to 300,000 acres.<sup>1177</sup> He did not give any more information on the type of timber actually required nor on the implementation of quality standards. Neither were there any indications of the major state forestry reorganization that had been proposed by Minister Connolly during his term. Minister Boland's reply to the Dáil criticism of a lack of a national plan was that 'there was no alternative' due to an uncertain land bank of poor quality.<sup>1178</sup> In 1939, he rejected the proposals for a Forestry Board or Commission without any discussion, saying that: 'I think we are doing all right and have hopes we will do better'.<sup>1179</sup>

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<sup>1172</sup> Gerald Boland, republican soldier, railway fitter and politician, member of the Irish Volunteers, Anti-Treaty and founder of Fianna Fáil, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Minister for Lands, Minister for Justice. McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

<sup>1173</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1515 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall.

<sup>1174</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1561 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1175</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8'.

<sup>1176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>1177</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 598 (4 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1178</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1562 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1179</sup> *Ibid.*, 1566.

Minister Boland's overriding interest was the acquisition of land. From 1939 to 1940, there were more properties on the market at a lower price, particularly private woodlands,<sup>1180</sup> and state forestry land was acquired in every county except Meath.<sup>1181</sup> He was also concerned about the effect of land acquisition on local people, referring to the historic removal of people from the good lands to the marginal lands that would normally have been forested, which were then used for marginal farming.<sup>1182</sup> He summarised the extreme complexities involved in acquisition of grazed hill land for forestry plantations, during a Dáil debate, saying that:

The forestry division have inspected offers of lands aggregating 334 acres approximately in Reenaniree, Macroom, in Cork. Only 54 acres have been found suitable for planting and this area is too small and too remote from any existing State forest to justify acquisition. Recently, however, an offer of 300 acres was made, the owner stating that there were a number of owners of adjoining lands also willing to sell portions of their holdings for State forestry purposes. The individual owners have been communicated with and requested to furnish particulars of the actual areas offered for sale. So far only two of them have replied and it transpires that portion of the area now offered was inspected in 1936 and found to be unplatable. If additional areas are offered they will be inspected as soon as possible.<sup>1183</sup>

Although there was a considerable area of land in Departmental hands that was not available for planting due to legal difficulties, including claims to grazing rights,<sup>1184</sup> Minister Boland rejected the use of compulsory purchase of land for forestry, preferring a more cooperative approach. He admitted to the Dáil that the Department would 'find the utmost difficulty in persuading people to give up land which the Department wishes to acquire for afforestation purposes'.<sup>1185</sup> He reiterated this dilemma in land management in response to criticism from Cork TD Thomas Dowdall on the slow pace of tree planting, saying that:

I do not think that anyone told Deputy Dowdall that this country could not grow trees. No expert ever suggested any such thing. What I maintain is that we cannot get the land. There are all these questions of grazing rights to be considered. You cannot take grazing rights from the people, rights that they have had for generations. The

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<sup>1180</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 7.

<sup>1181</sup> *Ibid.*, 1504.

<sup>1182</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 823 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1183</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxxv, (27 April 1939), Eamon O'Neill.

<sup>1184</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 8.

<sup>1185</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 1088 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.



Department must hesitate before it does that. If we were foolish enough to make the mistake the Department once did we know what would happen. The Department of Forestry thought they were quite certain of one particular mountain near Cahir. They proceeded to fence that, and on one fine night, 3,000 yards of that fence was torn up and burned. The one Department which must get the good-will of the people is the Forestry Department. You cannot do without it.<sup>1186</sup>

He said that: 'there was opposition almost everywhere... they all want it done in some other place', and his response to this was to 'try and inculcate a better spirit in regard to afforestation'.<sup>1187</sup> Although supportive of state forestry, Labour TD James Everett informed the Dáil of the growing negative response to Departmental afforestation by farmers in Wicklow, saying that: 'they are not so much enamoured there of afforestation because they have been deprived of their grazing rights'.<sup>1188</sup> Minister Boland was perplexed that local people could not see the benefits of state afforestation and related to the Dáil a story of a lady whom he expected to be pleased at the success of a new forest planted by the Department, that they were both standing in. But she said to him:

We did our best to beat them and I am sorry to say we did not succeed, but we kept them down the road; they did not get this hill. That was the best grazing in the country.<sup>1189</sup>

By 1939, Minister Boland noted the gap in anticipated planting goals which he put down to the growing opposition of local people to forestry development, particularly where grazing and turbary rights conflicted with Departmental interests. The 1938 to 1939 Report referred to 'trouble' with graziers affecting land purchases and planting targets.<sup>1190</sup> His view of this response was expressed in the Dáil, where he said that:

Unfortunately, enthusiasm for forestry is singularly lacking in certain districts where forestry operations could be undertaken on a comparatively large scale with every prospect of success, and where the local people would benefit by an extension of the State's effort to build up strong reserves of timbered land.<sup>1191</sup>

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<sup>1186</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, (4 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland, col 1562.

<sup>1187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1188</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1538 (3 May 1939), James Everett.

<sup>1189</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1564 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1190</sup> Dept Lands 1933-38, p. 18.

<sup>1191</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1504 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

Evidence of strained local relationships between communities and the Department were to be found in some local disturbances, a few of which could have reflected the continuation of civil war animosities. Minister Boland informed the Dáil that people in Sligo shouted 'up the Republic' when arrested for pulling trees.<sup>1192</sup>

The question of planting peatland with trees was also frequently addressed by Minister Boland. Over this period, there were ongoing arguments in the Dáil on this issue with many TDs still claiming that certain peatlands that were wooded before the war, had been rejected by the Department as unsuitable for state tree planting.<sup>1193</sup> He affirmed that the Department would not plant 'scrub stuff' (local trees and shrubs) on such poor land, but only 'commercial trees' (conifers) on the advice of the Director.<sup>1194</sup> TDs challenged the lack of local knowledge in the Department but Minister Boland consistently defended his expert foresters, saying that:

... they have given their whole lives to the work of forestry and ... they have the professional interest in their work which every professional man has and the desire to see that work a success.<sup>1195</sup>

Minister Boland also acknowledged the expertise of the new Division Director, Otto Reinhard, who himself had rejected peatland for tree planting except under certain conditions, based on his experience of German peatlands.<sup>1196</sup>

However, by 1939, the achievement of planting marginal agricultural land with conifers by the state was considerable, given its experimental nature. It also represented the challenge of addressing high costs of planting, seed supply difficulties, inaccessible forestry centres, some of them on difficult mountain sites, forest workmen strikes, graziers' claims, and the costs of clearing 'devastated woodland'. A successful pine and spruce planting scheme on ten acres of South East Wexford sand dunes at Curracloe during 1933 to 1934, was another example of the experimental aspect of state conifer planting that was being undertaken at this time.<sup>1197</sup>

Minister Boland's view of the amenity values of forestry was only in relation to private forestry. Although the percentage of hardwood species in state planting

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<sup>1192</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1521, 1566 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall; Gerald Boland.

<sup>1193</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 819 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1194</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1754, 1759 (27 April 1937), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1195</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1562 (3 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1196</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1757 (27 April 1937), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1197</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 13.

schemes had increased to 11% by 1939,<sup>1198</sup> he perceived the value of state tree production to be based on the assumption that state planting was 'commercial' and 'economic,' and which had little to do with the landscape. He said that: 'The Forestry Department is not concerned with scenery. It has to work on commercial lines'.<sup>1199</sup> He informed the Dáil that: 'The Forestry Department is concerned with the raising of commercial timber, and I think that is what it should be confined to,' adding that if the Government or the Dáil wished some other type of work done like growing bushes, that would be another matter.<sup>1200</sup> There was no additional information on the criteria of commercial planting beyond the speed of growth of the tree. Boland did acknowledge consideration of the scenic amenities by the Department in some cases, but he maintained that that was the job of the county committees. However, he admitted that there was not much cooperation between these committees and the Forestry Division.<sup>1201</sup>

In comparison, by 1938, the Forestry Commission in Britain had begun cooperative planning with local authorities and other government departments for amenity forestry development in certain state forests.<sup>1202</sup> The Forestry Commission was also responsible for managing the National Forest Parks.<sup>1203</sup>

Minister Boland had also limited interest in public forestry education. TD James Fitzgerald-Kenney referred to the need for demonstration sites of successful tree plantations for public education, and for the communication of market information.<sup>1204</sup> He called for the state to encourage the private planter and to offer surplus cost price trees if available. However, this was rejected by Minister Boland who was concerned about the impact on the private nursery trade. By 1938, Departmental public education was still focused on three exhibitions held in the Royal Dublin Society Spring Show, and the Wicklow and Toghher Agricultural Shows, which focused on conifer trees, planting techniques and demonstrations of home-made rustic items that could be made

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<sup>1198</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 69; 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 22.

<sup>1199</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, Ibid., lxxv, 1563-4 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1200</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 819 (11 May, 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1201</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1567 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1202</sup> Forestry Commission, *Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th 1938* (London, 1939), p. 15.

<sup>1203</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>1204</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1511-3, 1565 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; Minister Gerald Boland.

from larch. There was a film showing the process of cutting timber and its journey to the mill, and information on six types of trees for different ground.<sup>1205</sup> There was no input from the local wood industry on traditional wood products using hardwood timber.

By 1938, the ill-fated Arbor Day was reported by Minister Boland to be no longer a popular event with school management, with only 599 schools taking part in the planting celebration, mostly due to the space restrictions of planting around the school yard.<sup>1206</sup> It was made clear in the Dáil that planting advice was needed, as some of the schools were planting trees too close to the windows.<sup>1207</sup> However, Minister Boland observed that the Department did not give planting advice to schools, adding that: 'The scheme is purely educational, the purpose being to stimulate interest among young people in the care and preservation of trees and in the appreciation of their beauty and value'.<sup>1208</sup> With no interest in feedback, the program was discontinued by the Department in 1939 due to 'pressure from other work'.<sup>1209</sup>

Minister Boland was also very aware of the need to create a demand for the material coming out of the state forests. For the first time in 1937, the Department discussed the marketing of state timber from a survey that had taken place from 1935 to 1938. This was a partial report on the sales of timber, both by competitive tender and local sales at auction, of conifer poles, hardwood timber, and thinnings which would be used in fencing, and rustic work such as gates.<sup>1210</sup> Although the Department noted that the conversion of timber would not be undertaken on a large scale as this was best left up to private enterprise, proposals were made for the supply of small portable sawmills for processing wood for fuel.<sup>1211</sup> Poles for fencing, for scaffolding, for road building for forestry, and telephone poles, were supplied, and over 6,700 tons of firewood in 1937 were sold locally.<sup>1212</sup> The timber available was considered to be of poor or moderate quality and the stands sold were understocked, but it was a start of a

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<sup>1205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1206</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 32.

<sup>1207</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1512 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1208</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvi, 1737 (27 April 1937), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1209</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 5.

<sup>1210</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvi, 1733 (27 April 1937), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1211</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 27. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 600 (4 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1212</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

more realistic appraisal of the quality of the output of the experimental plantations from all over Ireland.<sup>1213</sup>

Despite the economic war, the English pitwood market opened in 1935, and over 766 tons of unprocessed roundwood poles were sold between 1935 and 1938. In 1939, 135,202 poles were exported to Britain.<sup>1214</sup> In 1938, Minister Boland informed TDs that he had been discussing the use of state timber with unspecified 'experts', which had resulted in the change of the state planting objective to supply home timber needs. He said that 'About 10 per cent of the trees grown are hard timber, and that is considered sufficient to meet our requirements. The rest is soft timber for the English market'.<sup>1215</sup> There was no response in the Dáil to this change to the state's planting objectives. Between 1941 to 1942, there was the added sweetener of a subsidy of £1 per ton exported.<sup>1216</sup>

The need for wood fuel had always been important in rural communities with limited turf supplies, but there was no Departmental policy on the provision of wood fuel from state forests until late into the 1930s. Minister Boland's view was that 'Continental forests are grown for fuel but in Ireland we have bogs'.<sup>1217</sup> Forest centres had their own approach to fuel wood gathering, some unable to get the wood to the local community. TD Nicholas Wall raised the question of the timber on the Waterford estate which had rotted on cleared ground due to difficulties of access and the high cost of private extraction. Minister Boland stated that the sale price and cartage price were set and there would be no further discussion.<sup>1218</sup> This attitude changed in 1938, when wood remains in state forests were no longer seen by the Department as 'rubbish' or a 'problem' to be disposed of by burning, but a valuable by-product, particularly for rural communities.<sup>1219</sup>

By 1939, the demand and price of fuel wood had increased due to the fall in coal imports, as Britain prepared for war. In state forests, there was 'a major increase

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<sup>1213</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 35.

<sup>1214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1215</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 822 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland. The import bill for unmanufactured timber in Britain in 1938 was £42,897,000 of which imported pitprops were worth £4,688,000.

<sup>1216</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 54.

<sup>1217</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1566 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1218</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxxix, 968-9 (17 November 1937), Nicholas Wall.

<sup>1219</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1204-5 (23 June 1933), Sean Goulding; l, PQ., (15 November 1933), John Daly.

in the utilisation side of the work' under the Minister for Supplies, Sean Lemass. His objective was to make mature timber and stocks of firewood from state forests available to the public, municipalities and industry, with 10,251 tons delivered between 1939 to 1940.<sup>1220</sup> Homemade charcoal production was restarted and delivered to the cooperatives from state forests during the war.<sup>1221</sup>

Gerald Boland's short time as Minister for Lands and Forestry was notable for his defence of his staff in the face of political criticism of their ability to identify suitable marginal lands for planting, according to the exigencies of the Department. However his defence of his treatment of forest workers, some of whom were still being paid 24 shillings a week in Laois,<sup>1222</sup> under very poor conditions of employment, was not as appreciative. But his understanding of the complexities of land acquisition grew over this period, both for the land and rights holders affected and for his staff. The impending war ended a potentially fruitful relationship between Minister Boland and his German Director of Forestry Otto Reinhard, for the benefit of forestry development in Ireland. But the war period also identified the institutional cooperative capacity for a more integrated forestry and wood industry administration to supply the actual timber requirements of the nation during the 'Emergency'.

### ***Forest Service Directors***

After the retirement of Arthur Forbes in 1931, the position of Director of Forestry was filled by two more Scottish foresters, John Crozier and Mark Anderson. Neeson proposed that difficulties had arisen between Fianna Fáil Ministers and their Scottish forestry directors' approach to state forestry due to the different cultural backgrounds, particularly in relation to the question of planting trees in Western regions.<sup>1223</sup> But at this time of administrative change and cultural sensitivities, the lack of an agreed national forestry policy possibly contributed more to the uncertainties. Acting Director from 1931 to 1933, Crozier had been an assistant to Arthur Forbes since 1910, and had been actively involved in experimental conifer plantation research, particularly on

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<sup>1220</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', pp 5, 39-41.

<sup>1221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>1222</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxx, 747-8 (23 March 1938), William Davin; PQ., lxx, 753 (23 March 1938), Patrick McGovern.

<sup>1223</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 150, 155, 157, 165.

the planting of Sitka Spruce.<sup>1224</sup> He had been involved in site inspection and preparation over many years,<sup>1225</sup> and held the same lack of interest in tree planting with social or employment objectives as Forbes. He had firm views on the 'doubtful economic value' of planting on the West coast, which would need 'prolonged experiment.'<sup>1226</sup> Crozier was followed by Acting Director, Mark Anderson, from 1934 to 1936, and Director Otto Reinhard, from 1936 to 1939. Under Minister Connolly, the Division grew from having only six senior technical staff in 1934, to fourteen in 1938.<sup>1227</sup>

### ***Acting Director Mark L. Anderson, 1934 to 1936***

Mark Loudon Anderson, known as 'a staunch Scot and a passionate forester',<sup>1228</sup> had been a former Forestry Inspector in Ireland for two years from 1926 to 1928, after a period of experimentation on the ploughing techniques of planting upland moors in Scotland. After returning to the British Forestry Commission as a forester, he also lectured in the Imperial Forestry Institute in Oxford. In 1932, he was invited to apply for the Chief Inspectorship by fellow Scotsman, F Meyrick, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture.<sup>1229</sup> Anderson filled this position on a temporary basis until 1935, when he was replaced by German forester, Otto Reinhard. This created a certain discord in the Division, according to O'Donoghue, due to very different personalities, Anderson tending toward the autocratic, whereas Reinhard was more comfortable with questions and discourse on the approach needed.<sup>1230</sup> In the views of both Durand and Neeson, Anderson's 'very conservative approach' and Minister Connolly's determination to expand forestry activity into new fields, particularly in Western regions, outside the scope of the Scottish concept of scientific forestry, were

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<sup>1224</sup> John Crozier, 'The Sitka Spruce as a tree for hill planting and general afforestation', in *Transaction of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society*, 23, no. 1 (1910), pp 7-16.

<sup>1225</sup> Gardiner and Nieuwenhuis, 'Celebrating 100 years of forestry education in UCD'.p. 148.

<sup>1226</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 229. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 164, 168.

<sup>1227</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 27.

<sup>1228</sup> Charles J. Taylor, 'Address in 1981 on Mark Anderson: Scottish forester', in *Irish Forestry*, lxxix, no. 1 & 2 (1992), pp 61-6.

<sup>1229</sup> David O'Donoghue, 'The story of Otto Reinhard: A case-study of divided loyalties, in peace and war', in *Irish Forestry*, lxxix, no. 1 & 2 (2012).

<sup>1230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215. Addendum, Donal Magner, p. 236.

undoubtedly the main factors which motivated the Departmental decision to try to introduce new blood into the Forestry Division.<sup>1231</sup>

During his period of office as Acting Director of the Forestry Division in Ireland, Anderson directed the large scale non-native conifer planting program. As forestry was seen to be the land use of last resort,<sup>1232</sup> he wrote that pine species were most suitable on deforested or bare land where the fertility of the soil had deteriorated, and 'where the sites are incapable of carrying the original forest vegetation'.<sup>1233</sup> He referred to 'waste lands' as 'land available for tree planting which has been devoid of a crop of trees for many years or which has perhaps never carried such a crop'.<sup>1234</sup> But in his reluctance to expand the planting program into the poorer lands of the Gaeltacht, he came up against the ire of Minister Connolly. As his later published views on forestry development were considered progressive for the period, it is possible that this discord was possibly another example of the effect of the lack of an agreed forestry development policy for Ireland. In 1940, after Reinhard's departure, Anderson was reinstated as Acting Director.

In later years, Anderson was commemorated for his technical excellence in forestry operations, his interest in the suitability of land and soil for selected trees, his planting of conifers into hardwood stands and the introduction of the eucalyptus plantation.<sup>1235</sup> He was also appreciated for his later studies of natural oak woodlands, sustained yield forestry, and climatology, and his innovations in technical proposals for peat planting,<sup>1236</sup> tree genetics, and natural regeneration as practiced in France, published after his term of office in Ireland.<sup>1237</sup> He developed a system of woodland classification for the British Isles, at the request of Robert Troup, Director of the Imperial Forestry Institute in Oxford.<sup>1238</sup> Anderson's wide appreciation of the many approaches to forestry using native and introduced species would indicate the missed opportunity by the state for the development of natural hardwood forests for timber and

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<sup>1231</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 166; Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 216.

<sup>1232</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 11.

<sup>1233</sup> Anderson, *The Natural Woodlands of Britain and Ireland*, p. 18.

<sup>1234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>1235</sup> 'Mark Loudon Anderson 1895-1961', in *Irish Forestry*, xviii, no. 2 (1961).

<sup>1236</sup> Taylor, 'Address in 1981 on Mark Anderson: Scottish forester', p. 62.

<sup>1237</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 61-6.

<sup>1238</sup> Anderson, *The Natural Woodlands of Britain and Ireland*.



shelter and other uses in Ireland. His maxim was 'to study nature, follow her if you can but guide her where need be, and record what is done and achieved'.<sup>1239</sup>

### ***Director Otto Reinhard, 1936 to 1939***

At the insistence of Minister Connolly, a new Director of the Forest Division was recruited from outside Britain. In 1935, Reinhard was selected from seventy candidates from twelve different countries, including Mark Anderson, on the basis of 'his technical qualifications for large scale forestry, his international practical experience, his knowledge of the timber trade,' and also the fact of his not being British, according to O' Donoghue.<sup>1240</sup> Reinhard was a professional Prussian forester and former military officer, who had worked as a conservator of a state forest of 88,000 acres, with European and African forestry experience.<sup>1241</sup> At that time, German forestry was based on sustainable forestry management of naturally regenerating conifer and beech forests, as well as plantation forestry, all of which were integrated with local industry. Reinhard negotiated a much higher salary than other Directors of equivalent posts which was approved by de Valera,<sup>1242</sup> indicating his perceived value to the Department who considered him 'an ideal director.'<sup>1243</sup> Reinhard and Minister Connolly both represented a change in the administration and direction of state forestry in Ireland.

In 1939, Taoiseach Eamon de Valera sent a series of questions on state forestry to Reinhard on Irish state forestry regarding the status of forestry in Ireland,<sup>1244</sup> reflecting an interest in a land survey and a broader approach to state forestry. He asked for information on:

- the land available for planting without interference with rough grazing and comparison of value of land use;
- the estimate of timber requirements;
- the potential of scrub planting for pulp production;

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<sup>1239</sup> Taylor, 'Address in 1981 on Mark Anderson: Scottish forester', p. 65.

<sup>1240</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2632-3 (6 June 1935), Joseph Connolly. Anderson was seen as not having the qualities to be technical head of the Department, in O'Donoghue, 'The story of Otto Reinhard: A case-study of divided loyalties, in peace and war', pp 216-9.

<sup>1241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>1242</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 220-2.

<sup>1243</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 173.

<sup>1244</sup> 'Forestry General Files 1939', *Taoiseach's Files* (National Archives, 1937-46), TSCH/3/S11555 A., Reinhard Correspondence 3 May 1939.

- the effect of forests on climate;
- the budget needed to plant trees to meet national timber requirements;
- the method of planting unsuitable land deemed unsuitable that was forested;
- the means of increasing hardwoods;
- and suitable trees for roadsides that would not interfere with agriculture.

Reinhard's reply indicated his views on Irish state forestry management and its potential for timber production.<sup>1245</sup> He recommended additional personnel to conduct a proper survey of the country for suitable land, and estimated the area of suitable land for afforestation to be 500,000 acres for timber production for the needs of the country. He proposed over 400,000 acres of land for state planting,<sup>1246</sup> and 100,000 acres of woodlands in private hands. On private forests, Reinhard's view was that 'these will either be run on proper forestry lines or will eventually be taken over by the Forest Service'. Scrub wood planting he viewed as non-economic, as there would not even be a certain minimum return, but it should be cleared and replanted, without specifying the tree species. On the question of the value of forestry over grazing land, he proposed that forestry gives a crop of valuable raw material and provides more actual and potential employment. He noted that 'the small grazier is the natural enemy of the tree'. He estimated that the requirement of home timber to be 20 million cu ft., and of this, 5% could be supplied from home woods. Reinhard considered there would be a surplus of softwood, and state forest thinnings were already being used in wood industries, particularly for fuel.

He maintained that the soil on the Western seaboard had deteriorated to the point where it would be difficult to plant trees, where crops were planted by ridging and manuring, which was not practical for forestry. Planting success he considered would be possible in valleys if they were sheltered and where there were suitable soils. He had firm opinions that peatland forestry was a waste of money, and neither fossil tree stump land nor flood plain land were suitable for planting, but in his view, cutaway bog could be planted if it was drained. Hardwood trees in state planting had risen from 3 to 12% but he observed that suitable ground was not often available for planting. This shows Reinhard's focus on timber production from conifer plantations over regenerated woodlands, based on existing market needs and available land. County council shelter belts and ornamental tree planting were more horticulture than forestry, in his view. He proposed that there was evidence of national climatic effects from forestry, with

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<sup>1245</sup> Ibid., Reinhard Correspondence 3 May 1939.

<sup>1246</sup> Ibid., Reinhard Correspondence 3 May 1939.

enough evidence to show some beneficial effects on the local climate for shelter, water economy and the prevention of soil erosion.

He recommended the expansion of the service to 19 forest managers, 99 foresters, 33 youths in training, and 700 to 2,000 labourers according to the season. Reinhard proposed a big increase in the area under nurseries from 315 acres to 8 to 10,000 acres. He did not refer to the involvement of the public in state forestry, but he did have plans for amenity forestry. Under Minister Connolly and Reinhard, both the staff and the planting rate of trees on state land increased, and better facilities were introduced for the Forest Service personnel. After three years, Reinhard had doubled the planting rate and, for the first time, the sale and marketing of timber was taken seriously,<sup>1247</sup> although still focused on the exports of pitwood to Britain.<sup>1248</sup> At this time, the marketing of timber in Britain was the objective of several new timber councils which were formed under the auspices of the Forestry Commission.<sup>1249</sup>

However, despite his positive but short contribution to the Irish forestry service, Reinhard's return to Germany at the beginning of the Second World War and to military service, created a difficult diplomatic situation for the Irish state. Although his contract was terminated,<sup>1250</sup> his correspondence indicated his hope to return to Ireland. In one of his last letters, he referred to the 'huge forests with standing timber we bought... will be a great asset to the country just now,'<sup>1251</sup> indicating the state purchase of timbered woods was still being undertaken for felling rather than preservation.

Reinhard's views were subsumed into the reorganisation of the Forestry Division into the Ministry for Supplies under Minister Seán Lemass, at the start of the war. The market for pitwood ceased at this time, and state timber was requisitioned by Minister Lemass for fuel, scaffolding, fencing, ESB poles, and other uses.<sup>1252</sup> As the war approached and coal imports were limited, the issue of the provision of a national fuel supply from state forests became critical, and there was an increase in woodland clearances and a return to traditional wood industries. Large supplies of wood fuel for urban centres by the state were organised by Minister Lemass to replace the loss of

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<sup>1247</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 178.

<sup>1248</sup> Dept Lands, 33-38, p. 20.

<sup>1249</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 175.

<sup>1250</sup> O'Donoghue, 'The story of Otto Reinhard: A case-study of divided loyalties, in peace and war', pp 227-8.

<sup>1251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>1252</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', pp 27-8.

coal imports. In Croneybyrne Wood in Co. Wicklow, there was extensive charcoal production to provide fuel for the creamery cooperatives' gas boilers.<sup>1253</sup> The cabinetmaker firm of Noyeks were contracted to fell and saw native timbers in Ireland for shipping and building needs.<sup>1254</sup>

By 1942, the Department of Supplies was in control of tree felling and the supply of timber, while the Forestry Division under Director Mark Anderson, was focusing on tree planting and the supply of timber for fuel, despite the shortage of land, labour, seeds and fencing.<sup>1255</sup> Under unfavourable conditions, planting was maintained at a rate of over 5,800 acres per year, which included replanting some areas where non-native conifer tree species such as Douglas fir had not survived. This demonstrated the potential for integrated timber production and wood fuel delivery by the government, in cooperation with the Forestry Division and the private sector at this time, which in time, could have been more closely integrated with planting programs for import replacements.

### ***Foresters and forest workers***

From 1934, the Forestry Division expanded rapidly with the recruitment of foremen and foresters from Departmental apprentices and graduates.<sup>1256</sup> Proposals in the Dáil for the recruitment of foresters formerly employed on estates were rejected by the Department due to the lack of available positions, according to Minister Boland, but it was more likely that the estate foresters were not trained in conifer planting techniques and work practices. By 1939, the numbers of forestry workers fluctuated from 1,208 to 2,092 in 1939 as the planting program declined, and they were also employed in road making, estate improvements and fuel production.<sup>1257</sup> The British-styled welfare employment relief scheme which had paid for forestry labour from 1904 was replaced by the Estate Improvement Scheme financed by the Forestry Division.<sup>1258</sup> However, the lack of action by the Department to improve the harsh working conditions

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<sup>1253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>1254</sup> Noyek were quality furniture makers, founded in 1890 in Dublin, and were the first producers of plywood. Anon, *The Noyek story 1890 - 1965* (Dublin, 1965).

<sup>1255</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', pp 4-5.

<sup>1256</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 28. *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2397, 2418 (7 May 1936), Sean Goulding; Minister Joseph Connolly; lxxv, 1525 (3 May 1939), Brooke Brasier.

<sup>1257</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943 ', p. 46.

<sup>1258</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 29.

and low pay for forest workers resulted in strikes for wage increases in 1937, which held up work in eleven forests. Improvements to working conditions by the Department were very slow, despite their growing difficulties in recruiting forestry labour where needed.<sup>1259</sup>

The Agricultural Wages Board was re-established in 1936 to fix minimum wages for agricultural and forestry workers, with the first order in August 1937 of 24 to 33 shillings per week for a six day week of fifty-four hours,<sup>1260</sup> rated against the local agricultural labourers' wage.<sup>1261</sup> Labour costs in 1936 were £69,300 for 6,919 acres, and by 1938 they had increased to £100,400 for a planted area of 7,389 acres.<sup>1262</sup> The Department started to review the issue of housing for foresters in 1938,<sup>1263</sup> after the formation of the State Foresters' Association.<sup>1264</sup> By comparison, by 1933, the Forestry Commission in Britain had provided 1,198 cottages with smallholdings for forestry workers in state forests.<sup>1265</sup>

In 1935, after a gap of twenty years, formal forestry education in Ireland restarted with twelve trainees in the Forestry School in Avondale, and the forestry centres of Emo and Dundrum. The former Forestry Scholarship was also reinstated in University College Dublin until the war years.<sup>1266</sup> Academic forestry research time and funding was still limited, with eucalyptus trials the only research program of the period, besides the undocumented large scale planting trials on 'difficult ground'<sup>1267</sup> that were being undertaken by the state in every county. However, forestry knowledge exchange with other foresters was facilitated by cooperation between Northern Ireland's forestry administration and the Forestry Division, initiated by Forbes, as well as by Ireland's continued attendance at the Commonwealth Forestry Conferences. This association with British state forestry provided essential information on 'up to date technical

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<sup>1259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1260</sup> Hoor, *The Department's story: A history of the Department of Agriculture*, p. 194.

<sup>1261</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxx, 649-50 (9 March 1938), Timothy Murphy.

<sup>1262</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 36.

<sup>1263</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>1264</sup> Michael McNamara, 'The state Foresters' Association', in M. Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays & recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century* (Coillte, 2000), pp 51-6.

<sup>1265</sup> Commission, *Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th, 1933*, p. 36.

<sup>1266</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 31.

<sup>1267</sup> Ibid.

knowledge for assistance to the state forestry service on soils, the treatment of growing wood, problems relating to fungi, soils, pests, etc. as well as silviculture in general and the utilisation of forestry products'.<sup>1268</sup> In the late 1930s, continental forestry experience was initiated under Director Reinhard, when two or three state foresters had the opportunity to visit European forests, a tradition that was retained in subsequent years.<sup>1269</sup>

### ***Nurseries and county councils***

Over the 1930s, the role of the private and county council nurseries in state forestry development became increasingly uncertain. County council nursery schemes in Cork and Kildare were no longer state funded by 1935,<sup>1270</sup> although there was an insufficient supply of the nursery stock of trees. This became a limiting factor in the expansion of the conifer and hardwood planting program at the time, creating a demand for an increase in imported seeds and plants. Concern was expressed in the Dáil on the need for direction on private nursery production, and the necessity of the control of imported nursery stock.<sup>1271</sup> The issue of importing disease with seed from diseased larch abroad was first raised by Dublin TD James Fitzgerald Kenny,<sup>1272</sup> but there was no reply on the issue from the Minister. Private nurseries had the capacity to supply the state with trees and Independent TD James Dillon informed the Dáil that private nurseries had built up a considerable market in Great Britain which had been destroyed by the economic war.<sup>1273</sup> Frank McDermott noted that there were three generations of nurserymen in the Meath nurseries of Summerhill which could supply trees to the Department but they had had no success in representations to the government.<sup>1274</sup> However, under Minister Connolly, the state nursery supply of seed was expanded to meet increasing demand, which reduced imports from Germany, Canada, Austria, United States, Denmark, Scotland, as well as oak from England,

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<sup>1268</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 98-9 (2 February 1938), Gerald Boland.

<sup>1269</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1515 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall.

<sup>1270</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 35.

<sup>1271</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxiv, 2215-6 (22 March 1939), Peadar Doyle.

<sup>1272</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1166 (27 June 1934), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1273</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1524, 1555 (3 May 1939), Brooke Brasier; James Dillon.

<sup>1274</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, I, 721 (30 November 1933), Frank McDermott; lxi, 2402 (7 May 1936), James Dillon.

Spanish chestnut from Japan and beech from Holland.<sup>1275</sup> The supply of home collected seeds, including oak, beech, sycamore and alder, was also increased.

During this time, county council interest in the management of local woods waned, although the Land Commission was still offering wooded estates to county councils, with one in Westmeath referenced in the Dáil.<sup>1276</sup> However, there was evidence of a continued interest in the county council horticultural tree planting schemes, with several proposals in the Dáil for coordination between county council horticulturalists and the Forestry Division for small forestry schemes near towns.<sup>1277</sup> Cork TD Jeremiah Hurley<sup>1278</sup> advocated state assistance for the management of a small wood at the edge of a town. Roscommon TD Michael Brennan informed the Dáil that there was interest in such a scheme but that there were no adequate municipal systems for such an undertaking.<sup>1279</sup> By 1938, the County Council forestry schemes of Kildare and Westmeath were about to be handed over and managed by the Department, with the Kildare County Council forester already reappointed to the Department.<sup>1280</sup> Thus the scheme to preserve local woods envisaged by the 1908 Report ended, with no replacement or even discussion on an alternative.

To conclude, this brief review of institutional discourse on state forestry in the Oireachtas' forest-related debates and in other publications during this period showed the depth of the legacy of British scientific forestry on the Forestry Division, which continued into the 1930s, and dominated every aspect of state forestry administration, until Connolly's term of office. While Anderson was the first state forester who was interested in a more natural approach to forestry, his term was not long enough to make a difference to the attachment that had been already established to non-native conifers, an attachment which continued over the decade in their promotion of conifers for shelter belts, in old woodlands, as well as on nearly all habitats acquired by the Department, for planting in schools, for county council tree planting.

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<sup>1275</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2398 (3 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1276</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1529 (3 May 1939), Michael J. Kennedy.

<sup>1277</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1545 (3 May 1939), Jeremiah Hurley.

<sup>1278</sup> Jeremiah Hurley, Cork South East Labour Party representative.

<sup>1279</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2439 (7 May 1936), Michael Brennan, Fine Gael, Roscommon, farmer.

<sup>1280</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 35.

Inferred from Dáil discourse and expert publications, several aspects of the relationships between participants emerge. Firstly, despite political and civil turmoil, political will was shown to be the most effective means of reigniting the national potential for an inclusive, broad-based state forestry policy. However, Minister Connolly's ideas and actions for an integrated state forestry program, regenerating woods and communities, preferably under an Independent Forest Authority, gradually faded from view without administrative cooperation to continue his legacy after he left office. His contribution was an increased rate of conifer planting with some increase in broadleaves under Reinhard's direction, as well as a short-lived Arbor Day limited to schools, and a new generation of state forestry staff from the re-opened Forestry School at Avondale. Although Reinhard would increase the rate of planting and open up the forests to wood users and recreationers, he had no relationship with the heritage and place of trees, woods, and forests as part of the national identity, along with all the previous Directors. Thus without the political will to implement the guidance of a forestry policy to include woodlands, the regeneration of woods was not on his nor the subsequent Minister Boland's agenda.

Secondly, this review clarified the relationship of the Forestry Division and the Ministers. It showed the capacity of the state forestry administration to continue to acquire land and plant trees despite numerous changes in leadership, and economic turmoil, which highlighted their fixed views on limiting the program to the capacity of the Division, in the absence of a national policy. This was arguably necessary to establish a sufficient level of conifer plantation to sustain a wood processing industry, but this had never been formally agreed or planned. The institutional cooperative action on a national system for the production and supply of timber demonstrated by the Department of Supplies to meet the fuel and timber needs of the public, highlighted the absence of any effective direction on the use of state timber over the previous twenty years, despite Minister Connolly's efforts, in a state forestry administration wholly given to land acquisition, tree planting and maintenance.

Thirdly, the perception of the public by the forestry administration was evident in the promotion of public education. Neither political nor administrative will was engaged with addressing the negative public opinion about the expansion of state conifer forests, which was already evident in certain areas, and which was causing significant delays in the planting program by the end of the decade. The cancellation of Arbor Day was another sign of a profound lack of understanding of the need for public education, participation and cooperation in forestry.



Fourthly, the relationship of the forestry administration and the private forest owner to preserve and make productive regenerating woods had not been fostered, except as recipients of small amounts of grant-aid to plant conifer plantations. The institutional assumption that the woods would be preserved either by the county councils or the private wood owner did not live up to the reality of the situation by the end of the decade. Nor had the cooperative potential of the local government with the forestry administration to regenerate woodland been realised. Neither of these aspects of forestry came within the field of view of the institutional land acquisition and conifer tree planting program, and the place of trees in the landscape continued to be considered 'decorative'.

## II: Public discourse on state forestry

During the 1930s, expert opinion on forestry could be found in the non-professional domain amongst private forest owners, and amongst those influenced by the re-forestation vision of the Provisional Government, represented by Thomas Ponsonby and authors John Mackay and Bulmer Hobson.

### ***Thomas Ponsonby, private forest owner***

As a public-spirited landowner in Ireland and an experienced manager of trees and woods, Thomas Ponsonby,<sup>1281</sup> former Chairman of the Irish Forestry Advisory Committee of the Forestry Commission conducted an ongoing discourse on the approach to state forest development with Arthur Forbes in the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society Journal from 1931 to 1932. Their discourse was on the advantages and disadvantages of non-native conifer plantation forestry and natural regenerated forestry for timber production, with Ponsonby favouring a balanced approach.<sup>1282</sup> This debate was illustrative of the wider discussion in scientific forestry journals in Great Britain on the benefits and costs of different types of forest

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<sup>1281</sup> Thomas Ponsonby was an expert forester and landowner of Kilcooley Abbey in Tipperary, who favoured natural regeneration and continuous cover forestry. Some of his woods were managed in this way by the Department who purchased the property in the mid 1930s. Much of the woodland was also planted in conifer plantations, in Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 72.

<sup>1282</sup> Ponsonby, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles', pp 1-28, 123-130, 1-7, 99-111; Forbes, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles: criticism and reply'.

development, particularly the non-native conifer plantation, or scientific approach. Ponsonby represented the practical self-educated forest owner who had long experience of estate forestry, who had also planted non-native conifer plantations, and with this experience, was promoting the continental forester's approach to productive regenerating forestry for state forestry in Britain.

Although both approaches to forestry development in Britain were very experimental for the British Isles at the time, Forbes comments were disparaging, referring to Ponsonby's proposals as untried and experimental, and dismissing him as an amateur, despite Ponsonby's own engagement with large-scale experimental conifer plantation on the advice of Forbes, on his estate in Ireland.<sup>1283</sup> Forbes' attitude towards non-professional foresters could have contributed to the loss of knowledge and the experience in regenerated woodland management of wood owners, to the state.

The discourse on plantation forestry and regenerated forestry continued during the British Empire Forestry Conferences which had become the forum for the Commonwealth nations discourse on scientific forestry management, mostly for the professional foresters. Scientific forestry papers delivered the latest results in forestry management trials, generally on the plantation approach.<sup>1284</sup>

### ***Authors John Mackay and Bulmer Hobson***

With widespread public interest in forestry development in Ireland, and a sense of frustration that more was not being done, authors Bulmer Hobson and John Mackay were an example of the inheritors of Griffith's vision for a re-afforested Ireland. Both Mackay and Hobson were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the beneficial effects of forestry in rural areas, particularly in the Gaeltacht where economic regeneration would be fostered by the regeneration of woods and the planting of trees, and the industries associated with them.<sup>1285</sup> In their published works, both were critical of the lack of a national forestry policy and the limited state planting ambitions of the non-native conifer trees planting program as an end in itself, without any national social and

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<sup>1283</sup> Forbes, 'A system of forestry for the British Isles: criticism and reply', pp 123-6.

<sup>1284</sup> Powell, 'Dominion over palm and pine: the British Empire forestry conferences, 1920-47', pp 868 - 72.

<sup>1285</sup> Hobson, 'Forestry and the Gaeltacht,'. Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 198, 202. This was endorsed as a joint objective with economic goals for state forestry in the 1951 FAO report of Roy Cameron.

community objectives.<sup>1286</sup> Both Hobson and Mackay made major contributions to the public discourse on state forestry development in the Dáil, and to the eventual expansion of the state forestry program.

During the 1930s, as one of the early twentieth century architects of the new state, Hobson<sup>1287</sup> returned to his earlier role in state public relations to advance national economic reconstruction under Cumann na nGaedhael as editor of *Saorstát Éireann*, a government publication that presented Ireland in 1932. On natural resources, the woods of Ireland were referred to in relation to their absence through deforestation, rather than being included for their potential for reconstruction.<sup>1288</sup> This oversight is puzzling as Hobson had also been a member of a forestry discussion group that had originally met before the First World War, and whose deliberations probably contributed to the high prioritisation given to re-forestation by the Provisional Dáil government. In the 1930's, a group made up of some of the same people met to discuss 'a substantial forestry programme'.<sup>1289</sup> The group was made up of John Busted,<sup>1290</sup> Mrs Berthon Waters,<sup>1291</sup> Alfred O'Rahilly,<sup>1292</sup> Luke Duffy<sup>1293</sup> and Seán McBride,<sup>1294</sup> who put forward recommendations to Eamon de Valera, for greatly accelerated forestry development, on a larger scale.<sup>1295</sup> As a former Minister, Seán McBride later mentioned that de Valera and particularly the Department of Finance

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<sup>1286</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, pp 174, 181, 202.

<sup>1287</sup> Hobson was pacifist leader of the Irish nationalist movement and the Irish Volunteers up to 1916, and a civil servant in the Irish Free State administration in 1923, Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth century Ireland* (Manchester, 2009), p. 220.

<sup>1288</sup> Hobson (ed.), *Saorstát Éireann, Irish Free State: Official Handbook*, p. 30. Robert Lloyd Praeger referred to the replacement of forested land by agricultural grazing land.

<sup>1289</sup> Seán McBride, personal interview in Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 170; McBride, *A message to the Irish people*, p. 92.

<sup>1290</sup> John Busted, economist in University College Cork, government advisor, governing body of UCC.

<sup>1291</sup> Mrs Berthon Waters, economist, Labour Party activist from New Zealand.

<sup>1292</sup> Alfred O'Rahilly, active nationalist, University Professor in UCC in Mathematics, Physics, became a TD in 1923-4, interested in education, politics and sociology. Contributed to 'Forestry in Ireland' by John Mackay, 1934.

<sup>1293</sup> Luke J. Duffy, born in Sligo was a Labour Party member and Trades Union activist. He was also active in the Irish National Foresters friendly society.

<sup>1294</sup> Seán McBride, Son of Maud Gonne McBride, TD Mayo West & South, interested in Irish, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, ship building.

<sup>1295</sup> McBride, *A message to the Irish people*, p. 92. This was also similar to the membership of the minority report group on the Banking Commission.

maintained that forestry was too expensive and that it could never become a short-term economic proposition.<sup>1296</sup>

Although the vision for the re-forestation of Ireland was not included in *Saorstát Éireann*, Hobson published the results of the work of the forestry discussion group in a pamphlet on state forestry development, *Irish Forestry Policy*, in an effort to generate public debate on the future of state forestry in Ireland, particularly on in the future development of the Gaeltacht.<sup>1297</sup> They proposed a committee of inquiry to recommend a forestry authority similar to the Shannon Scheme. This forest authority would administer a large-scale fifteen-year planting program of over half a million trees, with long-term financial support, advised by technical experts from those nations where economic forestry was of prime importance to the economy.<sup>1298</sup> In an effort to initiate a forestry policy on industrial planting and processing, Bulmer Hobson researched international industrial forestry development, particularly the chemical processing of wood pulp, and the benefits of the chemical wood industries of Germany, Sweden, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and the US.<sup>1299</sup>

Marnie Hay proposed that Hobson's economic policies influenced Seán McBride,<sup>1300</sup> and it is evident that they had met on common ground regarding McBride's forestry policies which were to make such an impact on forestry development and tree planting in Ireland in the 1950s. McBride was the architect of the expansionist conifer tree planting program of the 1950s, funded by Marshall Aid Funds. In later years, McBride regretted the lost opportunities in forestry development and plans for the utilization of the timber by subsequent governments, which, in his view, amounted to 'criminal neglect' of the question of the substitution of imports of wood products.<sup>1301</sup> Reflecting on the abandonment of the nationalist legacy of re-forestation, he said:

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<sup>1296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>1297</sup> Hobson, 'Irish Forest Policy'.

<sup>1298</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 1-22. Hobson, 'Forestry and the Gaeltacht,'.

<sup>1299</sup> Hobson, 'Irish Forest Policy', p. 22.

<sup>1300</sup> Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the nationalist movement in twentieth century Ireland*, p. 228.

<sup>1301</sup> McBride, *A message to the Irish people*, pp 97-8.

The failure of our governments to give adequate recognition to the importance of forestry and to give forestry-related industries the priority it deserves has been one of the great disappointments of my life.<sup>1302</sup>

Author John Mackay's<sup>1303</sup> view of a national forest policy for Ireland was based on the legacy of historic 'woodlands rooted in the collective imagination', in his book on the woodland heritage and culture of Ireland, *Trodden Gold*.<sup>1304</sup> His vision for the re-forestation of Ireland was similar to that proposed in the first Dáil where forests were at the heart of a nation's posterity.<sup>1305</sup> Mackay's passionate interest in trees, woods and wood culture in Ireland was evident in his several books on forestry, some of which were referenced in Dáil debates.<sup>1306</sup> His concern at the lack of vision in the state planting program was based on his view that 'the Forestry Division did not know what they were growing trees for'.<sup>1307</sup> He proposed that state forest policy should have the economic outlook of Arthur Griffith, to be administered by a Forestry Board. This forest authority 'would oversee a Forest Extension service for public education to 'instruct the whole people in forest values, and what such values mean to the prosperity of a nation', thus addressing vandalism and 'automatically outlawing violence against the common weal'.<sup>1308</sup> He proposed a forestry consultative committee for review and discourse on the challenges facing the state, the most urgent of which he considered to be the question of land use. State forestry, in his opinion, would integrate the production of timber on arable as well as non-arable land, where marginal wet land could be planted with trees instead of being drained for agriculture. His proposal for a Forestry Authority was described in some detail with eight Departments that would reflect a national forestry policy:

- Forest management for planting, regeneration and harvesting;
- Range management to attend to grazing of animals on unplanted land, game licenses, and recreational use of the forests;

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<sup>1302</sup> O Carroll and Joyce, 'A Forestry centenary', p. 12.

<sup>1303</sup> John Mackay, Wicklow solicitor, passionate advocate for the re-forestation of Ireland, author of several books on the heritage of trees and woods, and national forestry development. *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturalists* (London, 1994).

<sup>1304</sup> Mackay, *Trodden Gold: Merchandise of silk and paper and wood and the glory of the arat-tree*. A popular publication, referred to in Lady Gregory's Diaries as one which she had recommended to her friends.

<sup>1305</sup> Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, p. 18.

<sup>1306</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 612 (4 May 1938), Thomas Dowdall. Reference to 'Forestry in Ireland'.

<sup>1307</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 157.

<sup>1308</sup> Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, p. 19.

- Operations and engineering for drainage, roads, bridges trails;
- Public relations for propaganda, forest instruction and enlightenment of the whole common people with a liaison between the forest authority and owners of land adjacent to the national forests;
- Finance and accounts;
- Research to include crop species, silvicultural systems, ecology, fungi, insects, high forest regeneration, efficient utilization for industrial forestry and the chemical forest industry.

Mackay had also investigated commercial forestry development on the Continent, as well as the benefits of state saw mills and their potential for employment. He promoted the ancillary development of the wood industry with tree planting programs with the introduction of timber seasoning standards, common to other countries.<sup>1309</sup> In his detailed studies of Belgian, Swedish, Czechoslovakian and German experiences of the industrialisation of forestry resources, Mackay extolled the benefits of the wood industries in the economies of continental nations,<sup>1310</sup> particularly for local communities.<sup>1311</sup> He was also critical of the lack of effort to reinstate a university forestry course in Ireland, giving the examples of Finland and the US as a comparison,<sup>1312</sup> noting that there was not even a forestry museum in the National University.<sup>1313</sup> He vented his frustration with the directionless government approach to state forestry, with their missed opportunities to develop industrial uses, chiefly during Forbes' administration.<sup>1314</sup> His study of state forestry was reviewed and critiqued by a committee led by Professor Alfred O'Rahilly, who included an extensive commentary.

As Minister Connolly was introducing some of these measures at the same time as these publications, it is probable that he was influenced by Mackay and Hobson. However, Mackay's research was rejected by Minister Boland on the grounds of his

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<sup>1309</sup> Mackay and O'Rahilly, *Forestry in Ireland: A study of modern forestry and of the interdependence of agriculture and industry*, pp 44-84.

<sup>1310</sup> Mackay, *Trodden Gold: Merchandise of silk and paper and wood and the glory of the arat-tree*. Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, pp 47-57; Mackay and O'Rahilly, *Forestry in Ireland: A study of modern forestry and of the interdependence of agriculture and industry*.

<sup>1311</sup> Mackay and O'Rahilly, *Forestry in Ireland: A study of modern forestry and of the interdependence of agriculture and industry*; Mackay, 'The forest and national life'. Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*.

<sup>1312</sup> Mackay, 'The forest and national life', p. 6. Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, pp 48-52.

<sup>1313</sup> Mackay, *The rape of Ireland*, p. 73.

<sup>1314</sup> Mackay and O'Rahilly, *Forestry in Ireland: A study of modern forestry and of the interdependence of agriculture and industry*, pp 55-63, 157. In Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 157. Neeson considered that his criticisms were not entirely justified 'as Forbes was in a situation not of his own making'.

lack of professional knowledge, preferring the expertise of his Departmental foresters, which echoed Forbes' dismissal of opinions and proposals from non-professional foresters. Minister Boland remarked in the Dáil that he would not be 'relying on the opinions of a man who read a book', and he added: 'I have to rely on those who have been able to deliver the goods and who have given their whole life to forestry work'.<sup>1315</sup> Boland's criticism was scathing, referring to 'the gentleman really in the clouds,' whose plan which would require the whole scale evacuation of communities to provide the three million acres of land that would be needed for such an afforestation plan.<sup>1316</sup> His criticisms of Mackay did not refer to the other issues raised on the development of a national forestry policy, on industrial development of forestry, public education, or a consultative committee.

In contrast to Mackay's inclusive state forestry approach, in Minister Boland's view, state forestry was defined by the question of land acquisition, and the reality of land acquisition was becoming more challenging due to the growing negative response of the public. He explained to the Dáil that the Department: 'finds the utmost difficulty in persuading people to give up land which the Department wishes to acquire for afforestation purposes'. With evidence of fencing wire being removed to show the local response to state conifer planting in some regions, he added that 'there was opposition almost everywhere.. they all want it done in some other place'. His vague response to this negative attitude of the public was to 'try and inculcate a better spirit in regard to afforestation'.

These few examples of public discourse on state forestry during this period, illustrate the continued interest in the public domain in the Griffith vision of a broader national state forestry policy that would include natural woods and wood industry development, as well as plantation forestry on a large scale. These examples also reflect Forbes legacy, and that of Minister Hogan's, of non-acceptance of any other perception or proposal on state forestry development that did not originate from a professional forester. The cumulative effect of this limited approach to state forestry was beginning to emerge in the forest-related debates which were taking place in the Dáil by the end of the 1930s.

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<sup>1315</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lv, 812 (11 May 1938), Gerald Boland.

<sup>1316</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lv, 823 (11 May 1938), Gerald Boland.

### III: Parliamentary forest-related discourse and participants

During the period from 1932 to 1939, there was extensive parliamentary forest-related discourse in the Dáil, with occasional Seanad contributions made as part of debates on other issues. For the participants in state forestry development in Ireland, the debates in the Dáil provided the only annual public consultative forum between the government administration and parliamentarians on forestry-related issues. This was in contrast to public forestry discourse in Britain where there were three consultative committees which met once a year to review the work and direction of the Forestry Commission.<sup>1317</sup> With a constituency base that was more representative of the small holder and people living in rural Ireland, Fianna Fáil public representatives were active on behalf of their rural constituents, particularly in relation to land purchase and division arising from the implementation of four additional Land Acts. The effect of these Acts was to extend the powers of the Land Commission to include the potential for considerable political influence. Thus lobbying and deputations had become institutionalised, and there was increasing dependency on the state and politicians for economic benefits,<sup>1318</sup> particularly when many discretionary decisions by ministers and officials were to be made on tariffs, quotas, licences, and the location of factories.<sup>1319</sup> Lobbying committees on the question of the location of state forest centres continued to be formed in some counties, with TDs at their centre, which included local public agencies, church representatives and small holders.<sup>1320</sup> These committees were formed to encourage and cajole people to offer land plots for afforestation to the Department in the interest of the employment that would be created.<sup>1321</sup> For some TDs, this created difficult situations where issues regarding land division and land purchase for forestry were being decided by the same Department. Donegal TD Daniel

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<sup>1317</sup> Forestry Commission, *Fourteenth Annual Report, 1933* (London, 1934), p. 35.

<sup>1318</sup> Daly, *Industrial development and Irish national identity 1922-1939*, p. 178.

<sup>1319</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1320</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1544 (3 May 1939), Jeremiah Hurley.

<sup>1321</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1189 (27 June 1934), Joseph Connolly, 65.



McMenamin<sup>1322</sup> admitted he did not 'want to be too critical, as one would be disposed to be, having regard to what is being done in County Donegal'.<sup>1323</sup>

Discourse analysis of the debates on forest-related issues in the Dáil at this time were notable for their cross-party interest in the future of the forestry resource. Wexford TD John Esmonde<sup>1324</sup> believed that forestry issues should be beyond party politics, for the sake of the people working in it, whether labouring or manufacturing wooden products.<sup>1325</sup> There was evidence of growing public opinion in favour of planting trees,<sup>1326</sup> and many TDs spoke with experience and knowledge. Wexford TD Richard Corish<sup>1327</sup> maintained that the forestry vote was one of the most important votes in the parliamentary year,<sup>1328</sup> and Meath TD James Kelly<sup>1329</sup> reminded the Dáil of the fact that they were custodians of the wealth of the country.<sup>1330</sup> TD Michael Brennan<sup>1331</sup> expressed his belief that 'forestry is a matter in which every Deputy is deeply interested and there is considerable disappointment that there has not been more advance made'.<sup>1332</sup> However, forester historian John Durand dismissed the standard of Dáil debate on forestry, particularly the lack of economic scrutiny. He said that:

... debates in the Dáil followed a pattern around forestry units: Western county TDs would plead for more forestry, Wicklow and Laois would praise forestry, Labour TDs would question conditions. All TDs would call for more afforestation with implicit faith in the return of the investment with no informed debate on long-term financial

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<sup>1322</sup> Daniel McMenamin, Fine Gael, Donegal, barrister, interested in Gaeltacht affairs, Land Commission, fisheries, agriculture and the courts.

<sup>1323</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1543 (3 May 1939), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1324</sup> John L. Esmonde, Fine Gael, Wexford, spokesperson on health, social services and forestry.

<sup>1325</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lv, 808 (11 May 1938), John L. Esmonde.

<sup>1326</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 603(4 May 1938), Martin Roddy.

<sup>1327</sup> Richard Corish, Labour TD, Wexford county councilor, Trades Union official, insurance agent.

<sup>1328</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1526-7 (3 May 1939), Richard Corish.

<sup>1329</sup> Fianna Fáil TD, interested in agriculture, Land Commission, public works.

<sup>1330</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 791 (11 May 1938), James Kelly.

<sup>1331</sup> Michael Brennan, Independent then Fine Gael, Roscommon, farmer, active nationalist, Chair Roscommon county council, interested in agriculture, land issues and public works.

<sup>1332</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2438 (7 May 1936), Michael Brennan.

commitments. Issues were debated on social and political values not economic ones.<sup>1333</sup>

While the first part of Durand's observations can be upheld, there were many calls for a national forestry policy in parliament, and the 'commercial' and 'economic' justifications for plantation forestry were queried to no avail.

Although Forestry Division staff were appreciated for their courtesy, efficiency, and their good work,<sup>1334</sup> and there were a few congratulatory plaudits for their afforestation work,<sup>1335</sup> from Wicklow TD Seamus Moore<sup>1336</sup> who referred to the positive public attitude to forestry in his county, where the Department was seen as 'a fairy godmother in some parishes,<sup>1337</sup> there was widespread dissatisfaction with the rejection of lands considered unsuitable for afforestation resulting in increased challenges to Departmental expertise. In regions without state forestry programs, such as Meath, which TD Kelly referred to as the 'Cinderella' with no planting scheme, he proposed that every county should have one.<sup>1338</sup>

The leading speakers in Seanad debates from 1932 to 1939 were from a wide professional background from railway manager, professor and newspaper proprietor, listed in Appendix III. Their contributions to the forest-related debates in the Oireachtas was generally limited to points raised in debates on other issues, during this period. Parliamentary contributions to forest-related debates by TDs increased during the 1930's, as shown in the figure below.

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<sup>1333</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', pp 241-2.

<sup>1334</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 789 (11 May 1938), Timothy Murphy; lxxi, 703 (5 May 1938), Richard Anthony; lxxv, 1537 (3 May 1939), James Everett.

<sup>1335</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 693 (5 May 1938), Michael Kennedy; lxxi, 806 (11 May 1938), John Esmonde; lxxv, 1528, 1522 (3 May 1939), Joseph Kennedy; Brook Brasier.

<sup>1336</sup> Seamus Moore, Wicklow, Company director, interested in motor trade, industrial, commercial and technical issues.

<sup>1337</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1174-5 (27 June 1934), Seamus Moore.

<sup>1338</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1534 (3 May 1939), James Kelly.

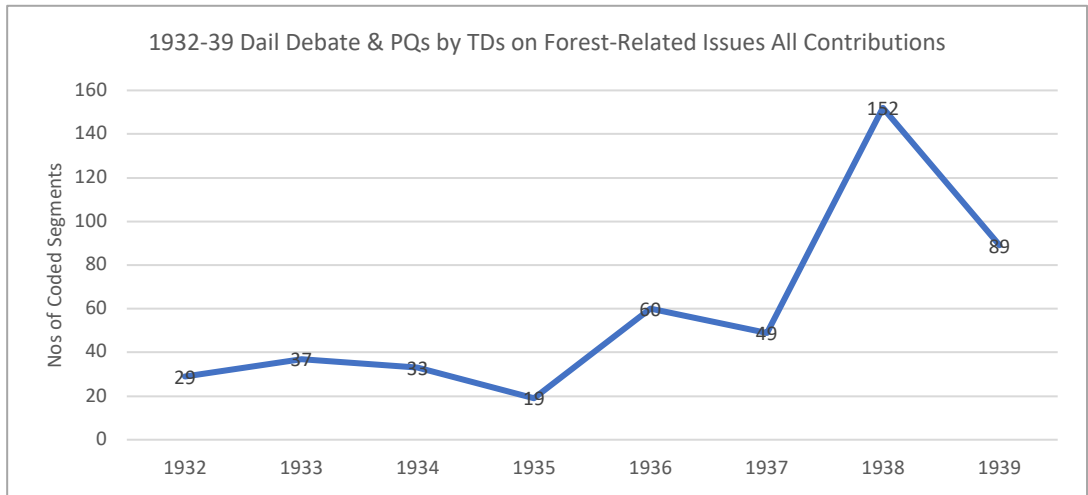


Figure 24: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs, all contributions

This figure shows the five-fold increase in Dáil contributions on forest-related issues as parliamentary interest in the economic and cultural potential of state forestry came up against the reality of state forestry operations, during this period.

The main contributors to Dáil debates and parliamentary questions by parliamentary party during this period from 1932 to 1939 are illustrated in the figure below.

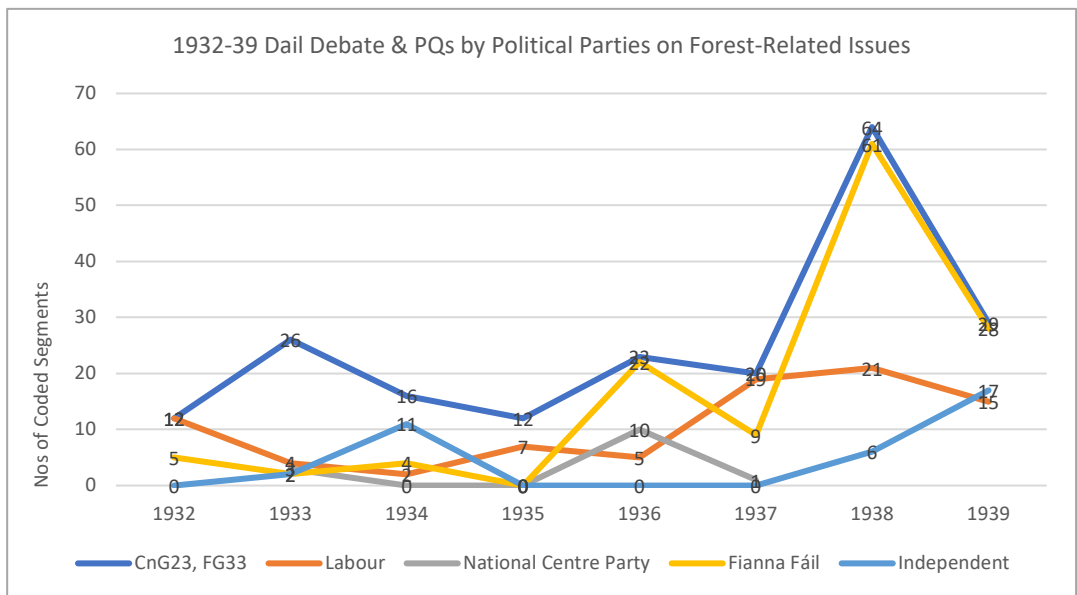


Figure 25: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by political parties on forest-related issues.

This figure gives an indication of political party contributions, showing the dominance of Fine Gael in forest-related debates despite being in Opposition, matched by Fianna Fáil by the end of the decade with priority time for speaking. Labour increased their contributions, mostly related to forest worker welfare.

The leading speakers on forest-related issues in the Dáil from 1932 to 1939 were farmers who made up around one third of speakers, and Western county representatives are in the majority, listed in the Appendix. Examples of the representative leading parliamentary participants in forest-related Dáil debates over this period are introduced below.

### ***William Davin, 1890 to 1956***

William Davin was an example of a trade unionist parliamentarian. He was born in Queen's County, County Laois, worked as a pier master and station controller of Dun Laoghaire and then the North Wall. He was elected in 1922 as a Labour TD, was Chief Whip of the Labour Party, and became Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in the Dáil. He became the Deputy leader of the Labour Party. His special interest was in housing, and was known as an athlete and an orator. He was also involved in the attempts to save the Aylesbury wood manufacturing factory being closed by Senator Joseph Connolly in the early 1930's.<sup>1339</sup> In 1954, he was made Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Local Government.<sup>1340</sup>

### ***James Fitzgerald-Kenney, 1878 to 1956***

James Fitzgerald-Kenney was an example of a Cumann na nGaedhael rural representative who was also a practising barrister with a reputation for defending prisoners, as well as being a landowner and farmer. Born in Mayo, he was a founder member of the Gaelic League in Mayo, joined the Irish Volunteers in 1914, and supported the Redmond Home Rule movement. He was elected as a Cumann na nGaedhael TD for Mayo South in 1927, until 1932 when the party joined with the National League and the Centre Party to form Fine Gael, and he supported the short-lived Blueshirts movement. He was Minister for Justice from 1927 until 1932.<sup>1341</sup>

Fitzgerald-Kenny was a consistent contributor to the discourse on the question of Departmental planting policy, querying 'what end in view' for the state tree planting program, over the 1930's. By 1939, his concern at the lack of a genuine forestry policy

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<sup>1339</sup> <https://offalyhistoryblog.wordpress.com/2017/10/14/the-closure-of-alesburys-timber-factory-in-edenderry-by-dr-ciaran-reilly/>

<sup>1340</sup> *Irish Times*, 2 March 1956; McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

<sup>1341</sup> McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*; *Connaught Telegraph*, 27 October 1956.

and the absence of any statement on this fundamental question was evident. He was a supporter of the benefits of state forestry in its value for money for employment compared with road building schemes. He saw its potential for industrial development, such as making matches with poplar timber, but these neglected aspects of state forestry were of concern to him. Fitzgerald-Kenny challenged the institutional belief in the unsuitability of the West of Ireland for planting trees, but his proposal to plant shelter belts in exposed regions to protect large scale planting schemes, did not get a response. He supported the cooperation of private nurseries with the Department to supply trees instead of risking disease from imported seeds and seedlings.

### ***James Dillon, 1902 to 1986***

In 1932, James Dillon was an Independent TD in Donegal. His father and grandfather had been leading nationalist parliamentarians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and his family and business associations were in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, as well as in Dublin. He was a non-practising barrister and active businessman. In an effort to break the cycle of civil war politics, he co-founded the National Centre Party in 1932, and the Fine Gael Party in 1933. Dillon represented Monaghan in 1937 for the Fine Gael Party, although he resigned in 1947. He was renowned for his outspoken views, his 'outstanding parliamentary performance,' in oratory and practice. As Minister for Agriculture, in 1948, he promoted the modernisation of farming and land reclamation to increase production.<sup>1342</sup>

Dillon's interests in forestry were chiefly in relation to its impact on local farmers and potential land purchasers under the Land Acts, supporting it only on reclaimed land. He promoted the less exposed areas of Donegal as a location for state tree planting. His detailed knowledge of the timber seasoning standards issue was due to his business interests as an egg exporter, affected by the rejection of mouldy eggs. However, the debate with the Minister for Industry and Commerce revolved around the issue of tariffs on imported timber for manufacturing egg boxes rather than insisting on standards for native wood seasoning to provide dry home-grown timber for the boxes. There was no Ministerial reply to Dillon's query on a suitable source for properly seasoned home-grown timber. He also supported cooperation between the Department and private nurseries in producing adequate supplies of seeds and trees.

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<sup>1342</sup> McGuire and Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

### ***Timothy Murphy, 1893 to 1949***

Timothy Murphy was a Labour TD for Cork West, from 1923, who had been a supporter of William O'Brien MP. He was a trade union official and a county councillor from 1925, and his main interest was in provision of housing. When he became Minister for Local Government in 1948, he was instrumental in a large increase in the supply of public housing.<sup>1343</sup> Recognising the courtesy and efficiency of Department staff, Murphy was nevertheless concerned that there be a review of the state forestry program. He was constantly following up Departmental actions regarding land acquisition and planting, and he queried the lack of information available except through parliamentary questions for TDs, or for farmers. He suggested planting other types of trees where conifers were not suitable. Murphy was consistent in his defence of the forestry worker, proposing a national wage for national work where the regional differences in government agency work was an inherited anomaly from the previous administration. He criticised the penal reduction of wages during wet weather.

### ***Thomas Dowdall 1870 to 1942***

TD for Cork Borough, Thomas Dowdall was an example of a Cork businessman with an active nationalist background, interested in the future of Irish state forestry. As a former member of Sinn Fein and the IRB, he was Pro-Treaty but became disillusioned with Cumann na nGaedhael and joined Fianna Fáil in 1927. He was noted for his independent views, particularly on national forestry policy and the Department's approach to state forestry, and was respected by both presidents. He compared Irish forestry to forestry in Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and other wood producing countries, and was critical of the Department acting as though Ireland could not grow trees in their rejection of previously wooded land for planting. This continual misunderstanding was based on the Departmental focus on land for conifer tree planting for softwood timber production, whereas TDs and local people saw the potential for native and mixed regenerating woodlands.

Dowdall proposed a Forestry Commission to take on state forestry under the direction of Otto Reinhard. In his opinion, assisted by the work of John Mackay, he considered that the traditions in the Department were left over from the British administration and that they were not serving the people. He was concerned that the Department did not value the trees, perceiving that woods which had existed before

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<sup>1343</sup> Ibid.

First World War deforestation were not being allowed to regenerate, but left to rot. He supported a national survey to determine the availability of suitable lands for planting, reclamation of lands for forestry and the development of a national plan for forestry development, particularly for employment.<sup>1344</sup>

#### IV: Issues of interest to participants in parliamentary debate

The major forest-related issues of interest to participants in Dáil debate had changed from the previous decade from deforestation, which was still of concern to members, to the question of the acquisition and planting of land by the Department. With the greater information available to the TDs on the work of the Forestry Division, the limitations of the state afforestation program were becoming increasingly apparent, generating considerable debate in the Dáil by the end of the 1930s, particularly on the role of forestry experts and land use for forestry.

##### *National Forestry Policy*

In 1933, after the change of government, the question of the long-awaited national forestry policy that would include economic, social and environmental aspects of forestry, was raised in the Dáil, and throughout the 1930s.<sup>1345</sup> Mayo TD James Fitzgerald-Kenney<sup>1346</sup> put the question to incoming Fianna Fail Minister for Agriculture, James Ryan. But Minister Ryan<sup>1347</sup> replied with the same answer as his predecessor by referring to the anticipated expansion of the planting program. In 1937, TD

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<sup>1344</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 4 May 1938, 3 May 1939.

<sup>1345</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 1036 (3 November 1932) and lxi, 2419 (7 May 1936), Daniel Morrissey; xlviii, 1199 (23 June 1933) and liii, 1165 (27 June 1934), and lxxv, 1510 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; lxxi, 608 (4 May 1938), Joseph Mongan.

<sup>1346</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxxviii, 1200-1, (23 June 1933) James Fitzgerald-Kenney. Farmer, supported Irish Volunteers, leader of Blueshirt youth section, barrister, Minister for Justice 19227-32,

<sup>1347</sup> James Ryan, Wexford, active nationalist, medical doctor, farmer and company director.

Professor O' Sullivan<sup>1348</sup> inquired whether Minister Boland had a plan 'as to the future of forestry besides a planting goal of 10,000 acres'.<sup>1349</sup> The recurring debate about Departmental expertise and tree planting returned when Cork TD Dowdall<sup>1350</sup> proposed that an independent commission of forestry be headed by 'the German expert' Otto Reinhard, with a national survey in cooperation with local people, to 'take it out of the hands of the Department' because of their belief that Ireland could not grow trees naturally.<sup>1351</sup> He said that the timber was removed 'in the most ignorant fashion' which did not allow for regeneration, adding that this mentality against native forests was in the Department under British administration before the Government came into existence, which perpetuated the idea that trees could not be grown in large parts of Ireland, where trees grew before.<sup>1352</sup> Michael Brennan also proposed a Forestry Commission 'to try and impress on individuals and local authorities the importance of trees'.<sup>1353</sup>

But there were no plans for a national survey, despite calls for it nearly every year.<sup>1354</sup> Presupposing a national forestry plan, John Flynn proposed that a survey of land could be undertaken to grade it according to soil and type of timber output.<sup>1355</sup> In Britain, the census of woodlands took place in 1924.<sup>1356</sup>

During this period in the Dáil, there was a greater emphasis by TDs on the impact of deforestation on the people and communities associated with the woods and forests, although the representatives promoting the survival of local manufacturers and traditions had begun to realise the futility of their task. Reference to traditional forest culture was raised with increasing frequency towards the end of the decade as

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<sup>1348</sup> Professor John O'Sullivan, Kerry, Fine Gael, University Professor in Modern History, Minister for Education.

<sup>1349</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvi, 1738 (27 April 1937), Professor John O'Sullivan.

<sup>1350</sup> Thomas Dowdall, Cork, Fianna Fáil, butter manufacturers, company director, founder of Irish Press, interested in economic and commercial issues.

<sup>1351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1352</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1517-20 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall.

<sup>1353</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 620 (4 May 1938), Michael Brennan.

<sup>1354</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 3 November 1932, Timothy Murphy; 27 June 1934, 3 May 1939, James Fitzgerald Kenney; 27 April 1937, Professor John O'Sullivan. This survey did not take place until the 1942 census of all standing timber for the Department of Supplies. 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 34.

<sup>1355</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1547-8 (3 May 1939), John Flynn.

<sup>1356</sup> Commission, *Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th, 1933*, p. 9.



awareness grew of the potential for state participation in ensuring its future, in the face of a fixed approach on the part of the Department to non-native conifer plantations as the only tree to plant on all available land.

Wexford TD Patrick Kehoe<sup>1357</sup> specifically referred to the loss of forest culture and the ‘legacy of an imperial legislature’, where there was a forfeiture of a sense of national continuity, associated with the destruction of the woods.<sup>1358</sup> He said that:

Those Gaelic Leaguers in the House who have heard the good old ballad, “Seán Ua Duibhir a Gleanna,” know that that lament arose out of the hearts of those who saw trees being felled in order that the houseless and homeless of the time would fall an easy prey to the English soldiery of that day. Not alone in cutting the woods did they commit a flagrant crime, but they destroyed our national continuity to such an extent that the ordinary virtues, such as pride of culture in the sense of forestry, and other ordinary virtues of that kind, are largely missing from our Gaelic make-up of to-day.<sup>1359</sup>

Kehoe supported planting oak and ash forests, species that were important to include in state forest planting as well as promoting the short-term value of conifer plantations.<sup>1360</sup> He also urged the Minister to re-educate the people in forestry and its national significance. TD Cormac Breathnach<sup>1361</sup> informed the Dáil of the traditional connection of local woods and people of the locality, referring to the ancient mythology of trees and woods reflected in the old name for Ireland, namely Inis na bFíodhbhadh or Oileán na gCoillteadh, the Island of Forests’.<sup>1362</sup> Fred Crowley reminded the Dáil of the appellation of ‘men of the woods’ as Irish people were known in Rome in ancient history.<sup>1363</sup>

Taking the longer view of arboreal heritage, the importance of the preservation of woods and their management was raised by TD Kelly, who also reminded the Dáil of its responsibilities to future generations, saying that:

After all, we are only custodians in this regard; the wealth of timber in the country should be preserved. This property has been handed down to us, and the least we might be

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<sup>1357</sup> Patrick Kehoe, Wexford, Fianna Fáil, active nationalist, GAA, interested in self-sufficiency agriculture and forestry.

<sup>1358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1359</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2425 (7 May 1936), Patrick Kehoe.

<sup>1360</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2423-4 (7 May 1936), Patrick Kehoe.

<sup>1361</sup> Cormac Breathnach, from Kerry, teacher, interested in educational issues and the Irish language.

<sup>1362</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 804 (11 May 1938), Cormac Breathnach.

<sup>1363</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1558 (3 May 1939), Fred Crowley.

expected to do is to see that there would be no wastage and that the trees cut down should be replaced. We should in no way reduce the potential value of this wealth. I believe that the conservation of the timber stock in the country is of great importance, not only to the furniture industry but to the nation as a whole.<sup>1364</sup>

Limerick TD George Bennett <sup>1365</sup> called for government action to protect the old woods for their non-commercial benefits, saying that:

The State should in some way preserve the trees that are there. They have a beautifying effect and a health-giving effect in this country, as the doctors will tell you. I think it is a crime that they should be destroyed and I am sure every Deputy will agree with that.<sup>1366</sup>

By 1939, there was a level of frustration amongst TDs that there was still no national forestry policy and no clear direction for the current program,<sup>1367</sup> with some TDs repeating their concern that the Department had no purpose in planting trees, nor an intended market.<sup>1368</sup> In the meantime, while the focus of the Department on the 'commercial and economic' aspects of the planting program was still maintained by Minister Boland, there was no economic analysis of the more costly conifer plantation approach to forestry, nor was ever made subject to an acceptable level of financial return.<sup>1369</sup>

TDs also conveyed their frustration at the autocracy of expertise and the limited information available from the Department. In 1938, expressing despair at the poor level of communication that had returned to parliamentary-administrative relations, TD Thomas Dowdall said that it seemed to be accepted that nobody except the Minister and the Department officials knew anything about forestry.<sup>1370</sup> James Fitzgerald-Kenney said that:

These are the things one would like to know, but this mysterious Forestry Department seems to have got into the depths of a forest itself, a forest throwing such a terrible

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<sup>1364</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, Ibid.

<sup>1365</sup> George Bennett, Fine Gael, farmer, cattle breeder, county councillor.

<sup>1366</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 76-77 (27 April 1938), George Bennet.

<sup>1367</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1524, 1531 (3 May 1939), Brook Brasier.

<sup>1368</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lii, 1165-6 (27 June 1934), James Fitzgerald Kenney; lxxv, 1520, 1510 (3 May 1939), Thomas Dowdall; James Fitzgerald Kenney; Timothy Linehan.

<sup>1369</sup> Durand, 'The evolution of state forestry in Ireland', p. 255.

<sup>1370</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 615 (4 May 1938), Thomas Dowdall.

shade around it that none of the light which is in the Department can get outside and reach the members of this House.<sup>1371</sup>

Despite attempts by both the Minister and TDs to broaden the institutional base of the state forestry administration for an agreed forestry policy in Ireland, these issues became secondary to the urgent requirements for timber supplies created by the impending war.

During 1932-39, the forest-related themes that were most frequently raised in debates and parliamentary questions were those related to land, tree planting, public forestry issues, the effects of forestry and employment. Deforestation and wood industry issues were less frequently raised during this period. The issue of wood clearance that preoccupied the Dáil debates in the 1920s was less often raised after the Forestry Bill was implemented in 1931, although TDs reported on tree felling that was still taking place.<sup>1372</sup> TD James Fitzgerald-Kenney informed the Dáil of the recent sale of a wooded estate to a timber merchant in Pallas, Co. Galway.<sup>1373</sup> Cork TD Timothy Linehan referred to around seventy acres of land cleared of timber near his town, and to nine to ten acres of wooded land burnt by the Black and Tans that were available for replanting.<sup>1374</sup> Longford/Westmeath TD Michael Kennedy<sup>1375</sup> informed the Dáil of tree felling in the Midlands where ash woods were being bought up over the previous eighteen months for export by an English firm, with no enforcement for replanting. He also added that trees were still being felled by tenant purchasers. Kennedy also spoke for the landowners who had planted the trees over the previous century without which there would have been no woods to fell.<sup>1376</sup> TD Seán Goulding<sup>1377</sup> expressed concern that there would be no hardwood timber in Ireland in twenty to thirty years.<sup>1378</sup>

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<sup>1371</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1511 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1372</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxxvii, 20-1 (11 May 1937), Frank McDermott on Boyle lands during land division; lxxi, 704 (5 May 1938), Donnchadha Ó Briain.

<sup>1373</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lii, 1169 (27 June 1934), James Fitzgerald-Kenney.

<sup>1374</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2425 (7 May 1936), lxxi, 797 (27 April 1937), John Flynn; lxxi, 794 (11 May 1938), lxxv, 1532 (3 May 1939), Timothy Linehan, lxi, 2425 (7 May 1936), Patrick McGovern;

<sup>1375</sup> Michael Kennedy, Fianna Fáil, farmer and general merchant.

<sup>1376</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1528 (3 May 1939), Michael Brennan.

<sup>1377</sup> Sean Goulding, Waterford, Fianna Fáil, merchant and company director, interested in forestry, education and Gaeltacht affairs.

<sup>1378</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2416 (7 May 1936), Seán Goulding.

The forest-related themes raised in Dáil debate during this period are shown in the figure below.

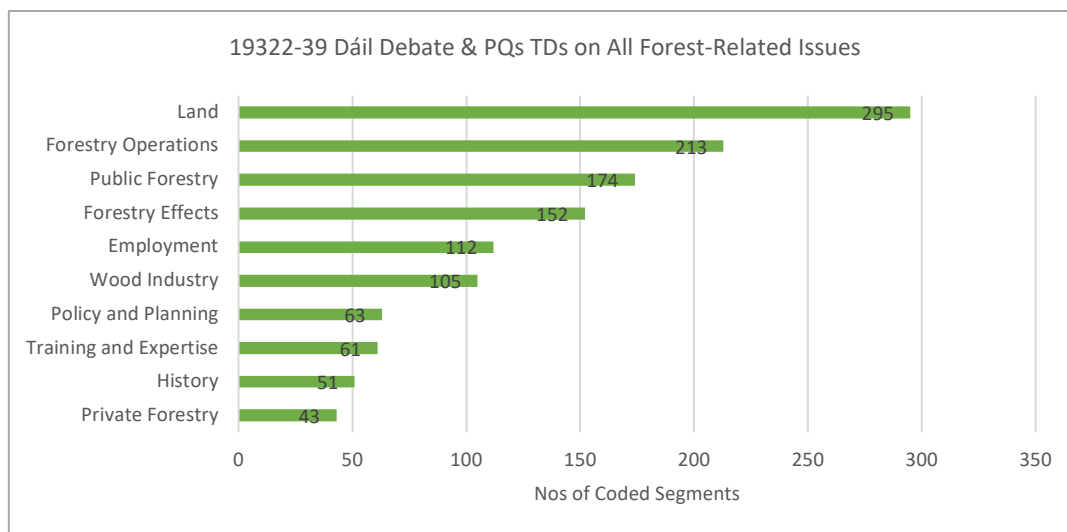


Figure 26: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on all forest-related issues

This figure shows that the theme of land and its availability was the most frequently raised subject of debate and parliamentary questions by TDs in this period, followed by forestry operations related to the topics of tree planting and species selection. Public forestry and forestry effects include the topics of public education and the impact of forestry on the environment. The theme of employment included training and education. Wood industry topics are raised less frequently than in the previous decade. The list of themes and topics are tabulated in Appendix II.

### *Land-related Issues*

Each year, the debate in the Dáil grew longer on the afforestation of lands in Western counties and the Gaeltacht, particularly lands rejected by the Department, and formerly wooded lands.<sup>1379</sup> This theme is divided into several topics according to the frequency with which they were raised in the debates which are: land availability for state forestry, Gaeltacht land or land available for afforestation in former Congested Districts regions, mountain land, peat and bog land for planting, and land use rights on land of interest for Departmental acquisition, , as illustrated in the figure below.

<sup>1379</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1522, 1534, 1538-9 (3 May 1939), Brook Brasier; James Kelly; James Everett.

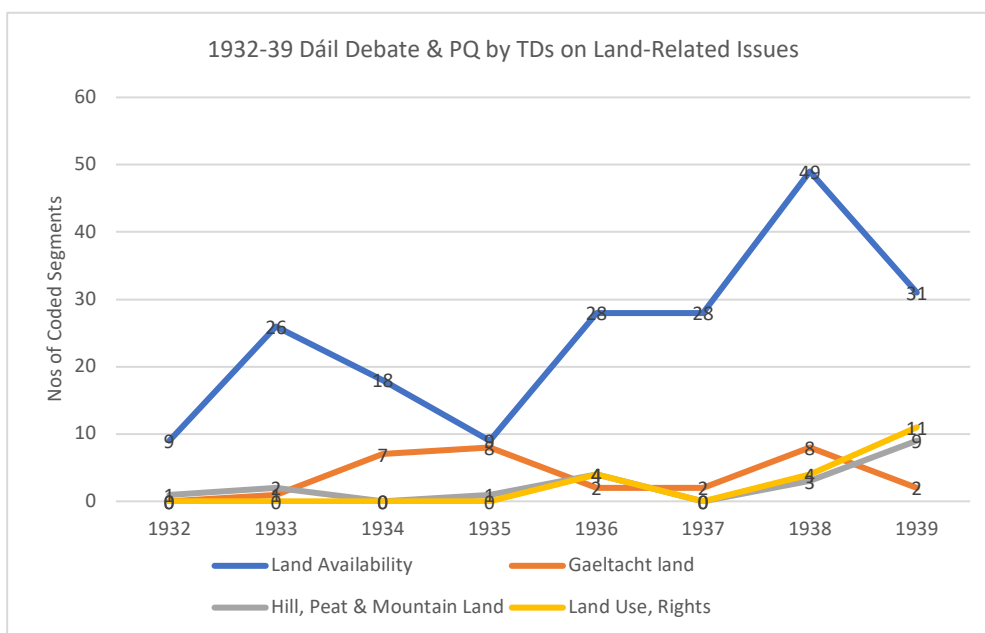


Figure 27: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDS on land-related issues

This figure shows that the topic of land availability for state forest tree planting increasingly dominated in Dáil debates and parliamentary questions during this period.

The question of land use rights on hill and mountain grazing land was discussed more frequently toward the end of the period as opposition grew to the Departmental acquisition of this land for forestry. Although governmental appreciation of local land use rights had improved under Ministers Connolly and Boland, and compulsory purchase was no longer officially in operation, conflicts over issues related to conflicts over land use rights were referred to where families had complained about unfair treatment and the effects of the planting on their livelihoods.<sup>1380</sup> The evidence of vandalism on state plantations and fences in Dáil debates was most likely connected to local disagreements over land use and afforestation.<sup>1381</sup>

As farmers' claims to any available land in these regions underlay these debates, for Western TDs, the defence of grazing land over forestry use was a vital issue for their constituents and the expansion of the Forestry Division into Gaeltacht lands provoked strong responses. TD James Dillon<sup>1382</sup> was still questioning the viability

<sup>1380</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 745-6 (28 March 1938), Jeremiah Ryan.

<sup>1381</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 815 (11 May 1938), Sydney Minch; 817-8 (3 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1382</sup> James Dillon, Monaghan, Independent and Fine Gael, barrister, farmer and merchant, Minister for Agriculture, leader of Fine Gael.

of valley farms without access to hill commonage in 1939.<sup>1383</sup> His view was that: 'If we have to choose between men and timber, we should choose men deliberately'.<sup>1384</sup>

The continuing complexity of land acquisition was evident in regard to lands in Cork offered to the Department where a land parcel of 3,700 acres was offered to the Department with thirty names of people with rights on the land.<sup>1385</sup> Although TDs were central to the organization of small holders willing to sell plots to land to the Department, there was no institutional support for communication between the many parties involved.<sup>1386</sup> Fianna Fáil Kerry TD John Flynn expressed his frustration at the lack of cooperation between the Board of Works, the County Council horticulturalists and the Forestry Service in assisting the cooperative efforts of local people who had assembled land parcels to develop their own districts.<sup>1387</sup> There were some local people who were looking for land swaps with the Department for better land.<sup>1388</sup> The response of the Department was slow with frequent rejections of land as unsuitable for planting trees (conifers).<sup>1389</sup>

During the 1930s, as the rural economy sank under the weight of the Trade War, the question of the planting of Gaeltacht land was taken up by Minister Connolly but was resisted by the Forestry Division. By 1939, this 'scrub and waste land' amounted to over 60% of the productive land area of the Department.<sup>1390</sup> As only the poorest quality land could be purchased by the Department at this time, the subject of planting peat and heathlands produced increasingly heated debate. Although there were some lands planted in Western counties,<sup>1391</sup> the departmental stance was generally fixed on the belief that trees could not grow in these regions, particularly in Connemara.<sup>1392</sup> The ghost of Knockboy and its association with the perceived failure of peatland afforestation trials, continued to influence peatland planting into the 1930s.

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<sup>1383</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1552 (3 May 1939), James Dillon.

<sup>1384</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1552 (3 May 1939), James Dillon.

<sup>1385</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., xlix, 2375 (12 October 1933), John Daly and Minister James Ryan.

<sup>1386</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1528 (3 May 1939), Michael Kennedy.

<sup>1387</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 792-4 (11 May 1938), John Flynn,

<sup>1388</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvi, 1749 (27 April 1937), Patrick Beegan.

<sup>1389</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1528 (3 May 1939), Michael Kennedy.

<sup>1390</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 7.

<sup>1391</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, 2442, 2445, (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1392</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1561, 1514 (3 May 1939), Sean Broderick; Fitzgerald Kenney; lxxi, 691 (5 May 1938), Michael Brennan.

With few options for rural employment, Dáil debates on this issues revolved around the fixed Departmental belief that conifers could not be planted in Western heathlands, whether lowland or upland in contrast to the parliamentary view based on experience, that trees, both conifers and hardwoods would grow in certain sheltered areas of these regions. The forestry and scientific expertise of the Department was often queried in relation to the determination of the suitability of land for planting trees. TD James Fitzgerald-Kenney criticised the fixed Departmental mentality set on mountain and boglands,<sup>1393</sup> and in 1938, Connemara TD, Dr Sean Tubridy<sup>1394</sup> informed the Dáil about woods growing around estate houses in the district of Carna and that apple trees were growing in the peatlands of Knockboy.<sup>1395</sup> He proposed that the Knockboy tree planting scheme was perceived to have failed but that it had never had a suitable plan for the tree planting program. Seosaimh Ó Mongáin,<sup>1396</sup> TD from Carna, could not understand why the Minister did not include the well-wooded area of Ballinahinch in his visit to Connemara, which was down the coast from Knockboy, and famous for its ancient oaks.<sup>1397</sup>

Deputies insisted that Gaeltacht wooded lands that had been recently cleared were still available for planting but had been rejected by the Department. Local TDs referred to their knowledge of woods in Gaeltacht regions<sup>1398</sup> in sheltered areas and around estate houses where account was taken of the losses due to exposure which were considered necessary to create a shelter belt to protect the trees behind them.<sup>1399</sup> Kenney informed the Dáil of trees growing on uncut bog and the success of shelter belt tree planting in exposed areas of Galway.<sup>1400</sup> The Minister also rejected thousands of acres of lands around Kylemore in Connemara on the basis of exposure or local

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<sup>1393</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2410 (7 May 1936), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1394</sup> Seán Tubridy, Galway, Fianna Fáil, medical doctor, Gaeltacht issues, health, land and education.

<sup>1395</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 719 (5 May 1938), Dr Sean Tubridy.

<sup>1396</sup> Seosaimh Ó Mongáin (Joseph Mongan), Galway, Fine Gael, hotelier, interested in the Gaeltacht, agriculture and fisheries, lands, education and tourism.

<sup>1397</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 610 (4 May 1938), Seosamh Ó Mongáin; lxxi, 701, 718 (5 May 1938), Sean Broderick.

<sup>1398</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.,PQ.*, lxxv, 1423-4, (10 March 1937), Sean Broderick and Gerald Boland.

<sup>1399</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2635 (6 June 1935), Fionán Lynch; lxi, 2415 (7 May 1936), James Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1400</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1218 (23 June 1933), and lxxv, 1513 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald Kenney; lxi, 2434 (7 May 1936), Daniel McMenamin,

poverty, and its value for sheep grazing.<sup>1401</sup> These hills are still known for their hardwood forests that have grown up around the abbey. During Minister Connolly's term in office, he requested suggestions from TDs on suitable trees that would grow in bogland, even to improve the countryside.<sup>1402</sup> With Connolly's enthusiasm for Gaeltacht afforestation tempered by the Forestry Division, the new German Director, Otto Reinhard agreed with the TDs Daniel McMenemy and Brooke Brasier<sup>1403</sup> who proposed that trees would grow on bogland if they were cutaway or drained.<sup>1404</sup>

### *Tree planting and species selection*

The discourse in the Dáil on tree planting and the selection of tree species was closely related to the quality of land, the need for hardwood trees, and ultimately, the shape of the future forests of Ireland. The topics raised are shown in the figure below.

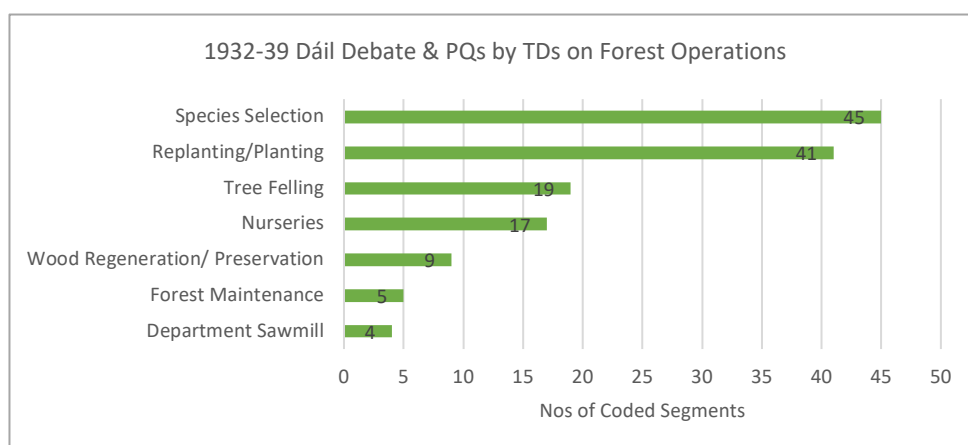


Figure 28: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on forestry operations

<sup>1401</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 699, 718 (4 May 1938), Sean Broderick. Kylemore Abbey was a wooded estate in a treeless part of Connemara, built by Mitchell Henry MP, Home Ruler in 1850s. It was an estate of 15,000 acres with 125 tenants who had been devastated after famine and cholera. It employed 300 people. It was sold in 1903, bought by Duke of Manchester and sold to the Benedictine Order in 1920.

<sup>1402</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2636 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1403</sup> Brooke Brasier, Fine Gael TD Cork East, farmer, interested in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, lands, local government.

<sup>1404</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2434, (7 May 1936), Daniel McMenemy; lxxv, 1526 (3 May 1939), Brooke Brasier.



This figure shows the level of interest in the Dáil on the topic of the selection of tree species to be planted. Concerns about tree felling were not expressed as frequently after the implementation of the Forestry Act in 1930.

As state forestry conifer plantations were maturing and their presence in the landscape was becoming evident,<sup>1405</sup> some TDs were interested in information on the new species of conifer being tried by the Department, particularly tree planter Mayo TD James Fitzgerald-Kenney.<sup>1406</sup> TD Fionan Lynch suggested the planting of shelter belts for commercial plantations.<sup>1407</sup> TD Patrick McGovern also voiced his support for mixed plantations and the use of larch on particular land.<sup>1408</sup> Although over one third of state forestry lands were former or intact woodlands, there was still no policy or program for their preservation or development for commercial hardwood timber production or other uses. While supporting the production of softwood from conifers for pulp, Daniel McMenamin reminded the Minister that both softwood and hardwood were required for housebuilding.<sup>1409</sup> TD Patrick Belton<sup>1410</sup> called for a survey on tree planting for building requirements and he also encouraged the planting of trees for non-commercial use.<sup>1411</sup> Although Denis Gorey TD<sup>1412</sup> said that he couldn't sell fine ash and oak trees,<sup>1413</sup> TD Patrick Kehoe recommended the valuable long-term investment in hardwood, as well as the cultural value of oaks, as being more in conformity with the landscape, with ash trees needed for camán or hurley sticks.<sup>1414</sup>

However, by 1939, the Department did start looking into techniques for establishing broadleaf plantations during the war years<sup>1415</sup> due to the restrictions on

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<sup>1405</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2423-4 (7 May 1936), Patrick Kehoe; lxxi, 799, 805, (11 May 1938), John Flynn; Cormac Breathnach.

<sup>1406</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.* xlvi, 1201, 1204 (23 June 1933), James Fitzgerald-Kenney, Sean Goulding.

<sup>1407</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2634 (6 June 1935), Fionán Lynch.

<sup>1408</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2428 (7 May 1936), Patrick McGovern.

<sup>1409</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1510, 1543 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald Kenney; Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1410</sup> Patrick Belton, Dublin County, Fine Gael, farmer and builder, interested in local government and financial affairs.

<sup>1411</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2636 (6 June 1935), Patrick Belton.

<sup>1412</sup> Denis Gorey, Kilkenny, Fine Gael, farmer and businessman, Chair Kilkenny county council.

<sup>1413</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 800 (11 May 1938), Denis Gorey.

<sup>1414</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2424 (7 May 1936), Patrick Kehoe;

<sup>1415</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 25.

imports of seed and timber. The Department's management of naturally regenerating woodlands was recorded for the first time in the 1939 to 1943 Annual Report, limited to a few parkland woods.<sup>1416</sup> In contrast, in England, Scotland and Wales, this interest in regenerating woodlands was translated into action with the emergence of a new awareness of ecology in 1938, when the Forestry Commission established Ecological Reserves on Commission land in cooperation with the British Ecological Society, to allow for the natural succession of trees and shrubs for observation and research.<sup>1417</sup>

### *Public forestry Issues*

The theme of public forestry included the topics of public education in trees, woods, forests and their uses, attitudes of people towards forestry, public input into forestry development, Arbor Day, recreation and history. This is summarised in the figure below.

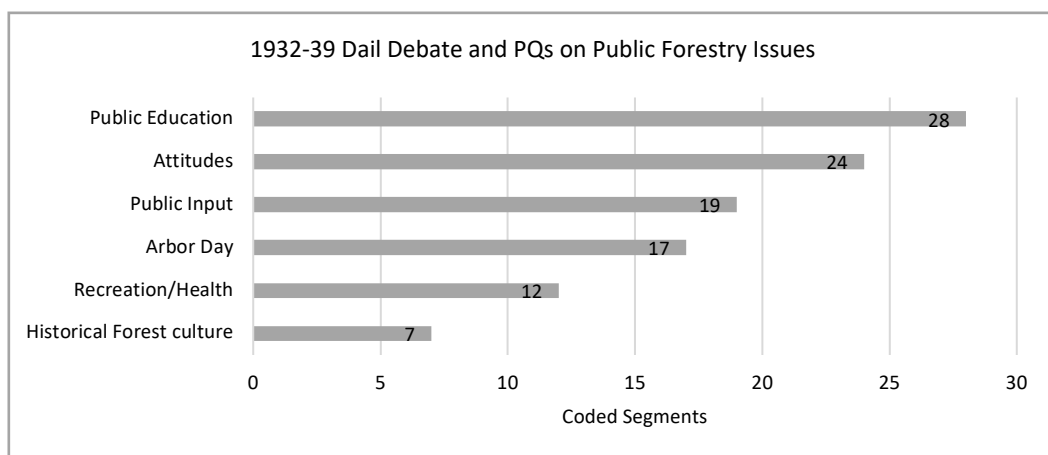


Figure 29: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on public forestry issues

This figure shows the interest of TDs in the importance of public education on trees and woods. Arbor Day, representing the celebration of tree planting and the legacy of the First Dáil, was also raised in Dáil debate more frequently than during the previous decade from its relaunch in 1934 due to concern expressed over its management.

Although public education in forestry was still a low priority for the Department, TDs continued to raise this issue with a variety of suggestions for the promotion of

<sup>1416</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>1417</sup> '19th Annual Report, 1938', *Forestry Commission* (London, 1939), p. 22.

public education in forestry, such as advertising circulars proposed for churches for people who might be interested in shelter belt grant aid.<sup>1418</sup> Kerry TD Fred Crowley<sup>1419</sup> 'was surprised at the general lack of forestry knowledge', saying that there was a need for a forestry society 'to create a discussion'.<sup>1420</sup> James Kelly proposed that the prevention of illegal felling could be addressed by a public campaign to change public opinion.<sup>1421</sup> The need for education of the young was raised by Carlow/Kildare TD Sydney Minch<sup>1422</sup> to teach them the love of trees, their scenic beauty and utility, and particularly to prevent vandalism.<sup>1423</sup>

The one major new initiative in public forest education of the 1930's was not well planned. In 1935, Minister Connolly's Arbor Day 'experiment' in schools, in conjunction with the Department of Education, was launched with enthusiasm.<sup>1424</sup> He said that:

The main purpose of Arbor Day is the Educational one, to teach children the value of trees, to interest them in the care and preservation of existing trees and to give them an appreciation of re-forestation work and the beauty and value of trees generally.<sup>1425</sup>

By 1937, Arbor Day was considered 'a joke' by a Donegal TD because of its limited application,<sup>1426</sup> although TD James Kelly reminded the Dáil of Arbor Day's original purpose which was that it be part of a national re-forestation campaign and that it should be extended with a national publicity campaign.<sup>1427</sup> Minch suggested a longer Arbor Day for planting small plots of land in every county, 'to win the sympathy and cooperation of the people', and a 'Plant More Trees' campaign to 'win over public opinion for a national afforestation scheme'.<sup>1428</sup> However, Minister Boland was concerned that the numbers of schools interested in participating in Arbor Day were

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<sup>1418</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1179 (27 June 1934), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1419</sup> Fred Crowley, Fianna Fáil, Kerry county councilor, interested in Gaelic League, tourism, fisheries, forestry and education.

<sup>1420</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 714 (5 May 1938), Fred Crowley.

<sup>1421</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 793-4 (11 May 1938), James Kelly.

<sup>1422</sup> Sydney Minch, Fine Gael, military career, maltster, businessman, interested in agriculture, commercial and economic issues.

<sup>1423</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 815 (11 May 1938), Sydney Minch.

<sup>1424</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2404 (7 May 1936), James Dillon.

<sup>1425</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2631 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1426</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1755 (27 April 1937), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1427</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 793 (11 May 1938), James Kelly.

<sup>1428</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 815 (11 May 1938), Sydney Minch.

dropping, despite having received vital feedback on its operation from TDs since its launch.<sup>1429</sup> James Everett suggested cooperation with public boards who were already planting several hundred trees a year. In 1938, Minister Boland announced a further decrease in the numbers of schools interested in the scheme, possibly because all available space had been planted. He added that Arbor Day work was more in the interests of the Department of Education rather than forestry work.<sup>1430</sup> There was also concern expressed on the lack of forestry guidance for the schools. Michael Kennedy TD reminded the Minister that he had raised the issue of March and April being unsuitable months for planting which might have caused the death of most of the trees.<sup>1431</sup> The question of appropriate trees being offered was also raised by McMenamin and Fitzgerald-Kenney who spoke of a school which had no light due to its unsuitably large tree, a Lawson Cypress being planted in its grounds. Minister Boland agreed with the unsuitable planting activity in schools but added that the Department did not give advice.<sup>1432</sup>

There was apparently no review of the 'experiment' by the Department and it was dropped from the calendar in 1938 by Minister Boland. This short-lived re-introduction of a limited Arbor Day demonstrated the lack of administrative support for public forestry education without political direction.

Other suggestions in Dáil debates referred to the importance of improving local sporting and hunting amenities, and the development of game management in state forests to benefit local tourism.<sup>1433</sup> However, there was no general policy on game management on Departmental lands nor compensation for the local loss of hunting access to lands held in common. There were also proposals on the public health benefits of woodland for walkers on recreational holidays. TD Frank Carney proposed that the German and Swiss approach to forest management for their health benefits could be included as an aspect of the development of the tourism industry in Ireland.<sup>1434</sup> The recreational aspect of game management for hunting on state forestry

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<sup>1429</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, (6 June 1935), Daniel McMenamin; lxi, 2399, 2404, (7 May 1936), Minister Joseph Connolly; James Dillon; lxvi, 1736, 1741 (27 April 1937), Minister Gerald Boland, James Everett.

<sup>1430</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 601 (4 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1431</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 695 (5 May 1938), Michael Kennedy.

<sup>1432</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1513, 1542, 1565 (3 May 1939), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; Daniel McMenamin; Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1433</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2407, 2438 (7 May 1936), James Dillon; Michael Brennan.

<sup>1434</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xxx, 1761, 1780 (26 June 1929), Frank Fahy; Frank Carney.

lands was of interest to TDs for its amenity and tourism benefits.<sup>1435</sup> The value of shooting rights in young forestry plantations was raised by TD Sydney Minch who recommended that they should be managed by experienced gamekeepers.<sup>1436</sup> In reply, Minister Boland said that the Department had a great many shooting demesnes but that they were not always able to get people to take them.<sup>1437</sup> He did not refer to a management plan.

The contribution of public input to state forestry development was promoted by TD John Flynn who was concerned that there had been no attempt to promote public cooperation which was required for successful state afforestation. In contrast to the compulsory purchase approach of the Department, he recommended that plans could be drawn up with local units, parish committees working with Departmental inspectors and representatives from the agricultural committees, for successful state planting programs.<sup>1438</sup>

### *Forestry effects*

Over the 1930s, there were continuing references in the Dáil to the wider effects of trees, woods, forests and their uses on the landscape, on climate and on hydrology, and the long-term negative effects of deforestation on the landscape. These topics are summarised in the figure below.

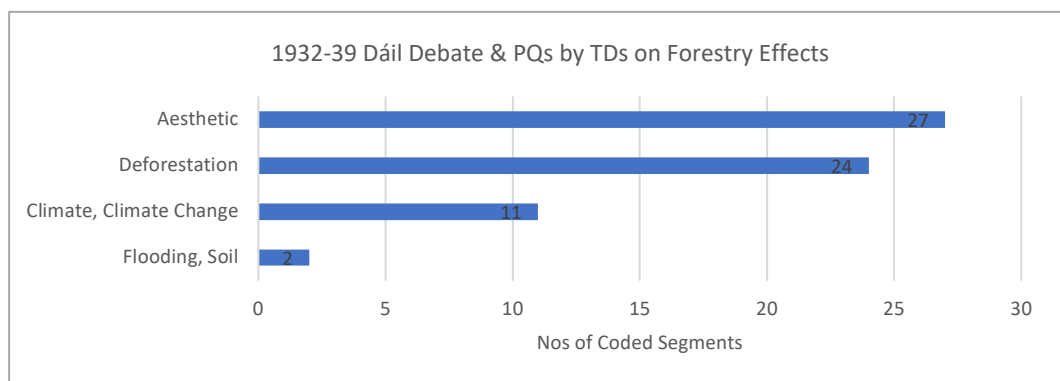


Figure 30: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on forestry effects

<sup>1435</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2407, 2434, (7 May 1936), James Dillon, Seamus Moore, Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1436</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 814 (11 May 1938), Sydney Minch.

<sup>1437</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2448 (7 May 1936) Minister Gerald Boland

<sup>1438</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1548 (3 May 1939), John Flynn.

This figure shows a greater appreciation of the importance of woodland in the landscape, the continuing concern of TDs on the effects of wood clearances on the scenery, and an awareness of the effects of forestry on climate and water retention in the soil. These issues were raised more often in this period of government. As TDs realised the monoculture focus of the Department on conifer planting, they spoke of the importance of preserving and replanting the old woods for scenic considerations, for tourism and for cultural importance as well as commercial objectives, referred to by TDs Minch, McMenamin, Breathnach, Bennett and Dillon.<sup>1439</sup>

Speaking in defence of old woods, TD George Bennett called for the preservation of the older mixed species woods and forests to build them up again, asking of the Minister that:

... he should not direct his attention to new forests but he should confine himself to preserving the forests we have. We have in this country many beautiful holdings having large areas planted with trees. These are a material and cultural advantage to the State. I am sure everybody knows some of the beauty spots I have in mind. Some attempt ought to be made to preserve these. I appeal to the Minister to try to preserve what is left of them.<sup>1440</sup>

TD Martin Roddy also support for the preservation of shelter belts on Land Commission holdings.<sup>1441</sup> TD Sean Goulding supported forestry schemes for scenery as well as for utility. The following year, he accepted 'some damage to scenery' in planting conifers but said that people would be employed.<sup>1442</sup> Donegal TD Daniel McMenamin spoke about the vandalism of the destruction of scenic areas from Strabane to the Glenties, and his view on shelter belts was that they could beautify the landscape.<sup>1443</sup> TD John Flynn referred to the extent of hardwood wood clearance from Mallow to the Kerry border during the Great War, land that could be replanted.<sup>1444</sup> He proposed developing the scenic beauty of the countryside by planting low grade plots

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<sup>1439</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 1206 (23 June 1933), Sydney Minch; liii, 1180 (27 June 1934); lxvi, 1754 (27 April 1937), Daniel McMenamin; lxxi, 804 (11 May 1938), Cormac Breathnach; lxxi, 76-7 (27 April 1938), George Bennett. lxxv, 1563 (3 May 1939), James Dillon.

<sup>1440</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 76-7 (27 April 1938), George Bennett.

<sup>1441</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 604 (4 May 1938), Martin Roddy.

<sup>1442</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 2096 (18 November 1932), 1204 (23 June 1933), Sean Goulding.

<sup>1443</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1180 (27 June 1934), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1444</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 792-4 (11 May 1938), John Flynn,

of land with other species if they were not acceptable for commercial timber,<sup>1445</sup> an issue also raised by other TDs.<sup>1446</sup>

Cavan TD, Patrick McGovern<sup>1447</sup> reminded the Dáil of the importance of planting in relation to the location, such as around the Shannon where ‘there is no canopy over its cradle.’ He referred to the beneficial effects of forestry on climate, shelter, and scenery, for tourism and the relief of poverty.<sup>1448</sup> Kehoe promoted the traditional place of woods around farms in the landscape, for the sake of ‘our successors’, as well as supporting the benefits of coniferous timber production which would turn the landscape into a ‘miniature Switzerland.’<sup>1449</sup> Donegal TD Daniel McMenamin supported forestry for tourism in a county known for its scenery, saying that:

The poet has spoken of “the grey hills of dark Donegal” and I would suggest to the Minister that he could perform no greater national work than to alter the poet’s words and turn “the grey hills of dark Donegal into the green hills of dark Donegal”.<sup>1450</sup>

He also referred to the success of mixed tree species planting in woods around estate houses in windswept parts of Donegal.

Departmental responses to the topic of scenic aspect of tree planting varied according to the Minister in charge. In 1933, Minister Ryan was mostly concerned with land acquisition and tree planting, saying that: ‘the Forestry Department probably looks on forestry as a commercial proposition but they do take into account the scenic effect of the plantations’, particularly the location of the plantation beside a river to facilitate the construction of a sawmill when the plantation matures. He added that owners of scenically important trees were not granted felling licenses.<sup>1451</sup> Minister Connolly appreciated the climatic and aesthetic benefits of repairing the denudation of the nation’s stock of trees, as well as the urgent need to resupply home requirements for timber.<sup>1452</sup> But by 1938, Minister Boland insisted that the Department only raised commercial timber and would not plant bushes for amenity unless directed by the

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<sup>1445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1446</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2636 (6 June 1935), Patrick Belton.

<sup>1447</sup> Cavan TD Centre Party and Fine Gael, farmer and cattle dealer, interested in agriculture, local government, lands, education.

<sup>1448</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 715 (5 May 1938), Patrick McGovern.

<sup>1449</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2424 (7 May 1936), Patrick Kehoe.

<sup>1450</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1209 (23 June 1933), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1451</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1215 (23 June 1933), Minister James Ryan.

<sup>1452</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2633, 2644 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

Dáil.<sup>1453</sup> In the following year, he informed the Dáil that the Department did have regard to the scenic value of a tourist area but that it was not concerned with scenery, which he referred to as ‘decorative planting’ which was being left to the county councils.<sup>1454</sup>

### *Employment, training and expertise*

In the 1930s, the employment benefits of state forestry were being endorsed and pursued by every TD who were all too aware of the deteriorating economic conditions and increasing levels of emigration in rural Ireland, even where seasonal or temporary jobs offered such difficult working conditions, whether on wages or welfare.<sup>1455</sup> Training and expertise was the second topic of interest, particularly the qualification of the Departmental officers for the job of inspecting plots of land offered for planting, particularly in peatland and heath. This theme is shown in the figure below.

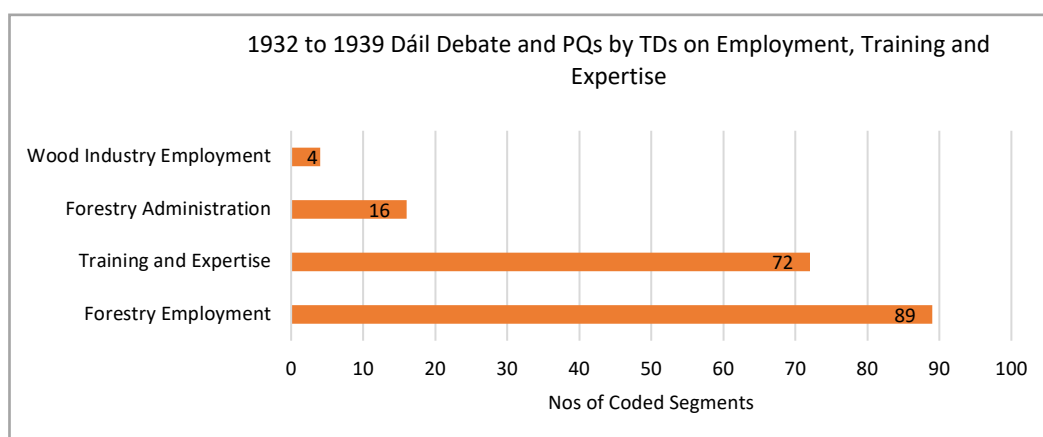


Figure 31: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on employment, training & expertise

This figure shows the predominant interest in Dáil discourse on forestry employment and working conditions, with Departmental experts and their training also of interest. Wood industry employment is raised infrequently, in contrast to the previous decade. By the end of the 1930s, the issue of employment in the wood sector was no longer raised in forest-related debates.

<sup>1453</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 819 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1454</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1563-4 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1455</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 1033, 1035, 1038, 1043 (3 November 1932), William Davin; Daniel Morrissey; Martin Corry; Richard Corish; Minister James Ryan.



The critical state of rural unemployment was reflected in Dáil debates on forestry workers and employment on state forestry schemes, with evidence of new tenant purchaser landowners offering their land for sale to the Department in exchange for employment in the state scheme.<sup>1456</sup> Reports of wages of twenty-two shillings per week were given by the Department, and there were calls for a national wage for national work.<sup>1457</sup> Over the course of the 1930s, after several strikes, conditions for forestry workers improved under Minister Connolly.<sup>1458</sup> There was also some improvement in working conditions, which in 1937 were still very harsh,<sup>1459</sup> with long distances to cover to start the day's work, where work and wages stopped during rain, with no shelters for workers in many forestry centres.<sup>1460</sup> In 1938, permanent forestry workers lived on twenty-four shillings per week in Cootehill, but as a result of representations, their wages were raised after two months to twenty-nine shillings per week.<sup>1461</sup> During this period the wages for forestry workers were reviewed by the Wages Board and increased, although regional variation continued. The gradual improvement of forest workers' and foresters' working conditions and pay over the 1930s was a consequence of continual efforts by TDs for change in the absence of a Forester's Association.

With a revival of state forestry education in Avondale by Minister Connolly in 1935, several TDs were supportive of more practical forestry education for agricultural students. TD Sean Broderick pointed out the adjacent forestry centre beside Athenry Agricultural College for forestry training for agricultural students, but this was considered an issue for the Minister for Education by Minister Boland.<sup>1462</sup> He did not reply to the recommendation for forestry education in technical schools from Wexford TD Richard Corish.<sup>1463</sup>

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<sup>1456</sup> Peter Healy, pers. comm.

<sup>1457</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxiv, no col. (10 November 1937), William Davin; 1037 (3 November 1932), Daniel Morrissey.

<sup>1458</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 1035-6 (3 November 1932), Daniel Morrissey.

<sup>1459</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 1037-8, 1041 (3 November 1932), Richard Corish; Patrick Curran; Larkin (ed.), *A social history of forestry: Essays and recollections on social aspects of forestry in Ireland in the 20th century*, p. 77.

<sup>1460</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxvi, 1742 (27 April 1937), James Everett.

<sup>1461</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., lxx, 753 (23 March 1938), Patrick McGovern; PQ., lxxi, no col. (24 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1462</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1560, 1567 (3 May 1939), Seán Broderick, Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1463</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1528 (3 May 1939), Richard Corish.

The question of Departmental forestry expertise was continually challenged in the Dáil over the decade. In the first decades of the Forestry Division, most of the senior staff had been trained in the United Kingdom, but increasingly, there was recruitment from the graduates of the Forestry School and University College Dublin.<sup>1464</sup> Sean Goulding recommended the involvement of former estate forest managers and workers in state forestry before this experience in woodland management was lost.<sup>1465</sup> The availability of local expertise and experience to advise on the suitability of land for tree planting by the state was also raised in Dáil debate. Where land had been rejected by Departmental forestry experts, some TDs referred to local evidence of trees having previously been grown in rejected lands, many areas having been felled during the First World War, or still growing in the locality.<sup>1466</sup> Minister Connolly did request the input of TDs on suitable sites for tree planting based on local experience, but this suggestion was not repeated the following year.<sup>1467</sup> TD Seamus Moore considered that it would be impossible to overcome the Departmental prejudice against growing trees in peatlands.<sup>1468</sup> Ministers defended the expertise of their staff, 'men who have given their lives for their profession,' against those who have merely read a book,<sup>1469</sup> referring to John Mackay's books on state forestry, which were circulating around the Dáil at the time.<sup>1470</sup> He also mentioned how much the Forestry Division relied on the Forestry Bureau of the Commonwealth Governments and their annual Conference for the dissemination of the latest technical knowledge in forestry.<sup>1471</sup>

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<sup>1464</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 1216 (23 June 1933), Minister James Ryan.

<sup>1465</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2417 (7 May 1936), Sean Goulding.

<sup>1466</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1171 (27 June 1934), Seamus Moore; lxxi, 717 (5 May 1938), Thomas Dowdall.

<sup>1467</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2636 (6 June 1935), Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1468</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lvi, 2641 (6 June 1935), Seamus Moore.

<sup>1469</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 816 (11 May 1938) Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1470</sup> Mackay, 'The forest and national life'.

<sup>1471</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxx, 618 (2 February 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

## Wood industry

During the 1930s, the theme of the wood industry and its timber supplies was still being raised in the Dáil, although less frequently.<sup>1472</sup> The topics in this theme included the traditional and industrial wood industries, timber supplies, timber imports and exports, and fuelwood, which are summarised in the figure below.

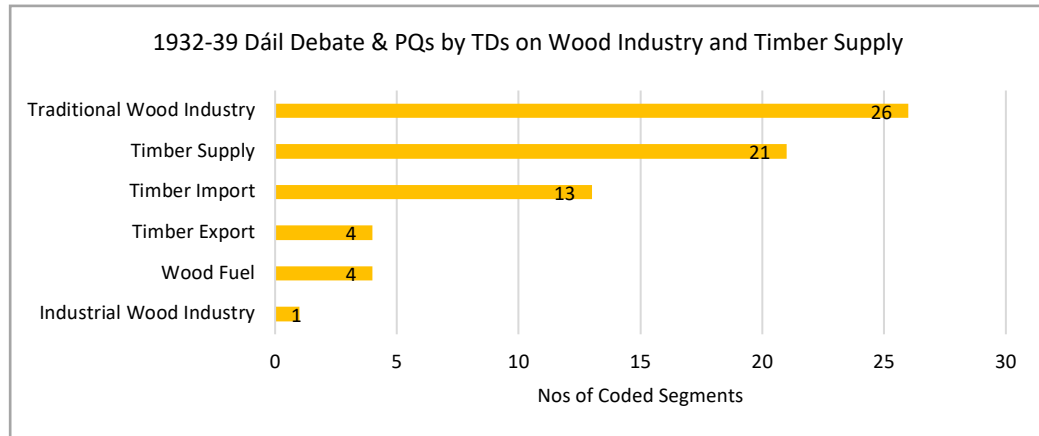


Figure 32: 1932-39 Dáil debates & PQs by TDs on wood industry issues

This figure shows that the traditional wood industry and its future was still the main topic of interest during this period, with its falling timber supply still a matter of concern.

From the start of the Economic War, the wood industry in Ireland was particularly affected by tariffs on British timber products. These tariffs on imported wood products encouraged the organization of the Irish wood industry sector and the founding of the Irish wholesale Furniture Manufacturers Association in 1937.<sup>1473</sup> At this time in Britain, the marketing of timber was the objective of several new timber councils, including the British Home Timber Committee, which were formed under the auspices of the Forestry Commission.<sup>1474</sup> In an effort to modernize the wood industry, the government permitted wood imports if manufacturers were investing in new machinery.<sup>1475</sup> This protected the larger firms with capital to invest in new machinery, such as the largest brush-making firms Varians, a family business established in 1868

<sup>1472</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlviii, 1203-4 (23 June 1933), Seán Goulding; lvi, 2636 (6 June 1935), Patrick Belton; lxi, 2412-3, 2421 (7 May 1936), James Fitzgerald Kenney; Daniel Morrissey; lxxi, 704 (5 May 1938), Donnhdhda Ó Briain; lxxv, 1535 (3 May 1939), James Kelly.

<sup>1473</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 118.

<sup>1474</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 175.

<sup>1475</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlv, 749-50 (1 Dec 1932), Minister Sean Lemass.

with 250 employees in Dublin,<sup>1476</sup> but this would not be of benefit to small local manufacturers.

However, for wood industries depending on the supplies of local timber, the debate in the Dáil highlighted the challenges of the wood industry during this time, particularly the issues the quality of home grown timber. Many TDs proposed commercial opportunities for state timber such as the production of matches from poplars.<sup>1477</sup> In 1934, TD McMenamin reported evidence of timber supplies in Donegal being already low and prices set high,<sup>1478</sup> and, increasingly, the wood industry was relying on the supply of timber from abroad.<sup>1479</sup> TDs Fitzgerald-Kenney and Kelly repeated their concern for the future of furniture industries in Meath, and the effect of difficulties sourcing timber in times of high prices.<sup>1480</sup> Traditional wood industries such as the clog blocks for Lancashire were also being affected by changing markets, although Sydney Minch TD was against using old beech trees for clogs, defending the removal of old trees 'which were formerly an attraction to the people and of which they were proud'.<sup>1481</sup> Even the hurley manufacturers were making representations to the Minister to grow more ash for the camán.<sup>1482</sup> In reply, Minister Connolly referred to a plan for a review of the needs of the country in relation to imports, but again, he left office before plans could be put into action.

The question of inadequately seasoned timber had been an issue that was repeatedly raised in the Dáil. In 1938 TD Fitzgerald Kenney expressed his frustration at the lack of national standards for timber, saying that there was an 'inferiority complex amongst us in the matter of forestry as well as in other things. It is a proven fact that Irish timber is exported in the round from here, dry-kilned in England and imported here in the form of manufactured articles'. He added: 'I have it from the manager of one of these huge saw-mills in Staffordshire that Irish ash is better than any European ash, and that Irish elm and Irish beech are equal to the best products of

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<sup>1476</sup> MacCába (ed.), *Irish Year Book 1938*, p. 119.

<sup>1477</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1511 (3 May 1939), Fitzgerald Kenney.

<sup>1478</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1180 (27 June 1934), Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1479</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1169, 1189 (27 June 1934), James Fitzgerald Kenney; Minister Joseph Connolly.

<sup>1480</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1169-70 (27 November 1934), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; lxxi, 791 (11 May 1938), James Kelly.

<sup>1481</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1204-5 (23 June 1933), Sean Goulding; Sydney Minch.

<sup>1482</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2436 (7 May 1936), Sean Gibbons.

Poland'.<sup>1483</sup> Damp timber for box-making was attributed as the cause of particular economic loss to the multi-million pound egg export wholesalers.<sup>1484</sup> Their use of insufficiently seasoned native timber in egg box construction resulted in mould from the boxes contaminating the eggs, resulting in large volumes of eggs being rejected by the United Kingdom market. Repeated requests by TDs for state action on national timber quality standards to improve the poor reputation of Irish timber since the previous decade, were addressed by Minister Connolly in 1936 but he did not get time to develop his proposals before his departure.<sup>1485</sup> Minister Boland did not consider it a problem for his Department, rather one for the Minister for Industry and Commerce. He maintained that tariffs on imported egg boxes would not change and that these tariffs would not affect the manufacture of egg boxes on duty free planed or seasoned timber.<sup>1486</sup>

The gradual involvement of the Department in the timber market was evident as thinnings began to come out of state forests during the 1930s. However, information on the practice of the Forestry Service in the disposal of state timber emerged only through the questions in Dáil debates, with Michael Brennan concerned that the Department ensure that there would not be a monopoly in the processing of timber.<sup>1487</sup> In anticipation of local wood industry development alongside state forestry centres, Wicklow TD Moore raised a query about whether Continental community woodwork industries could be established alongside state forests to use the timber in local manufacturing.<sup>1488</sup> In 1937, the Dáil heard that timber exports of roundwood were starting up again and TD Seán Goulding urged export control except for immature timber for the pitwood market.<sup>1489</sup>

There was also some debate on the marketing of hardwood timber, with TD Denis Gorey informing the Dáil of the changing market for trees and his difficulties selling three hundred ash and one hundred oak trees, which were eventually taken by

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<sup>1483</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 694 (5 May 1938), Michael Kennedy.

<sup>1484</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., I, 1098-9 (7 February 1934), James Dillon.

<sup>1485</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2444, (7 May 1936), Minister James Connolly.

<sup>1486</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, li, 1015, 1024 (15 November 1934), James Dillon.

<sup>1487</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 2414-5 (7 May 1936), James Fitzgerald-Kenney; lxxi, 964 (5 May 1938), Michael Kennedy.

<sup>1488</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxi, 2410, 2421 (7 May 1936), Seamus Moore; Daniel Morrissey.

<sup>1489</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxvi, 1740 (27 April 1937), Seán Goulding.

the railway company for sleepers and building carriages.<sup>1490</sup> In his view, the only hardwood market that could be found for Spanish chestnut trees was for fencing, but that there was a market for softwood timber for pit props, pulp and building.<sup>1491</sup> However, TD John Esmonde affirmed that there was a market for hardwood in Ireland.<sup>1492</sup> TD Daniel McMenamin queried the long view of the Minister on timber production of the state to produce wood for house building and furniture-making, as well as the production of soft wood for pulp.<sup>1493</sup> After promoting hardwood planting during the 1920s, Seán Goulding supported the planting of conifers by the state for their short rotation and their use in the pitwood market, for silk, paper and pulp.<sup>1494</sup>

However, in 1938, these expectations of an expansion of the domestic timber market were cut short when Minister Boland informed the Dáil of the advice of a consultant to dispose state timber on the English market. He said that:

That matter is being attended to by people who are thoroughly competent and who have studied the timber requirements of the country. They have an intimate knowledge of the requirements of modern industry. As experts they studied the question ... About 10 per cent. of the trees grown are hard timber, and that is considered sufficient to meet our requirements. The rest is soft timber for the English market.<sup>1495</sup>

Minister Boland's announcement on the proposed sale of conifer trees and thinnings from state forestry centres to a private interest in Britain in 1938 was evidence of the abandonment of the stated planting objective from 1922, which had been to supply the timber needs of the country and replace timber imports.

Dáil discourse shows that the use of wood for fuel was important to local communities during this time of rural hardship, where turf supply was limited or not available. However, Departmental policy on wood production for fuel from state forests was haphazard, even though Minister Connolly had proposed an increase in production of firewood from state forests.<sup>1496</sup> TD Nicholas Wall raised the issue of the loss of firewood on an estate in Waterford after the wood had been burnt by the

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<sup>1490</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 801 (11 May 1938), Denis Gorey.

<sup>1491</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1492</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 800, 807 (11 May 1938), John Esmonde; Denis Gorey.

<sup>1493</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1510, 1543 (3 May 1939), Fitzgerald-Kenney; Daniel McMenamin.

<sup>1494</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, xlvi, 1204 (23 June 1933), Seán Goulding.

<sup>1495</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 822 (11 May 1938), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1496</sup> 'Report on Forestry 1933-8', p. 4.

Department.<sup>1497</sup> The local residents could not afford the cost of carting to carry away the remains and the Minister could not comment on the issue. However, on another estate, Moor Park in Cork, the decayed timber was sold to local people over several winters for firewood.<sup>1498</sup> Minister Boland gave the Departmental perspective on wood for fuel for rural communities, saying that generally, it was assumed that it was not needed. He said that:

Most people know that in some places on the Continent where they have a large area planted, a lot of the wood is used for fuel, whereas we here have bogs which supply a large percentage of the fuel requirements of our people.<sup>1499</sup>

Although the hardwood supplies of the nation depended on the privately owned forests, there was still no particular forum for non-state foresters' input into the state forestry program, and their expertise was not heard, except in the Dáil where there was considerable support for state financial assistance for private forestry. The small planting grant scheme for conifer tree planting which had been introduced in 1930, had very few applicants. In response to the Dáil request for the distribution of cost price or free trees in years of oversupply, Minister Boland replied that the sale of excess trees to farmers was not possible due to the impact on the trade of nurserymen.<sup>1500</sup> There were proposals for coordinated schemes to reduce costs where TD Kennedy proposed state support for private forestry schemes adjacent to forest centres.<sup>1501</sup> Cooperative schemes were proposed with three or four farmers, using surplus trees, across two or three townlands, or with thirty or forty landowners for larger schemes,<sup>1502</sup> with the help of a forestry inspector.<sup>1503</sup> There was no further discussion of these suggestions with the Minister.

By contrast the British Forestry Commission's planting program depended on the cooperation of the private forestry sector which was an essential component of British national forestry development since its foundation. This was evident in the national meetings held in every region to inform and stimulate private forestry

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<sup>1497</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., 968-9 (17 November 1937), Nicholas Wall.

<sup>1498</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, PQ., no col. (15 November 1933), John Daly and Private Secretary Hugh V. Flinn.

<sup>1499</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxv, 1566 (3 May 1939), Minister Gerald Boland.

<sup>1500</sup> 'Report on Forestry, 1 April 1938-March 1943', p. 23.

<sup>1501</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, lxxi, 696 (5 May 1938), Michael Kennedy; lxxv, 1538 (3 May 1939), James Everett.

<sup>1502</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1177 (27 June 1934), Fionán Lynch.

<sup>1503</sup> *Dáil Éireann deb.*, liii, 1177-9 (27 June 1934), Daniel McMenamin.

expansion, in the forestry courses offered, and in financial assistance given to improve the quality of all types of forestry.<sup>1504</sup>

## V: Findings and discussion

This study of parliamentary discourse on forest-related issues during the period of the Fianna Fáil government of 1932 to 1939 marked the transition from deforestation to re-afforestation in Ireland, after the implementation of the Forestry Bill (1928) in 1930. The findings show the opening of a dialogue by Minister Connolly with parliamentarians on ideas on how to address the complex issues of suitable land for planting, or on public education in an effort to foster a more positive relationship with the Dáil. At the same time, it was evident that TDs were reluctant to criticise the Department on forestry issues when the same administration was directing the local land division program. Dáil debate shows that Minister Connolly's efforts to introduce an agreed national forestry policy ended with his departure and the forest administration returned to the forestry approach of land acquisition and conifer tree planting. It is not clear why Minister Connolly's Forestry Bill and independent Forest Authority, and all other initiatives except the Forestry School were so quickly abandoned when he left office in 1936. The short-lived Arbor Day celebrations introduced by him were so limited in their application that the nation-wide public engagement with tree-planting and forestry envisaged by the First Dáil was lost, along with any subsequent Ministerial support for local participation or cooperation in state forestry.

However, possibly due to the rapid turnover in administration, or the sensitive land acquisition questions, there was no review of the state non-native planting program, despite parliamentary requests, and perceptions that state forestry had been neglected. This lack of formal review was unusual considering that the non-native conifer plantation approach to forestry development was still experimental but there were enough maturing plantations to evaluate the results of their establishment, their effects on the environment, and the timber production. Despite high levels of administrative and Ministerial change, it was remarkable that the now institutionalised state conifer planting program, initiated under Forbes, continued practically unchanged. The failure to develop such a policy was evident in the frustration still

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<sup>1504</sup> Commission, *Annual Report for the Year Ending September 30th 1938*, p. 18.



evident at the end of the decade over the uncertain purpose of the state planting program, and the slow pace of tree planting.

It is clear that Forbes' legacy of scientific conifer plantation forestry with little reference to place or culture, was the approach followed by the three British Directors of the Forestry Division during this period. Although Anderson was seen as 'obdurate' by Minister Connolly in his reluctance to expand state forestry into peatlands, it is possible that with state policy guidance on the use of native species, Anderson might have successfully reintroduced trees to Connemara and other Western lands, given his later interests in woodland planting and native shelter belts.

The potential for a broader reconstructive state planting program was also found in the contributions of Ponsonby, Mackay and Hobson, which might have informed the work of Minister Connolly, but which were later disregarded by Minister Boland, who reverted to his experts' views on scientific forestry development.

The study showed a change in the issues of greatest interest to parliamentarians from the previous decade from concerns over extreme deforestation and choice of tree species for replanting, to land acquisition and employment, given the extreme economic pressure on small holders all over Ireland at this time. There was increasing expression of interest of participants in the mythological and cultural aspect of trees, woods, forests and their uses, and the state, than during the previous decade, with differing perceptions on the potential arboreal environment. Conflicting views of the purpose of state planting were shown in relation to the parliamentary interest in the planting of sheltered areas of peat and heath lands with mixed species, areas which had not deemed suitable for conifer planting by state experts. In general, parliamentary contributions favoured the planting of non-native conifer forests for timber production on bare land, whether cleared woodland, scrub, or heath, as part of a mixed planting program which included re-planting woodlands for scenery, amenities, and heritage, in cooperation with local agencies and communities. But although this approach might have been developed under Minister Connolly, his successor, Minister Boland had no interest in any aspect of state forestry policy other than land acquisition and the conifer planting program, with a lack of understanding of local fuel requirements. By the end of the decade, from Dáil debate, this fixed approach to state forestry evidently contributed to the growing public hostility towards state conifer tree planting in relation to conflicts over the use of hill grazing land, which had become critical enough to stall the Departmental planting program.

The parliamentary debates also show that there was no national fuel production policy for removal of decaying wood in Department woods for fuel, nor a program of timber supply for local industry nor standardisation of timber seasoning, during a time of rural economic hardship. This was in contrast to the Continental forestry management system which generally included fuel production in its forestry management plans. Despite the vague objective of supplying national timber requirements, the subsidised sale of state conifer timber to the United Kingdom at the end of the decade without any discussion on timber processing or use, could have been due to the low quality of the first harvests of the timber, which was considered to be only fit for pitprops and pulp, rather than construction. It could also have been an indication of the lack of capacity in the Department to deal with the seasoning of timber and sales, and marketing to the domestic market.

However, the discussion on pre-war preparations of Minister Lemass highlighted the capacity of another Department to organise state timber production for fuel and other uses during the Second World War, while the Forestry Division continued their primary work of land acquisition and tree planting. This institutional capacity for integration with the wood industry ended after the war, indicating that the professional forester required additional expertise and a cooperative relationship with a dedicated Department or agency to organise the wood industry, with political will to engage in this activity.

This study showed that without the direction of political will, the state forestry program reverted to land acquisition and conifer tree planting under an autocratic expert approach initiated by Forbes and continued by Crozier and Anderson. The fixation of the Department on the experimental nature of the 'great speculation' of state conifer forestry continued during the 1930s, pushed to the limit of land and experience by political pressure to expand the planting program for employment purposes, without a national forestry policy to guide the planting according to habitat and accompanying species. The opportunities represented by Anderson's interest in woodlands were never realised, neither were the expertise and experience of Reinhard in wood industries and timber supply, despite Minister Connolly's vision for an integrated forestry policy. Meanwhile, woodlands in state ownership were being cleared of all vegetation and they were being replanted with conifers. It is remarkable that by 1939, there was still no agreed forestry policy, and the state still did not know what it was growing the trees for. Despite claims of the commercial justification of the state planting program, the 'great speculation' was evident in the state subsidies to the wholesaler to export the first timber crops from state plantations to Britain.

In conclusion, by the end of the decade, the new arboreal environment created out of the establishment of exotic conifer plantations represented almost the entire state investment in the future forests of Ireland, despite persistent efforts by those interested in broadening the type of forest planted or managed. However, these new single-age conifer forests were an achievement in themselves, carried by the belief of the founding British foresters in the future potential of large-scale non-native conifer plantations, and also by the willingness of the local forestry worker to undertake the hardship of the low-paid planting work in all weathers and conditions, at a time when the population and the state were experiencing acute financial need. This study has shown that the assumptions established during these first two decades of the state on conifer tree planting and its suitability for all types of land, especially non-agricultural land and including woodland, as well as its commercial attributes of rapid growth for a ready market of pit props or pulp, would become central tenets of state foresters in the following years as only the values of the scientific forestry approach of the participants in the forest administration would be recorded.



## Chapter Seven: Discussion and conclusion

Ireland's non-native conifer plantations did not appear by themselves on hill slopes and valleys, and in former woodlands. If nature as an arboreal environment is considered a political construct, this research has illuminated its creation in the highly controlled conifer plantation environment envisaged by the governing institution of the twentieth century. This study indicates that these plantations were the product of a centrally planned program of planting by the state based on legacies of different assumptions and beliefs about the arboreal environment and its care, about landownership and use, about people's participation in forestry and their rights, and about the responsibilities of the state. As in Britain, Irish state forestry can be seen to be the outcome of society's circumstances and requirements, as well as the intentions of the expert foresters.<sup>1505</sup>

One of the challenges of the research has been to entertain the idea that the term 'state forest' in Ireland could apply to other types of tree besides non-native conifers due to the loss of knowledge and appreciation of the place of native trees in the Irish landscape and their uses. The location of a credible archive to address the gaps in the literature on existence of any alternative perceptions on future state forests at the time of the foundation of the state, was key to this research. Even though some of the sources used in this study were dismissed by scientific foresters and others as potentially biased or superficial, their close examination has allowed the rediscovery and validation of alternative perceptions on the legacies of the arboreal environment and its future development.

In this chapter, to conclude this research, the implications of the findings of the comparative studies are discussed in the context of inherited legacies, with an evaluation of the methodology. The research questions on discourses, the participants and the issues frame this discussion, and conclusions are made on the contribution of the research to state forest history in Ireland and to knowledge.

The methodological approach was found to be a useful means of compiling, analysing and contextualising public, political and expert perceptions in contributions made during Oireachtas debates and in expert publications during the first years of the Irish Free State. It brought to light key participants in discourse and debates, and hitherto unrecorded voices and views within an organised framework. It provided a

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<sup>1505</sup> Oosthoek, 'The logic of British Forest Policy 1919-1970', p. 17.

structure for analysis of perceptions on forestry values which allowed a greater understanding of expert perceptions on issues related to trees, woods and forestry, their uses and the state. It illuminated the local, experiential, lay views on the arboreal environment which had often been dismissed as being negative. It was particularly illuminating of some of the relationships between the public representatives and the Minister, between the Minister and his administration which was both conflicted and supportive, and between the Minister and the public.

The record of debate on themes and topics raised in the discourse by participants informed not only the meaning of an issue to participants, and its relevance but also clarified systems of thought and practice, particularly the unequal contest for dominant discourse on the approach to state forestry. This was particularly evident where historical questions and issues were conflicted, seen in the debate around purchase of land used for grazing for state forestry development, an issue which had eventually delayed the achievement of Departmental conifer planting goals by the late 1930s. The record of the Departmental economic perspective on hill land acquisition did not include the sociological and cultural impact on the small farmers contesting the purchase which was referenced in Dáil debate, nor the wider theme of the future of commonage. It is possible that the legacy of landowners' perceptions regarding the negative view of trees attributed to the small holder tenant could have contributed to the lack of institutional understanding about the interests and needs of hill farmers on small holdings in relation to land use.

The findings of the analysis recorded these conflicting perceptions and differing values around the nature and characteristics of different types of arboreal environments in Ireland. Many contributions to the discourse were made with an awareness and appreciation of trees and woods, and a diverse group of parliamentarians and individual authors were evidently informed about the wider impact of forestry on climate, on hydrology, on soil, on landscape, and the profound long-term impacts of the loss of wooded land on the surrounding landscape as well as on industry. However, the institutional discourse only addressed the short-term goal of commercial timber production, ignoring the catastrophic effects of wood clearance and deforestation on the local wood industries and the impacts of introducing non-native conifer plantations.

From the two contiguous periods of study from 1922 to 1931, and 1932 to 1939, comparative analysis of parliamentary discourse and other publications across two periods of government showed the changing roles of Ministers, parliamentarians and forest administrators in state forestry development. This brought the contributions

of leading groups of participants into sharp relief, identifying their relative strengths and weaknesses, and their potential for action on policy or program. During the Cumann na nGaedhael government, the devolution of the state forestry program by Minister Hogan to the forestry administration led by Arthur Forbes halted any effective discourse between Minister and parliamentarian beyond land acquisition and conifer tree planting. The active interest of Minister Connolly in implementing a forestry policy through an independent Forest Authority and a more 'household of nature' approach to state forestry introduced a constructive exchange with parliament. This approach was evidently abandoned by Minister Boland who reverted back to the minimalist conifer plantation program, possibly due to lack of Cabinet direction in the absence of personal Ministerial interest. Neither Ministers Hogan, Boland nor Lemass considered the Oireachtas as an active partner in state forestry development.

## I. Participants in discourse on forest-related issues

The findings of the study on parliamentary discourse on forest-related issues showed that while the legislature might have been newly established, the Oireachtas quickly settled into the procedural routine of well organised forest-related debates. However, its evidently ineffective relationship with Minister Hogan and his forestry administration regarding state forestry development could be seen in Hogan's determination not to address any forest-related question other than land acquisition, tree planting and tree felling control with the parliamentarians. This could be considered a reflection of Cosgrave's stated preference for close partnership with the inherited civil service precluding the necessity of parliamentary expertise. This lack of confidence in parliamentary forest-related discourse by Hogan could also have been influenced by the forestry experts' views on non-professional opinions on future forests, as well as a reflection of his unwillingness to contribute to the deeply held divisions in society over land acquisition and use after the civil war.

However, the discourse analysis established the public representative as a leading, but not necessarily effective participant in discourse on state forestry from 1922 to 1939. After the constitutional changes to the Irish Free State in 1922 which created citizens instead of subjects, these changes can be seen in the non-partisan efforts of parliamentarians to develop an national forestry policy for Ireland that would include public participation. This was an aspect of state forestry that was not

considered relevant to post-war commercial conifer production-based forestry which had been inherited from the British administration in Ireland.

The first group of participants in forest-related debate was the not so inarticulate taxpayer representing some of the diversity of society, with many members of the Oireachtas experienced public representatives, if not in parliamentary procedures. Many of the parliamentarians also had associations with farming or land, whether owned or not which could be seen as a continuation of the tradition, if not the particular individuals, of public-spirited landowners being actively involved in state policy and program review under British administration. Landowning representatives from both the unionist and nationalist traditions were shown to be equally interested in a state forestry program, some of whom had personal experience of planting and trees, maintaining woods as well as local wood industries and their community significance. They were clearly appreciative of the foresters' skill in managing woods as well as the wider beneficial effects, particularly on the landscape. It was evident that all parliamentary speakers favoured the state role in forestry development and were keen to participate in its evolution, particularly those familiar with the re-forestation objectives of the First Dáil and those involved in the wood industry. However, as parliamentary discourse offered the only public oversight of the government forestry development program during the 1920s and 30s, the institutional disregard of the accumulated forestry experience and knowledge of parliamentarians contributed to the growing disconnection between government and people on forestry-related issues. This was particularly evident in the use of 'relief' work schemes for state forestry development which created the potential for an underpaid labour force. Parliamentary representatives associated with trades unions were outspoken in their defence against perceived exploitation during this time.

From the analysis, it was also clear that the second group of participants on forest-related debate who had the greatest potential for effective change were the Ministers. Their role was demonstrated by the lack of any direction for the forestry needs of the new Irish Free State under Minister Hogan, besides the control of tree felling Act, during his term of office, accepting the expansion of Forbes' DATI trial conifer tree planting program without independence of authority. The innovative proposals for a cooperative tri-partite management of national woods proposed in the 1908 Report were referenced by Hogan but not reviewed, nor the wider application of the British Forestry Commission objectives of 1919, both of which were of significance to Forbes. This was in contrast to the active involvement of Minister Connolly, his proposed Forestry Bill and Forest Authority for the national redevelopment of woods,



forests, and the wood industry, with the renewal of woodland appreciation in Ireland. It is arguable that the independent Forest Authority so often proposed over the previous three decades, (similar in function to Bord na Móna, the Irish Turf Board), would have faced different challenges and constraints of government, particularly on land acquisition. However, it also could have been the catalyst for a reconnection of people and trees, while supplying the needs of the market. However, although a non-English forester was recruited to replace his expert English Director, Minister Connolly did not have time to develop his integrated plan for state forestry and his ideas were quickly abandoned. Still without a national forestry policy for guidance, Minister Boland subsequently reverted to forest-related discourse that was limited to land acquisition and conifer tree planting. However, the efforts of Minister Sean Lemass to integrate the Forestry Division with the wood industry for war-time supplies of fuel and timber from state forests demonstrated for the first time since 1922, the effectiveness of coordinating active marketing of state forestry timber with the management of supply. This administrative exercise ended after the war, and with it ended the potential for state input into the development of the hardwood industry for most of the twentieth century.

The third major group of participants in this analysis were professional, (mostly British) foresters working in Irish state forestry. Their overwhelming belief in the superiority of the scientific approach to plantation forestry, preferably with non-native conifers, common in the United Kingdom, Europe, and Imperial or Commonwealth countries, was innovative for the time. This approach was generally based on a native forestry sector that was still appreciated as a national asset, an appreciation which seemed to be less important to the first government of Ireland. Only the deforested and treeless land was of interest to the foresters, who were applying new practices in the introduction of new tree species on any land available. The scientific skill required to replant this temporary or permanently treeless land tended to disregard other views on forestry that did not have the imprimatur of a professional forester's formation, evident in Forbes' dismissive view of Ponsonby's extensive experience and practice as a forester, amongst others. This disregard of the non-professional view could still be found at the end of the 1930s, in Ministerial remarks on Mackay's publications in the Dáil.

The 'father' of professional forestry in Ireland, Arthur Forbes' pioneering approach to large scale plantation forestry was influenced by his association with the imperial, and then commonwealth forestry development for timber production, particularly the Forestry Conference from 1920, for foresters and land use managers in

service to the post-war Empire. Forbes' perceptions of land outside the estate as a 'clean slate,' with no cultural attachments would have facilitated the use of all habitats as suitable for the introduction of quick-growing non-native conifers for timber production, initially for British post First World War requirements, and eventually in 1939 for British pre-Second World War requirements. Although imperial foresters' changing views of forestry and the wider environment that were forming over the 1930s and were eventually re-exported back to Europe,<sup>1506</sup> the preservation and enhancement of arboreal heritage in Ireland was not priority or an interest of Forbes, unless it was on a private estate. Whether considered beneficial or injurious to the environment of trees and woods, it is demonstrated that Forbes' views had long-lasting impact on future forest development in Ireland. His strongly-held opinions on the folly of planting trees (conifer) in Connemara or peatland were inherited by generations of foresters, where native species for other uses besides pitprop timber, even as shelter belts would have been more successful, according to parliamentarians from these areas. Also inherited were his firm views on natural woodlands being the concern of the private forest owner, as planting trees for the production of hardwood timber was not considered to be a commercial proposition for the state by either Forbes or Henry during the 1920s. But without a forestry policy to guide him nor an advisory council to discuss his assumptions, Forbes was free to expand his planting experiment started in DATI, based on the objective of large-scale commercial production of softwood timber. Forbes' approach did ensure the innovative expansion of non-native conifer plantations in nearly all habitats, whether in woodland or in treeless hill land, by the end of the twentieth century, with the state bearing the cost of the great experiment. The institutionalisation of the nursery production of conifer seed and seedlings, as well as the conifer plantation training program of Irish foresters contributed to the perpetuation of Forbes' approach to forestry. No concessions to parliamentary concerns over the importation of disease with conifer seeds and transplants were countenanced by the administration, indicating an institutional disregard for the impact of the program. The analysis shows how the trial and error approach to non-native conifer plantation forestry, with the errors removed and new species planted, eventually produced quick-grown low quality softwood timber that was initially unsuitable for much import substitution, but which would become the raw material for the industrial chip and pulp industry in Ireland.

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<sup>1506</sup> Beinart and Hughes, *Environment and Empire*, p. 112.

The fourth participant in the analysis, the 'core constituent' of Steinsiek, and the 'actor' of Agnoletti *et al.*, and Warde *et al.*,<sup>1507</sup> is nature itself, the agency of creation of the arboreal environment which does not contribute to the discourse but can be perceived in the contributions of the active participants' views on the nature of the arboreal environment, and can be included in the narrative.<sup>1508</sup> The potential arboreal environment was perceived differently by the participants in the discourse. Its loss from wood clearances cast a long shadow in debates and the clearance of local woods from many counties are recorded. The participants referred constantly to the 'denuded' landscape, the 'bare land', and the uncertainties over the tree-growing potential of Ireland were shown to have a profound effect on the participants in state forestry, from parliamentarians, Ministers to foresters. The extreme level of deforestation in Ireland had arguably a profound influence on Forbes and Henry in their perception of a landscape that could no longer support a natural arboreal environment which necessitated the introduction of non-native species, and the destruction of native remnants, (where were the woods to replant?). The reconstruction of cut-over woodlands, the planting of scrub and heath were viewed with diverse associations of meaning and value. The participants' experience of the adverse impacts of plantation forestry approach which required the greatest human intervention and control became slowly evident as the planting schemes mature, highlighting the lack of scientific review and control, even as the urgency for state employment schemes increased over the period. The perception of the need to reconstruct a more inclusive, more natural arboreal environment with its regenerative capacity was a constant theme in parliamentary debates despite the Fathers' of Forestry overriding interest in the making of a new arboreal environment for Ireland based on nature's productive capacity from temporary non-native forests.

## II. Issues analysis and contribution to state forestry development

The findings on the most important issues raised by participants in Oireachtas debates are discussed under four main themes in consideration of the wider context of

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<sup>1507</sup> Steinsiek, 'Theory in (forest) history: A success story?', p. 61.

<sup>1508</sup> The history of the soil from the earthworm's perspective inspired this perspective, in Verena Winiwarter, 'Soils and Society: An environmental history of challenge and response', in *Die Bodenkultur*, lvii, no. 4 (2006), pp 231-242.

their contribution to state forestry development, namely, deforestation and replanting, land use, economics, and aesthetics.

The contextualisation of the legacy of deforestation in Ireland framed the findings on this issue in Oireachtas debates. The rapid deforestation as a result of land ownership changes was evident in two major periods of tree clearance, with an associated contentious view of the non-landowning public by landowners of large estates, and equally contentious view of the property of the landowner by the dispossessed public. The effects of deforestation on the land and the impoverishment of the soil from exposure and grazing was only hinted at in the historical record. The late nineteenth to early twentieth century period of tree and wood clearance initiated as an unintended effect of the Land Acts inspired both the British and the First Dáil re-afforestation programs, to bring peace, employment, cultural revival as well as economic benefits. But the control of tree felling was shown to be unthinkable under British administration to protect private property interests and extensive wood clearance continued over thirty years, particularly during the First World War. The clearance of woods was finally addressed by Hogan's 1928 Forestry Act, after several years of concern expressed in the parliament, evidence of appreciation of woods as national assets. Unfortunately, the provisions of the Forestry Act (1928) and subsequent iterations did not seem to apply to the Department, which recorded the clearance of trees and associated vegetation from woods in their ownership, effectively destroying intact woodlands in the name of scientific forestry to replace them with non-native conifer plantations. Reinhard expressed the perception of the forestry administration when he referred to the wood stocked with timber that he had recently bought which was going to be of great use to the Department for the sale of the trees and clearance of the land for conifer tree planting. Institutional deforestation was not a topic for review during the period of study nor during the twentieth century, and has only recently been recognised and halted with measures to preserve the remnants of some of these old replanted woods.

The second theme of economics underpins the state conifer tree planting program of this period, both with regard to land acquisition and tree planting. With private woodland at a critically low level in an already deforested landscape, the issue of replanting devastated woodlands and treeless lands was raised in nearly every state forestry debate from 1922 to 1939. The state planting program based on the maximum area to be planted that could be maintained by a forester, required cheap land found on hill slopes, and low-paid labour, due to the expense of planting conifer plantations which was greater than reconstituting woodland. Forbes maintained that the only tree

that could be planted for timber production in hill land was the conifer tree, an argument which gradually became the justification for the belief that the *only* tree that was possible to plant in hill or low quality land ( or eventually any land), was the conifer tree. The purchase of large areas of almost worthless hill land depended on the unexamined assumption of the higher value of commercial timber production, compared to the proven value to the sheep farmer in some regions. Some of these farmers valued it enough to fight to keep it, as Dáil reports showed Departmental planting goals being held up by disputes over land use rights. An example of the disconnection of the Department from the people involved in hill land acquisition was illustrated in Minister Boland's shock at hearing an outraged local resident's triumph at having saved two good farms from state afforestation. Although these measures were challenged in parliamentary debate, they were not scrutinised by expert review. It is debatable whether the land issue was a continuation of the conflict proposed by Solow,<sup>1509</sup> between two views of land ownership, private or cooperative, and its use and rights, that had been ongoing since the famine. Minister Hogan added compulsory land purchase powers to the Forestry Bill for the Department's land acquisition program in cases of objecting land owners or users. Any opposition was seen as going against public good, although an ancient system of commonage and hill farming economics was being broken up without any public consultation. The temporary part-time and seasonal jobs generated by state planting schemes were welcomed for much-needed employment for some, but these jobs could not replace the loss of land, housing and community. State conifer forestry has generated conflicts around land use in other parts of Ireland that have rumbled on to the present day, despite recent research into the interests of local farmers.

The findings show that economics was also the justification for rejecting peatlands and thus much of the available land in Western regions, as unsuitable for conifer tree planting, according to Minister Hogan, advised by Arthur Forbes who insisted that such an undertaking would be a costly failure. Parliamentary debates illustrated the differing expectations for state forestry to replant native species as well as conifer trees, particularly in areas that would be too exposed or wet for conifer timber production. These expectations were driven by parliamentarians who had witnessed the existence of mature native or mixed woods in Western peatland areas, which had either been cleared during the First World War or were still intact, growing

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<sup>1509</sup> B.L. Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy 1870 - 1903* (Massachusetts, 1971).in Campbell, *Land and revolution: Nationalist politics in the west of Ireland 1891-1921*, p. 77.

with shelter and drainage. The ineffectiveness of the debate on Western peatland tree planting in the Dáil was probably due to the rigid adherence of Forbes to his conviction that the Knockboy scheme had demonstrated the impossibility of planting trees (conifers) in these areas. The discourse also highlights the continuing institutional dismissal of the potential of local native species for timber or non-timber uses. This approach was implemented over much of the twentieth century without a national forestry policy to protect native woods, where there were no Crown Woods already established to preserve the tradition of arboreal heritage, as in other European countries. This resulted in the clearance of the remnants of native woods in peatlands and other areas to replant with conifers, such as the former Derryclare oak wood in the Inagh Valley in Connemara.<sup>1510</sup> These beliefs were promulgated by Forbes' successors, Crozier and to some extent Anderson, and they would accompany foresters into the twentieth century. They were inherited by many of the graduates of the Forestry School Avondale and forestry centres, and were also evident in foresters' search for new techniques to make non-native conifers, rather than native trees grow in any habitat available. As Forbes, Neeson, Fitzpatrick and Durand clearly show, the afforestation of Ireland was grant-driven towards the non-native conifer plantation approach to forestry, with no financial support nor training courses made available for public or private management and replanting of hardwood or native woods, until the end of the twentieth century.<sup>1511</sup> Although this approach to state forestry was being reversed in Europe from the end of the nineteenth century, it was still to be found in tropical forest management up to the 1970s. At this time, the Food and Agriculture Organisation began to question the wisdom of clearing native slow-growing hardwood forests for quick growing softwood trees.<sup>1512</sup>

But although these assumptions of an economic approach to state tree planting were particularly evident in the appreciative historical record of the heroic nature of the early experimental tree planting schemes, eventually there was an acknowledgement of the uneconomic basis of the early approach to state tree planting. In the 1970s,

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<sup>1510</sup> Fitzpatrick records the contribution of timber cleared and sold from over 72,000 acres of private forests which were then replanted, out of a total in state ownership of over 82,000 acres. Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 125.

<sup>1511</sup> Increasing numbers of farmers have planted broadleaf trees under the Native Woodland Scheme introduced in 2001, and communities have planted native woods under the Neighborhood Wood Scheme in 2006. [www.woodlandsofireland.com](http://www.woodlandsofireland.com). (Accessed 12 March 1917).

<sup>1512</sup> Bennett, *Plantations and protected areas: A global history of forest management*, p. 92.

economist Frank Convery said that 'the creation of this major resource is a vindication of those individuals ...who persevered over the past forty years in promoting forestry when initially tangible evidence in support of their case was limited'. Later, forest historian McGlynn would note the uncommercial nature of over half of the forest plantation estate due to the early experimental work of the state, and it was not until the mid-twentieth century that there were admissions about unsuitable trees being planted in unsuitable places.<sup>1513</sup>

Scenery was also an economic issue. The findings of the discourse analysis showed that the aesthetic aspects of trees, woods and forests in the scenery and the landscape were also considered a luxury by some Ministers. By contrast, representatives from all sections of society in Oireachtas debates expressed their perception of trees in the landscape as essential factors in long-term land use, whether from personal awareness of nature or as a feature of tourism and leisure development. Parliamentarians spoke with regret of woods that had been lost to the merchant saw miller, as well as the potential of woods to 'clothe the denuded landscape,' landscape which had once been covered in woods. The sense of place and woods that was at the heart of the re-forestation policy of the First Dáil, along with references to the mythological connections of people and woods, were both raised in Dáil debate.

Only the Provisional Government's proposals would prioritise the reconnection of people to their ancient arboreal heritage by including the public at the centre of the re-forestation forestry policy. These proposals sought to reinstate trees, woods, forests as an essential part of modern state-building. Although these concepts of reconnection of people with trees were raised in Dáil debate and in Minister Connolly's proposals for an integrated forestry policy, they were abandoned immediately he left office. This is possibly due to the cultural public aspects of forestry development in Ireland as being seen as outside the purview of the professional British forester of the period. The increasingly evident disconnection of the Department with the public was also manifest in the forthright, independent publications by amateur forestry experts, Bulmer Hobson and John Mackay of the 1930s. Mackay's strident work was evidently produced out of his frustration with the limited state perspective on forestry development in Ireland. However, his attribution of blame for all the problems of state forestry development on Forbes is unfair given the continued absence of an agreed national forestry policy to set priorities for state forestry management. The acceptance

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<sup>1513</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 160; Fitzpatrick, *The forests of Ireland: An account of the forests of Ireland from early times until the present day*, p. 51.

of Mackays' premise that forestry has 'an essential environmental, and therefore social role antecedent to commercial management' by Neeson in the early 1990s, is a reflection of the extent of the disconnection of state forestry from aspects other than conifer plantation development for timber production, over most of the twentieth century.

Economics was also given as the reason for not investing in state hardwood timber production in Ireland. From Dáil debates, except for the short-lived efforts of Minister Connolly, it was recorded that hardwood timber production was also perceived by Ministers as uneconomic, uncommercial, a luxury which the state could not afford, despite the expense of establishing conifer plantations, and the unexamined cost of the demise of the traditional wood industry, with its loss of skills and jobs. This highlighted the long-term effect of the institutional perception of the low value that had been attributed to private woodland and forest development up to the late 1970s, a view which changed with the advent of membership of the European Union.<sup>1514</sup> With the focus of the Forestry Division on land acquisition and tree planting, it was clear that no amount of parliamentary statements, proposals or pleading would persuade Minister Hogan to include the wood industry in his consideration of the future of state forestry, leaving him open to the charge of 'planting for planting sake'.

Despite the stated goal of providing timber from state forests for the domestic market to reduce the import bill, it was clear from Dáil debates that there was little state interest in or support for local wood industry employment, apart from the sale of conifer thinnings, even considering the annual loss of employment in wood manufacturing. It is noteworthy that the simple standardisation of timber drying to ensure the reputation of Irish timber at home and abroad was ignored by the government despite its potentially immediate economic benefits. Domestic timber supply continued to be a vague aspiration until Minister Connolly met with the wood industry representatives to discuss their supply needs. This rejection of the interests of the wood industry in Ireland was arguably a combination of lack of professional training or capacity in the Forestry Division to address the industry issues, the still unknown quality of timber that would be produced by the experimental non-native conifer plantations, and an unwillingness by Minister Hogan to insist on the integration of production and processing of state timber. The subsidised sale of state timber to Britain in 1939 could be seen as a realisation of Forbes' original objective of large-scale conifer timber production to supply the British market. However, the temporary integration of the state timber production sector with

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<sup>1514</sup> Neeson, *A history of Irish forestry*, p. 258.



the wood industry was evident in Minister Lemass' rapid organisation of the state timber production output to supply industrial needs and peoples' fuel requirements during the war time embargo on imports from 1939 to 1945. This proved the effectiveness of cooperative institutional management of production and supply where there was a common goal. Again the critical importance of a national forestry policy and plan for the wood industry in Ireland was raised in 1950 by Irish forester, F.T. Morehead, expert on forestry in Burma under British administration.<sup>1515</sup>

Thus parliamentary discourse clearly showed that political will was required to ensure the administrative capacity to implement an integrated state forestry planting program with the wood industry, similar to the organisation of the Agriculture Department that had been present since its foundation in 1900. As this integration ended after the war, this research raises many questions on the subsequent management and marketing of state timber as well as the marketing of hardwoods from individual native woods under state and private ownership and the fate of their associated traditional wood working crafts and industries, over the twentieth century.

This demonstration of the uneconomic aspect of early state forestry in this research illustrates the absence of an economic review of the state forestry planting program during this period, in conjunction with the lack of an agreed national agreement on state forestry policy that would integrate tree planting with industry requirements while reinstating the arboreal environment. Although the mounting frustration over the inability of the Department to institute a coordinated national forestry policy and program could be taken as example of 'autocratic expertise' in action, the extraordinary absence of a formal review process that defined Irish state forestry during its first twenty years of existence was more the result of inaction by the government. This was in stark contrast to the extensive discourse that founded the establishment of the British Forestry Commission in 1919, and directed its annual review.

By the end of 1939, the great speculative venture by the state to establish non-native conifer plantations in all types of habitats, with its cost in money, labour and land, was beginning to show results from the fifteen years growth of trees that had survived. Possibly the real success of the early state forest planting program was the reintroduction of the tree into the rural landscape, even if it was non-native and grown as a crop, trees which were being cared for by a new generation of foresters, trained in

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<sup>1515</sup> F.T. Morehead, 'The necessity for a forest policy', in *Irish Forestry*, vii, no. 1 & 2 (1950).

development of conifer plantation forests. The visual potential of a forest was again part of Irish consciousness, but its utilitarian potential was limited to the institution of the state.

In conclusion, in order to explore the query on the origins of the non-native plantation approach of Irish state forestry and its associated abandonment of native woodland development, based on all available evidence, this research shows that a broader lens of analysis is required to include differing perceptions, assumptions and values on future state forests. With this lens, the findings show that perceived values can predispose attitudes and ultimately behaviour and that these differing values, including the deeply held, emotional aspects of people's cognition, and their consequential action can be studied in discourse analysis. The broader lens of this research aided the understanding of aspects of the complex legacies around landownership, social history and the nature of the arboreal environment in Ireland during the early twentieth century, which contributed to its particular characteristics in the later part of the century. Within the European narrative of transition from single-aged conifer plantation forestry to a return to regenerating forestry, Ireland was shown to have selected experimental non-native conifer plantation forestry for its commercial potential, rejecting any state involvement in native woodland development. Identification of the interrelationships of the participants in discourse on forest-related issues in the course of the research clarified the perceived and actual roles of the participants. The recovery of the public voice in state forest history illuminates the legacies of both extreme deforestation and public efforts to reinstate trees, woods, forests and their uses in Ireland with an integrated national forestry policy, by both British and Provisional Government administrations.

Thus, attempts to introduce a broader approach to state forestry development for the needs of the Irish state, were unsuccessful due to considerations of a conservative administration, the effect of war, expert dominance and truncated Ministerial interest. The expansion of the experimental non-native conifer tree planting program as the state forestry development program without an agreed national forestry policy is shown to be largely due to the institutionally unchallenged acceptance of the expert views on plantation forestry, with their associated rejection of the value of the native arboreal environment, the woodlands, their products, and their people during the first years of the Irish state.

It is possible to conclude that this research approach deepens the narrative on the origins of Irish state forest history to include the perceived environment of trees, woods, their uses and the state, and the institutional perspective on state forestry.

From its foundations in 1922, the domination of institutional values for state forestry development can be seen in the proposed sale in 2012 of the state conifer plantation forestry estate without formal review of impact on environment, on land, on people or industry, or on place.

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Table of forest values of opportunity

Aesthetic	The opportunity to enjoy the beauty of woods, forests and nature
Ecological	The opportunity to protect woods and forests in order to ensure human well-being and survival
Economic	The opportunity to extract timber, bark, resin, and use other natural resources from woods and forests
Education	The opportunity to learn more about woods, forests and nature
Historical/Cultural	The opportunity to see and experience woods and forests as our ancestors did
Intellectual	The opportunity to think creatively and be inspired by woods and forests
Moral/Ethical	The opportunity to exercise a moral and ethical obligation to respect and protect woods, forests, nature and other living things
Recreation	The opportunity to camp, hike, hunt and participate in other recreation activities in woods and forests
Scientific	The opportunity to scientists to study woods, forests and nature.
Spiritual	The opportunity to get closer to God or obtain other spiritual meaning through contact with woods, forests and nature
Therapeutic	The opportunity to maintain or regain physical or mental well-being through contact with nature
Employment	The opportunity to create or maintain jobs
Resettlement	The opportunity to create or resettle people or communities

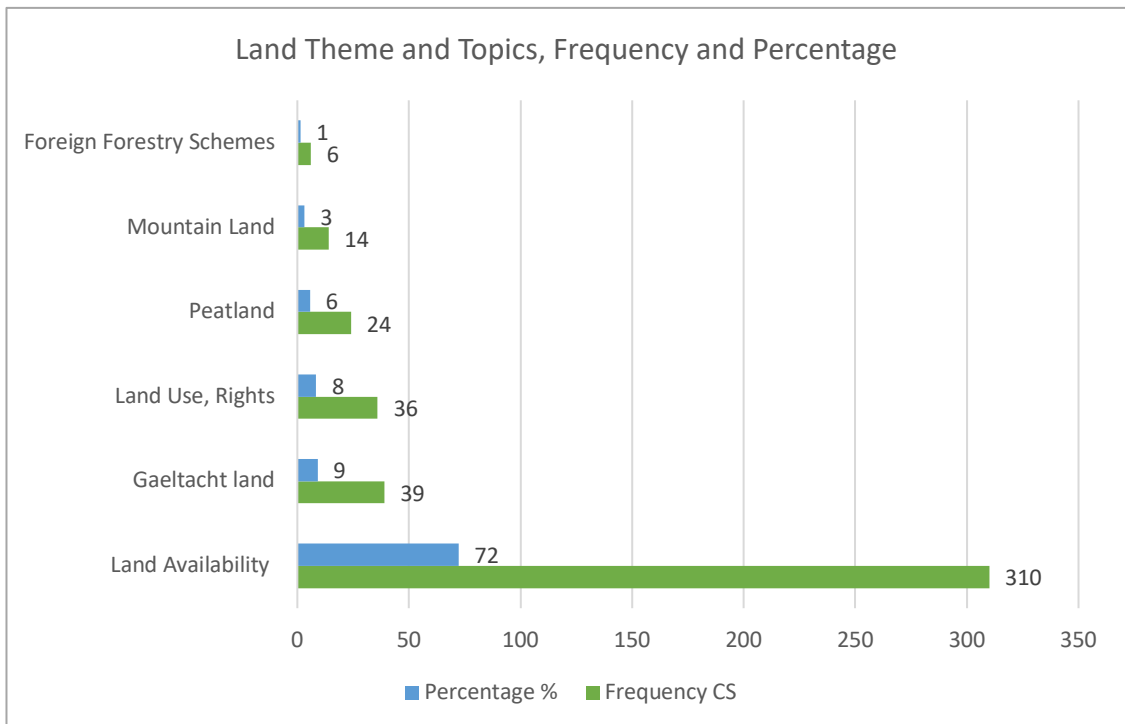
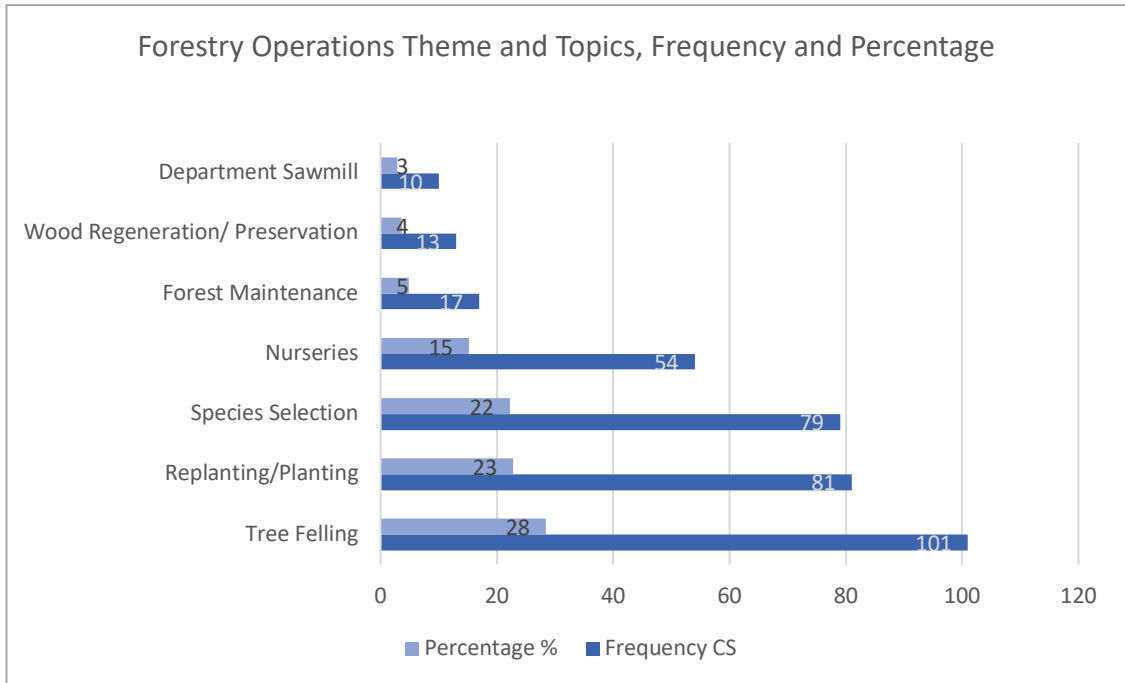
(Adapted from R Manning *et al.*, 1999).

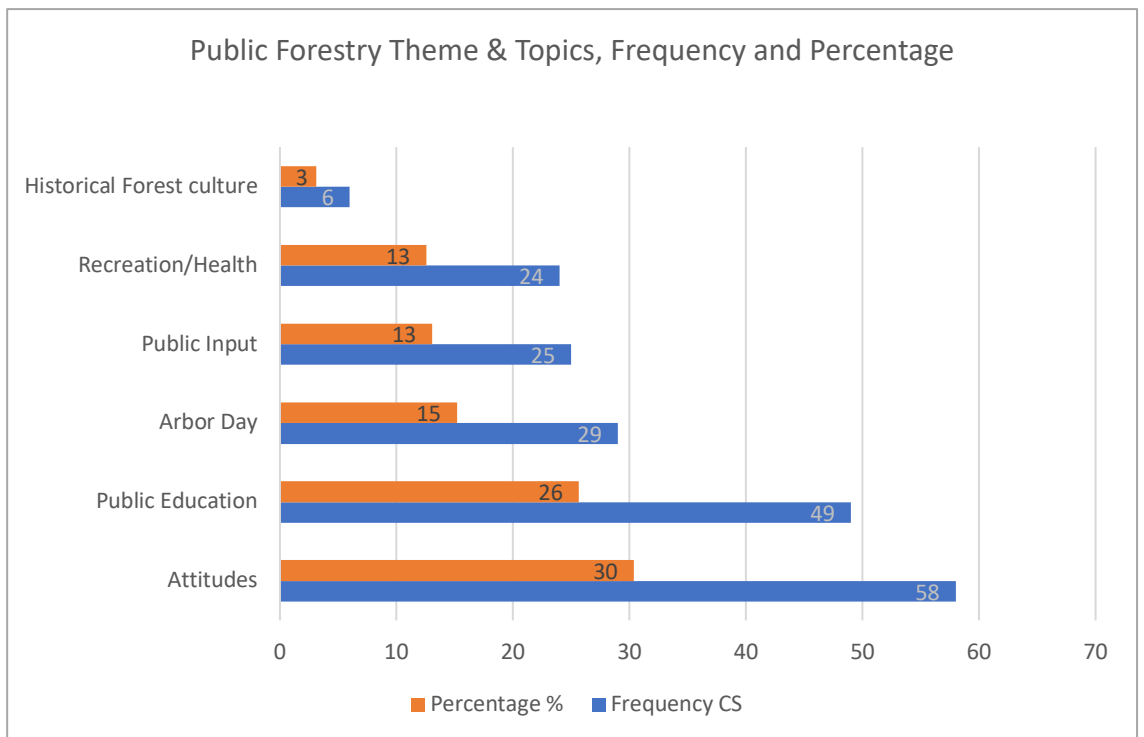
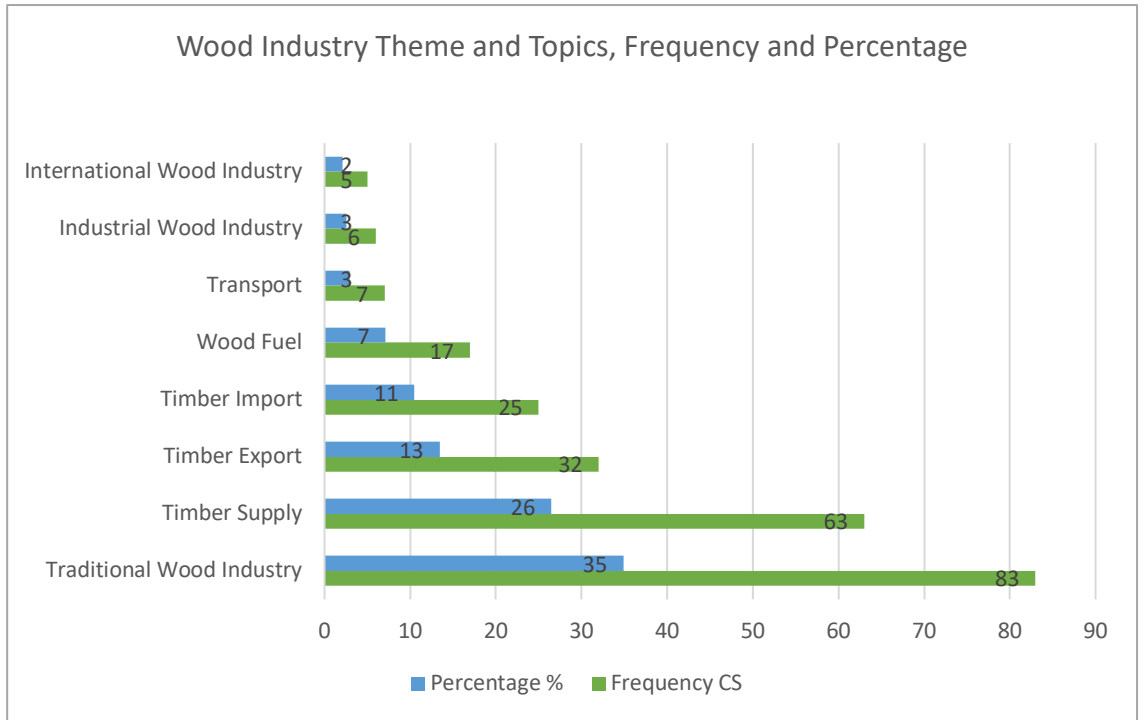
## Appendix II: Summary of codes

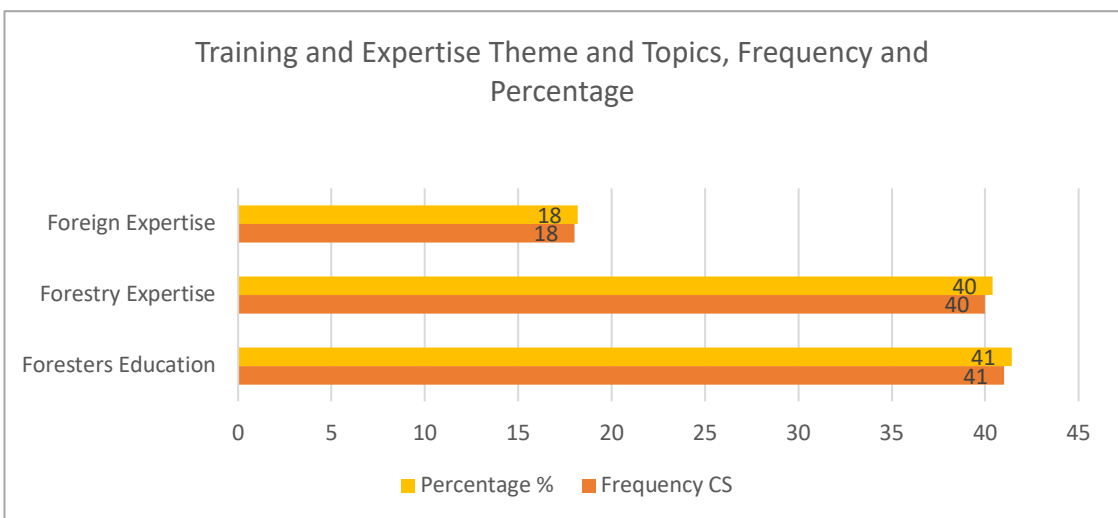
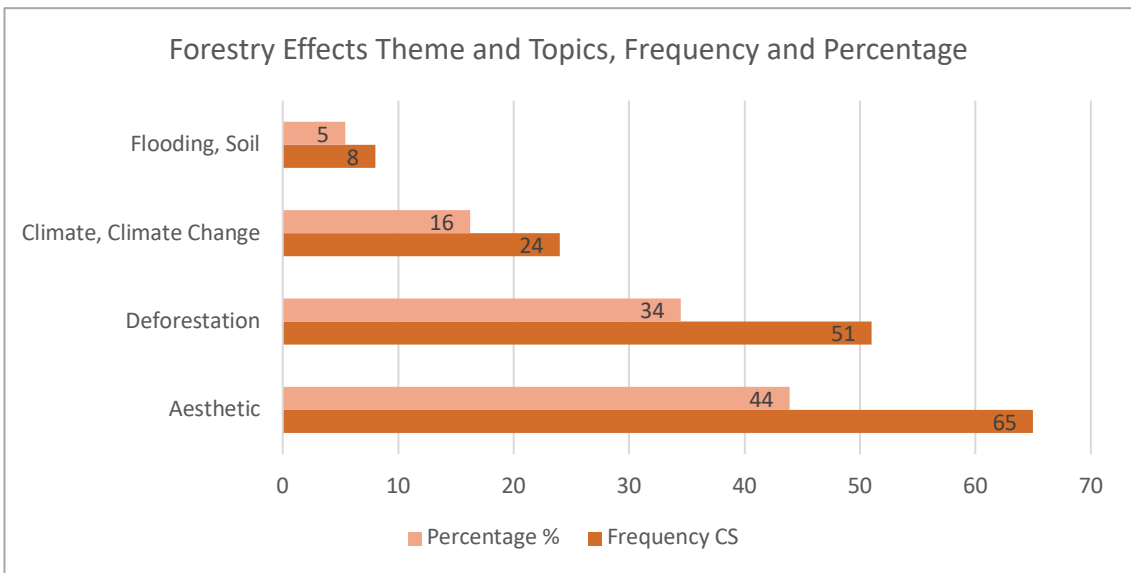
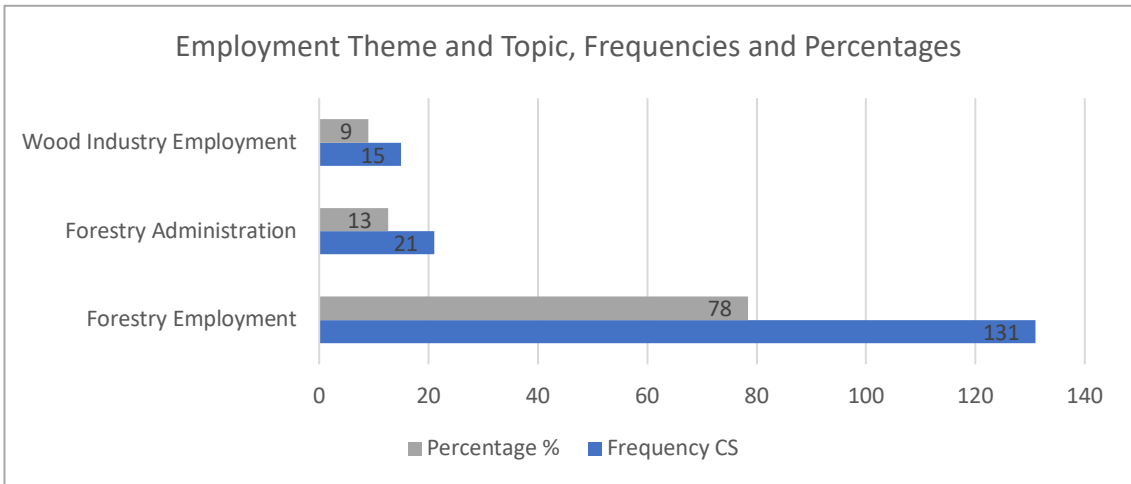
- a) Coded themes and topics for forest-related discourse in Dáil Debate and Parliamentary Questions.

<p>Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Land Availability</li><li>Peatland</li><li>Gaeltacht land</li><li>Land Use, Rights</li><li>Mountain Land</li><li>Foreign Forestry Schemes</li></ul> <p>Public Forestry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public Input</li><li>Recreation/Health</li><li>Historical Forest culture</li><li>Attitudes</li><li>Arbor Day</li><li>Public Education</li></ul> <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Forestry Administration</li><li>Forestry Employment</li><li>Wood Industry Employment</li></ul> <p>Policy and Planning</p> <p>Forestry Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Flooding, Soil</li><li>Aesthetic</li><li>Deforestation</li><li>Climate, Climate Change</li></ul>	<p>Training and Expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Forestry Expertise</li><li>Foresters Education</li><li>Foreign Expertise</li></ul> <p>History</p> <p>Private Forestry</p> <p>Forestry Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wood Regeneration/ Preservation</li><li>Tree Felling</li><li>Forest Maintenance</li><li>Replanting/Planting</li><li>Species Selection</li><li>Nurseries</li></ul> <p>Wood Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>International Wood Industry</li><li>Industrial Wood Industry</li><li>Department Sawmill</li><li>Timber Import</li><li>Timber Supply</li><li>Wood Fuel</li><li>Timber Export</li><li>Traditional Wood Industry</li><li>Transport</li></ul>
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b) Summary of Codes in themes and topics by frequency and percentage









## Appendix III: Speakers in Oireachtas debates on forest-related issues

### a) 1922-31 Leading speakers in Dáil Debates and PQs

Dáil 1922-31				
Name	Term of Office	Affiliation	County	Occupation
William Sears	1919-27	CnG	Mayo South/Roscommon	Newspaper Owner
Osmunde G Esmonde	1923-36	CnG	Wexford	Diplomat, Landowner
Mathew O'Reilly	1927-54	CnG	Meath	Farmer
George Wolfe	1923-32	CnG	Kildare	Nationalist activist landowner
Daniel McMenamín	1927-61	National League/CnG	Donegal	Barrister
James Fitzgerald	1927-44	CnG	Mayo South	Barrister, Minister for Justice
Kenney				
Seamus Moore	1927-40	Fianna Fáil	Wicklow	Businessman
Dr James Ryan	1919-65	Fianna Fáil	Wexford	Nationalist activist, Doctor landowner, Agriculture Minister
Sean Goulding	1927-37	Fianna Fáil	Waterford	Farmer and Company Director
Thomas Johnson	1922-27	Labour	Dublin County	Trades Union Official, Leader of the Labour Party
William Davin	1922-56	Labour	Leix/Offaly	Station Master
Archie Cassidy	1927-32	Labour	Donegal	
John Daly	1923-32	Independent & CnG	Cork East	Vintner and Baker
Michael Heffernan	1923-32	Farmer's Party	Tipperary	Farmers Union Secretary
Denis Gorey	1922-40	Farmer's Party, CnG	Carlow/Kilkenny	Farmer and Land
Bryan Ricco Cooper	1923-30	Independent, CnG	Dublin County	British Military and Farmer

b) 1932-39 Leading speakers in Dáil debate and PQs

Dáil 1932-39				
Name	Term of Office	Affiliation	County	Occupation
William Davin	1922-56	Labour	Leix/Offaly	Station Master
Seán Broderick	1923-43	Fine Gael	Galway East	Nationalist Activist
Martin Corry	1927-69	Fianna Fáil	Cork South East	Nationalist Activist, Farmer
John Flynn	1932-57	Fianna Fáil	Kerry South	Farmer
Sean Goulding	1927-37	Fianna Fáil	Waterford	Farmer and Company Director
James Dillon	1932-69	National Centre Party, Independent & Fine Gael	Donegal & Monaghan	Company Director
Timothy Murphy	1923-49	Labour	Cork West	Trade Union Official
Daniel McMenamin	1927-61	National League/CnG	Donegal	Barrister
Patrick McGovern	1933-43	National Centre Party & Fine Gael	Cavan	Farmer
Michael Keyes	1927-57	Labour	Limerick East	Railway Employee
Michael Brennan	1927-43	Independent & Fine Gael	Roscommon	Farmer
Patrick Hogan	1923-69	Labour	Clare	Barrister
James Fitzgerald Kenney	1927-44	CnG	Mayo South	Barrister, Minister for Justice

c) 1922-31 Leading speakers in Seanad debates

Seanad 1922-31				
Name	Term of Office	Affiliation	County	Occupation
Thomas Westropp Bennett	1922-36	CnG	Limerick	Landowner
Maurice Moore	1922-39	Independent	Mayo	Military Officer, Farmer, Nationalist Activist
Patrick Kenny	1922-31	CnG		Farmer, Vice President of the Seanad
John P Bagwell	1922-36	Independent	Tipperary	Landowner, Railway Manager
John Keane	1922-1948	Independent	Waterford	Military Officer, Barrister, Banker
George Sigerson	1922-25	Independent	Dublin	Professor, scientist, writer, physician
Thomas Linehan	1925-36	Farmers Party & Independent		Farmer
Michael Fanning	1925-36	CnG	Tipperary	Grocer & Vintner
Thomas Johnson	1928-34	Labour Party	Dublin County	Labour Party Leader, author
Richard Wilson	1928-36	Farmers Party & CnG	Kildare-Wicklow	Farmer
Joseph Connolly	1928-36	Fianna Fáil	Belfast & Dublin	Furniture Business, Minister for Lands & Fisheries
William Sears	1928-29	CnG	Mayo	Newspaper Proprietor

d) 1932-39 Leading speakers in Seanad debates

Seanad 1932-39				
Name	Term of Office	Affiliation	County	Occupation
Maurice Moore	1922-39	Fianna Fáil	Nominee	Author, military career, landowner
John Keane (Sir)	1922-48	Independent	Nominee	Military career, landowner, barrister, governor of the Bank of Ireland
Kathleen Browne	1928-36	Independent	Wexford	Farmer, author, historian, archaeologist, Gaelic League member
Thomas Johnson	1928-36	Labour	Dublin County	Trades union official, fish buyer, founder of the Labour party, President ITU
John Farrell	1922-43	Labour	Dublin North West	Railway Clerk, Trade Union Official, President of ITU Congress
Denis Healy	1934-37	Fianna Fáil	Administrative Panel	Saddler & harness maker, Gaelic League, Dublin Alderman
Michael Hayes	1921-57	Cumann na nGaedhael, Fine Gael	Administrative Panel	Active nationalist, TD Dublin South, Leader of the Seanad, 1948-51, University Professor in Modern Languages

## Appendix IV: List of Documents and Codes

### a) List of Documents by official title

Date	Document name	Coded Segments
1920	DD 17 September 1920 -DEPT AG REPORT	4
1920	DD 6 August 1920 FORESTRY	12
1920	DD 29 June 1920 DAIL REPORTS AG & FOR	3
1922	DD 6 December 1922 NOMINATIONS TO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	3
1922	DD 4 December 1922 DAIL IN COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ESTIMATES	32
1922	DD 1 December 1922 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1922	DD 28 November 1922 DAIL IN COMMITTEE	2
1922	DD 15 November 1922 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	5
1922	DD 18 October 1922 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	5
1923	DD 8 August 1923 DD Dail in Com, Land Bill Senate Amendment	3
1923	DD 25 June 1923 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	47
1924	DD 5 December 1924 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	2
1924	DD 22 October 1924 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	5
1924	DD 12 August 1924 CEISTEANNA	3
1924	DD 10 July 1924 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	90
1924	DD 2 July 1924 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	2
1924	DD 9 April 1924 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	9
1925	DD 11 December 1925 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	4
1925	DD 9 December 1925 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	5
1925	DD 2 July 1925 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1925	DD 18 June 1925 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	105
1926	DD 1 June 1926 ESTIMATES FOR PUBLIC SERVICES	75
1927	DD 16 November 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 8 November 1927 WRITTEN ANSWERS	5
1927	DD 2 November 1927 CEISTEANNA—Repeat QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 27 October 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 26 October 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	4
1927	DD 19 October 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS copy	3
1927	DD 19 October 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 2 August 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	4
1927	DD 26 July 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 5 July 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1927	DD 7 April 1927 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	6
1927	DD 6 April 1927 PRIVATE BUSINESS	16
1927	DD 25 February 1927 IN COMMITTEE ON FINANCE ESTIMATES	5

1928	DD 29 November 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	2
1928	DD 21 November 1928 CEISTEANNA	4
1928	DD 21 November 1928 WRITTEN ANSWERS	4
1928	DD 21 November 1928 IN COMMITTEE ON FINANCE	2
1928	DD 21 November 1928 CEISTEANNA	3
1928	DD 11 October 1928 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1928	DD 27 June 1928 FORESTRY BILL 1928—FIFTH STAGE	16
1928	DD 26 June 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	38
1928	DD 13 June 1928 FORESTRY BILL	82
1928	DD 30 May 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS FORESTRY BILL	85
1928	DD 30 May 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	2
1928	DD 23 May 1928 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1928	DD 3 May 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	257
1928	DD 29 March 1928 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	3
1928	DD 7 March 1928 CEISTEANNA—QUESTIONS	5
1929	DD 6 December 1929 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1929	DD 4 December 1929 Written Answers	12
1929	DD 13 November 1929 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1929	DD 24 October 1929 Ceisteanna—Questions Oral Answers	2
1929	DD 26 June 1929 In Committee on Finance	247
1929	DD 6 June 1929 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1929	DD 9 May 1929 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1929	DD 19 April 1929 Ceist—Question Written Answer	2
1930	DD 10 December 1930 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1930	DD 4 December 1930 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1930	DD 27 November 1930 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1930	DD 20 November 1930 Turf Adjournment Debate	6
1930	DD 11 June 1930 In Committee on Finance	48
1930	DD 30 April 1930 Written Answers	3
1930	DD 6 March 1930 Written Answer	3
1930	DD 26 February 1930 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1930	DD 26 February 1930 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1931	DD 10 June 1931 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1931	DD 3 June 1931 In Committee on Finance	223
1931	DD 21 May 1931 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1931	DD 4 March 1931 Ceisteanna	2
1932	DD 7 December 1932 In Committee on Finance Customs Duties	14
1932	DD 6 December 1932 Trade Agreement between the Irish Free State	6
1932	DD 1 December 1932 Finance Customs Duties	4
1932	DD 30 November 1932 Private Business	10
1932	DD 18 November 1932 In COF Suppl Est Relief Sch	2
1932	DD 3 November 1932 Vote 53—Forestry	49
1932	DD 13 July 1932 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1932	DD 15 March 1932 Vote on Account—In Committee on Finance	2

1933	DD 30 November 1933 In Committee on Finance	34
1933	DD 15 November 1933 b Ceisteanna—Questions copy	2
1933	DD 15 November 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 12 October 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 11 October 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 27 September 1933 b Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 9 August 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 23 June 1933 In Committee on Finance	101
1933	DD 20 June 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1933	DD 23 May 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1933	DD 23 May 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1933	DD 17 May 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1933	DD 29 March 1933 b Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1933	DD 29 March 1933 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1934	DD 14 November 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 27 June 1934 In Committee on Finance	152
1934	DD 12 June 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 16 May 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1934	DD 26 April 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 11 April 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1934	DD 20 March 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 15 March 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 15 March 1934 Public Business Duty on Egg Cases	14
1934	DD 21 February 1934 Questions	3
1934	DD 7 February 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1934	DD 31 January 1934 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 4 December 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 28 November 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 20 November 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 2 July 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 6 June 1935 In Committee on Finance	101
1935	DD 15 May 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 7 May 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 1 May 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 4 April 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 3 April 1935 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1935	DD 27 February 1935 Ceisteanna	3
1936	DD 25 November 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1936	DD 4 November 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1936	DD 21 July 1936 Ceisteanna	3
1936	DD 8 July 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1936	DD 7 May 1936 Committee on Finance	214
1936	DD 5 May 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	6
1936	DD 31 March 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	3

1936	DD 26 March 1936 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 7 December 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 1 December 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 24 November 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 24 November 1937 Written Answers	4
1937	DD 17 November 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1937	DD 10 November 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 3 June 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 1 June 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	7
1937	DD 13 May 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 11 May 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 27 April 1937 Committee on Finance	123
1937	DD 27 April 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 22 April 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 8 April 1937 Committee on Finance	2
1937	DD 8 April 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 10 March 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 4 March 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1937	DD 4 March 1937 bCeisteanna—Questions	6
1937	DD 25 February 1937 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 30 November 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 24 May 1938 Written Answers	3
1938	DD 20 May 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 11 May 1938 Committee on Finance	222
1938	DD 5 May 1938 Vote 55—Forestry	147
1938	DD 4 May 1938 Committee on Finance	107
1938	DD 27 April 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 27 April 1938 Committee on Finance	7
1938	DD 23 March 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 23 March 1938 Written Answers	3
1938	DD 23 March 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 9 March 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1938	DD 16 February 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1938	DD 2 February 1938 Committee on Finance	5
1938	DD 13 January 1938 Ceisteanna—Questions	3
1939	DD 7 December 1939 Committee on Finance	2
1939	DD 8 November 1939 Written Answers	2
1939	DD 18 October 1939 Statement of Government Policy	2
1939	DD 27 September 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1939	DD 6 July 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1939	DD 22 June 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	2
1939	DD 3 May 1939 Committee on Finance	306
1939	DD 2 May 1939 Committee on Finance	2
1939	DD 27 April 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	3



1939	DD 19 April 1939 Committee on Finance	2
1939	DD 22 March 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1939	DD 1 March 1939 Ceisteanna—Questions	4
1st Dáil 1919	DD 27 Oct 1919 STATEMENT OF ACTING-PRESIDENT - FORESTRY	3
1st Dáil 1919	DD 27 October 1919 REPORTS. - AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY.	2
1st Dáil 1919	DD 27 October 1919 ORAL QUESTIONS AND REPLIES.	5
1st Dáil 1919	DD 20 August 1919 DEBATES. - FORESTRY.	15
1st Dáil 1919	DD 18 June 1919 MINISTERIAL MOTIONS. - AFFORESTATION.	10
1st Dáil 1919	DD 17 June 1919 STATEMENT OF THE ACTING PRES - FORESTRY	5
2nd Dáil 1921	DD 25 August 1921 ESTIMATE FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY DEPT	5
2nd Dáil 1921	DD 23 August 1921 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REPORT	7
2nd Dáil 1921	DD 17 August 1921 DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - Ch IV	33
Seanad Debates	SD 25 October 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	
Seanad Debates	SD 23 October 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	
Seanad Debates	SD 10 October 1928 PUBLIC BUSINESS	
Seanad Debates	SD 5 July 1928 FORESTRY BILL	
Seanad Debates	SD 3 July 1928 PRIVATE BUSINESS	
Seanad Debates	SD 24 July 1924 SEANAD IN COMMITTEE	
Seanad Debates	SD 16 July 1924 THE DRAINAGE OF THE RIVER BARROW	
Seanad Debates	SD 10 October 1923 DEBATE ON GOVERNOR	

## b) List of All Codes and Subcodes

Code System
Land
Land Availability
Peatland
Gaeltacht land
Land Use, Rights
Mountain Land
Foreign Forestry Schemes
Public Forestry
Public Input
Recreation/Health
Historical Forest culture
Attitudes
Arbor Day
Public Education
Employment
Forestry Administration
Forestry Employment
Wood Industry Employment
Policy and Planning
Forestry Effects
Aesthetic
Flooding, Soil
Deforestation
Climate, Climate Change
Training and Expertise
Forestry Expertise
Foresters Education
Foreign Expertise
History
Private Forestry
Forestry Operations
Wood Regeneration/ Preservation
Department Sawmill
Tree Felling
Forest Maintenance
Replanting/Planting

Species Selection
Nurseries
Wood Industry
International Wood Industry
Industrial Wood Industry
Timber Import
Timber Supply
Wood Fuel
Timber Export
Traditional Wood Industry
Transport
Institutional/State Role
Acting President, Arthur Griffith 1919
Director of Agriculture Art O'Connor 1920-21
Director of Agriculture Robert Barton 1919-21
Minister for Agriculture P Hogan 1922-32
Minister for Lands Joseph Connolly 1933-36
Minister for Lands, Gerald Boland 1936-38, Thomas Derrig 39
Minister for Agriculture J Ryan 1932-47
Finance Ministers 1919-1939
Minister for Industry and Commerce 1922-38
Minister for Justice
Policy and Planning
Forestry Department
Budget
Departmental Receipts
1928 Forestry Bill Objectives
County Councils
TDs 1919-39)
Sinn Fein (1919-1923)
Waterford/Tipperary
Longford/Westmeath
Kildare
Dublin
Kilkenny
Sligo
Cavan
Wicklow
Wexford
Mayo
Donegal
Cork
Galway
CnG23, FG33 (1923-39)
Carlow-Kilkenny

Cavan
Cork
Donegal
Dublin
Galway
Kerry
Kildare
Leitrim-Sligo
Leix Offaly
Limerick
Longford-Westmeath
Mayo
Monaghan
Roscommon
Tipperary
Wexford
Waterford
Labour (1919-1938)
Kildare
Carlow/Kilkenny
Galway
Longford Westmeath
Limerick
Tipperary
Clare
Cork
Wicklow
Leix-Offaly
Mayo South
Donegal
Wexford
Dublin
Businessman's Party 1922-23
Dublin
National Centre Party 1932-1937
Cork
Cavan
Roscommon
Tipperary
Donegal
Fianna Fáil (1927-39)I
Laois-Offaly
Carlow Kilkenny
Tipperary
Kildare

Dublin
Meath
Kerry
Mayo
Roscommon
Leitrim-Sligo
Longford-Westmeath
Donegal
Louth
Waterford
Cork
Galway
Wexford
Wicklow
National League 1926-1931
Leitrim/Sligo
Waterford
Farmers Party 1922-1932
Wexford
Donegal
Clare
Tipperary
Kildare
Cavan
Kildare/Wicklow
Cork
Carlow/Kilkenny
Independent 1922-1939
Donegal
Roscommon
Cork
Cavan
Dublin

## Appendix V: Glossary

The glossary is adapted from From J. R. Cross and K. D. Collins, *Management Guidelines for Ireland's Native Woodlands* (2017).

**AFFORESTATION** - The creation of new woodland or forest on open land.

**AGE CLASS STRUCTURE** - The distribution of defined age categories of trees within a stand. The long-term sustainability of that stand will often depend on achieving and maintaining a certain distribution of age classes within it, to ensure the ongoing recruitment of younger trees into the canopy.

**AGRO-FORESTRY** - A land use that combines the growing of trees with conventional farming practices.

**ANCIENT TREE** or **VETERAN TREE** - A tree of exceptional age and / or a tree surviving past full maturity, typically exhibiting crown retrenchment. Such trees – whether native or otherwise – are important for forest biodiversity, as they provide a range of habitats for invertebrates, birds and other animals (e.g. deep fissured bark, broken snags, cavities, dead branches). Also, veteran trees are often of cultural and / or landscape value.

**ANCIENT WOODLAND** - An area assessed as having been under woodland cover since 1660, based on the oldest reliable national records such as estate records and the Down and Civil Surveys.

**BIODIVERSITY** - The variety of living organisms, including: the diversity of species; the genetic diversity or variation within the species; and the ecosystems in which the species occur.

**CARBON SEQUESTRATION** - The process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and stored as carbon in plant tissue (including wood), soil litter and deadwood.

**CATCHMENT** -The area from which a stream, river or lake derives its water.

**CLEARFELL** - A form of harvesting whereby the entire stand (typically even-aged) is felled in a single operation. Clearfelling is the most common form of harvesting within Ireland's commercial forest sector.

**CLOSE-TO-NATURE SILVICULTURE** - An approach to forest management which mimics natural processes such as windthrow and fire, and which utilises natural processes such as natural regeneration, in order to influence age and species diversity within a woodland or forest.

**COILLTE OLD WOODLAND SURVEY** - A desk-based survey undertaken by Coillte in 2001, which involved tracing the history of woodland cover on all of its properties by consulting the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map series. The survey found that c.27,000 ha constituted old woodland sites (also referred to as 'long-established woodland').

**CONTINUOUS COVER FORESTRY (CCF)** - A type of low-impact silviculture that involves the use of selective harvesting and natural regeneration to promote uneven-aged stands and a continuous tree cover more typical of natural forests. CCF systems most relevant to native woodland management are selection, shelterwood and coppice. CCF is generally regarded as close-to-nature silviculture.

**CONVERSION** - The process of changing a non-native forest to native woodland. Conversion can be carried out through *via* gradual transformation or more abrupt replacement.

**COPPICE** - A tree cut just above ground level and allowed to produce new shoots, which are subsequently also cut. Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as a forest crop raised from shoots produced from the cut stumps of the previous crop.

**COPPICING** - A CCF system in which trees are cut just above ground level to encourage the production of multiple stems. These stems are then grown on and subsequently harvested after a number of years (depending on the diameter required for a particular end-use), thereby initiating a repeat of the cycle. Coppicing is an ancient form of woodland management in Ireland.

**DECIDUOUS** - A term used to describe species of trees that shed their leaves annually in autumn and replace them the following spring. In Ireland, examples include broadleaves such as sessile oak, silver birch and common beech, and some conifers, such as European larch.

**ECOSYSTEM** - A dynamic, interacting community of interdependent organisms (plants, animals, fungi, bacteria, etc.) together with the physical environment which they inhabit and upon which they depend.

**ECOSYSTEM SERVICES** - Benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. These include: provisioning services such as food and water; regulating services such as the maintenance of water quality, flood and disease control; cultural services such as spiritual, recreational and cultural benefits; and supporting services, such as nutrient cycling, that maintain the conditions for life on Earth. The services and goods that an ecosystem provides are often undervalued, as many of them are without market value.

**ESTABLISHMENT** - The point at which a young tree is free-growing, i.e. above the height of competing vegetation. Within the context of early woodland development, it refers to the point at which an adequate number of trees of the desired species are free-growing.

**EVERGREEN** - A term used to describe species of trees that retain their leaves through the year, shedding and replacing them over a several year cycle. In Ireland, examples include conifers such as Norway spruce, Scots pine and yew, and some broadleaves, such as holly and Holm oak.

**FERTILISER** - A substance used to enrich the soil with particular nutrients, to boost tree establishment and early growth. Slow release formulations should be favoured, applied manually into the planting pit or around the base of the newly planted tree.

**FLOODPLAIN** - Land adjacent to a stream, river or lake that experiences flooding during periods of high discharge.

**FOREST** - Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as land under trees with a minimum area of 0.1 ha and tree crown cover of more than 20% of the total area (or the potential to achieve this cover at maturity), and includes all species of trees.

**FOREST LAND** - A collective term applied to planted and natural forests, as well as temporarily unstocked areas (e.g. recent clearfell sites) and permanently unstocked areas within forest boundaries.

**FOREST SERVICE** - Ireland's national forest authority, responsible for forest policy, the promotion of the forest sector, the administration of forestry grant schemes, felling control, forest protection, and the National Forest Inventory.

**HABITAT** - The physical and biotic environment in which an organism or community of organisms lives.

**HERBICIDE** - A chemical formulated to cause plant death. A range of formulations are available, with different modes of action. Their typical use within a woodland context is to manage competing vegetation around the base of young trees, to aid establishment.

**INVASIVE SPECIES** - A species capable of rapid spread and which has a deleterious impact on other species and habitats. Although a few native species may be considered as invasive, the term is more typically applied to non-native species that are injurious to native species. Within a woodland context, invasive plants such as rhododendron and cherry laurel can suppress natural ground flora and the natural regeneration of woodland trees. Invasive animals include most species of deer (except red deer), which can cause considerable damage by overgrazing and stripping bark from trees.

**LONG-ESTABLISHED WOODLAND OR OLD WOODLAND**- An area that has remained continuously wooded since at least the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS maps of the 1830s and 1840s, but for which there is no positive evidence that it had been wooded for longer, or for which there is evidence that the woodland is not ancient. Also referred to as 'old woodland'.

**NATIONAL FOREST INVENTORY (NFI)** - A statistical and multi-resource inventory carried out on a cyclical basis on the national forest estate by the Forest Service, in order to record and assess the extent and nature of Ireland's forests, both public and private, in a timely, accurate and reproducible manner. The NFI, undertaken initially in 2006 and again in 2009-12, is repeated in order to assess changes in the forest estate over time, to conform with national and international reporting requirements. Parameters recorded include: area and species composition, growing stock (m<sup>3</sup>), biodiversity, health and vitality, carbon content and soil type, and data on minor tree species and natural regeneration. The 2<sup>nd</sup> NFI also recorded forest area change, volume increment and the latest harvesting volume estimates, thereby allowing the monitoring of aspects of sustainable forest management.

**NATIONAL PARK** - An area of land protected for its outstanding scientific (biological, geological, geomorphological) and landscape importance and for its recreational, educational and scientific use, and recognised as such by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). All of Ireland's National Parks fall into the IUCN Category 2 and are owned by the State. Category 2 areas are typically large and conserve a functioning ecosystem, although to be able to achieve this, the protected area may need to be complemented by sympathetic management in surrounding areas.

**NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE (NPWS)** - The national body charged with the conservation of habitats and species in Ireland. Currently part of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs but it has been attached to various Government departments over the years.

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF NATIVE WOODLANDS** - A national survey of native woodlands undertaken between 2003 and 2008. The survey recorded (*inter alia*) plant species and information on area, location, soils, topography, invasive species, deadwood, grazing and natural regeneration. The data generated were used to produce a new and more comprehensive woodland vegetation classification system. For details, see Perrin *et al.* (2008).

**NATIVE SPECIES** - Species of plants and animals that arrived onto the island of Ireland naturally since the end of the last Ice Age. They are of particular biodiversity value, having existed alongside other native flora and fauna over thousands of years. Also referred to as 'indigenous species'.

**NATIVE WOODLAND** - Woodland dominated by native species of trees and other native plants.

**NATIVE WOODLAND SCHEME** A support package available under the Forestry Programme 2014-2020 to encourage the appropriate restoration and expansion of native woodlands in Ireland. The package comprises two separate 'elements': the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme and the Native Woodland Establishment Scheme (the latter represented by Grant & Premium Categories 9 and 10 under the general Afforestation Scheme). The package, originally launched in 2001, is implemented by the Forest Service in partnership with Woodlands of Ireland, the National Parks & Wildlife Service, the Heritage Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland and other native woodland stakeholders.

**NATURAL REGENERATION** - The establishment of new trees and shrubs, and woodland, from seed arriving



naturally (by animals, wind, water, etc.) onto the site from overhead sources within the woodland or from outside sources (typically adjoining or nearby, and occasionally distant). Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as the generation of trees from natural seed fall.

**NATURAL WOODLAND** - Woodland dominated by native tree species and which has developed without human assistance or interference. It is generally held that little, if any, woodland in Ireland is entirely natural, as almost all woodland has been influenced by human activity. The term 'semi-natural woodland' is more often used.

**NATURE RESERVE** - An area of high biological importance designated for protection under the Wildlife Act. All nature reserves are also designated as Special Areas of Conservation / proposed Natural Heritage Areas. All woodland nature reserves are on State land.

**OLD GROWTH STAND** - A stand that has attained a great age with minimal human disturbance and consequently, exhibits unique ecological features and high biodiversity.

**OLD WOODLAND** - See LONG-ESTABLISHED WOODLAND..

**PROVENANCE** - The location from which seeds or cuttings are collected. The designation of Regions of Provenance under the Forest Reproductive Material Directive is used to help nurseries and growers select suitable material. The term is sometimes confused with 'origin', which is the original natural genetic source.

**REFORESTATION** - The restocking by planting, natural regeneration or coppicing of an area from which trees have been felled or otherwise removed.

**REPLACEMENT** - The abrupt conversion of a non-native forest to native woodland, through clearfell and subsequent reforestation (*via* replanting and / or natural regeneration) with appropriate native species.

**REPLANT** - To deliberately restock with trees an area from which trees have been felled, removed or otherwise destroyed, or to restock such other land as may be agreed with the Minister of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, but does not include restocking by means of natural regeneration (Forestry Act, 2014).

**RESTORATION** - The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded.

**RING-BARKING** - A silvicultural treatment involving the removal of the bark and vascular tissue (typically using a small axe) from around the entire circumference of a standing tree, for the purpose of killing it *in situ*. Applications within the native woodland context include the elimination of individual or small groups of non-native trees, and the creation of standing deadwood.

**SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND** - Woodland that resembles natural woodland cover, dominated by native trees and shrubs but considerably altered by human activity. Stands originating from previous planting and / or coppice may be termed 'semi-natural' if they are now regenerating naturally.

**SILVICULTURE** - The science of establishing and / or managing a woodland or forest to achieve a certain objective or range of objectives. It is based on a detailed knowledge of the current characteristics of the tree population within the woodland, and how these will react over time to various influences, both natural and artificial (e.g. thinning).

**STAND** - A discrete unit of woodland, as distinguished by a common characteristic or range of characteristics such as age or species. Woodlands are commonly divided into stands, for management purposes.

**SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (SFM)** - *"The stewardship and use of forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global*

*levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.” (From the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Helsinki, 1993.)*

**THINNING** - Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as the removal from a forest in accordance with good forest practice of excess or diseased trees, or trees of poor quality in order to improve the growth, health and value of the remaining trees. Thinning can also be undertaken to achieve other objectives, such as the promotion of the ground layer or the understorey, to enhance biodiversity.

**TIMBER** - A piece of wood, typically a plank or beam, prepared for use in building, carpentry, etc. Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as the wood produced by a tree, whether or not the tree is standing.

**TRANSFORMATION** - The process of changing from an even-aged stand structure to a multi-aged stand structure, using continuous cover forestry. Within the native woodland context, transformation can be described as the gradual conversion (over a number of years or decades) of a non-native and predominantly even-aged forest to an uneven-aged native woodland, through the use of CCF.

**TRANSPLANT** - A tree seedling or cutting that has been transplanted at least once in the nursery.

**TREE** - A woody plant, with a single or multiple stems (trunks), that lives for many years and is typically capable of growing to over 5 metres in height (or 4 metres on waterlogged soil). Defined under the Forestry Act 2014 as a free standing woody perennial plant whose species has the potential to have a more or less definite crown and be capable of reaching a minimum height of 5 metres at maturity and includes a sapling and the species of birch and hazel.

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY** -International convention (1992) on the protection of global biodiversity. Its implementation in Ireland is set out in the National Biodiversity Plan, developed by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, with cross-sector input.

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT** - The control of competing grasses and herbaceous plants around the base of a young tree, to suppress competition for water, nutrients and light, and to aid establishment.

**WOOD** - The collective term for the hard woody parts of a tree that can be recovered and used for a range of products, including building material and fuel.

**WOODLANDS OF IRELAND** - A not-for-profit company with charitable status, established in 1998 to promote the conservation, expansion and sustainable development of native woodlands. Funded and supported by the Forest Service, National Parks & Wildlife Service and the Heritage Council.

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