

Movement For the Preservation of American Forests; Vigorous Effort to Extend Our National Reserves

THE time has come, according to the experts of the agricultural department, when in order to preserve the southern Appalachian and White mountain watersheds from destruction it will be necessary to establish a system of great national forests in the eastern part of the continent. The last congress instructed the secretary of agriculture to look into the matter thoroughly.

Secretary Wilson has recently submitted to the present congress a detailed report in which he advocates the purchase of as much of the White mountain and southern Appalachian wooded regions as is necessary. It seems that the cost of the land will be insignificant compared with the benefit to be derived from the purchase. With the White mountain forests the public is more or less familiar, but the southern Appalachian region is almost an undiscovered country to most Americans.

The timber lands of the White mountain region are held nowadays by a few large companies, nearly all of which are engaged extensively in felling the spruce for pulp or lumber manufacture. For this reason the government may not be able to acquire large areas of virgin timber. It will be obliged to content itself with smaller tracts surrounding points of special scenic interest.

In the south the case is quite different. The land is still cheap, and in order to preserve the rivers much larger tracts will have to be taken immediately by the general government. It is the opinion of Secretary Wilson and also of Gifford Pinchot, the national forester, that not less than 5,000,000 acres should be purchased by the government in this southern Appalachian region. They believe that this would cover the higher watersheds of the Potomac, James, Roanoke, Yadkin, Catawba, Broad, Saluda, Savannah, Chattahoochee, Coosa, Tennessee, New, Cumberland, Kentucky and Monongahela rivers.

It is believed that this land may be obtained for an average of \$3.50 an acre, and an appropriation of \$3,500,000, to be available at once, is recommended. Secretary Wilson is also of the opinion that the acquisition of about 660,000 acres in the White mountain region will be sufficient. This should include as much as possible of

the Presidential, Franconia, Sandwich and Carter-Moriah mountain ranges, which are the scenic portions of the region.

"National forests," says Mr. Wilson in his report to congress, "will mean the development of the southern Appalachian and White mountain regions beyond any point that would be possible without them. Much of the Ap-

palachian forest has been so damaged that years will be required for it to come again to a high state of productivity. Until it does we may expect a shortage in hardwood timber. The longer the delay in putting this forest land under control the longer continued and more extreme will be the shortage."

The Government Reserves.

At present only one-fifth of the wooded area of the United States is in

government reserves. All of these reserves are west of the Mississippi river. It is a fact that the best of the country's forests are in private hands. The national forests now cover nearly 162,000,000 acres and are confined to fifteen western states, with four reserves in Alaska and one in Porto Rico. In each of the states of California, Idaho and Montana more than 20,000,

ing annually 460 board feet of lumber per capita, while the average for Europe is only sixty feet per capita. It is estimated that the lumber cut since 1880 would make a floor one inch thick over Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware, an appalling area. According to an expert, the present timber situation is about as follows:

The total lumber product. The time of ascendancy of the Pacific states is fast approaching. Since the last census the product of the Pacific states has risen from less than 10 per cent of the lumber output of the country to 20 per cent.

"The shifting of the chief sources of supply has, of course, been accompanied by a change in the kinds of

"The yellow pine states of the south are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The present annual cut of yellow pine is about 12,000,000,000 feet, or a little more than one-third the total cut of all species. It is estimated by the forest service that within ten or fifteen years there will be a serious shortage of yellow pine.

three states can never regain their lead or even maintain the standing they have.

"States not thought of in former years for their hard woods are now turning out considerable quantities. Maine, with a cut of 23,000,000 feet in 1905, went to 73,000,000 in 1906; New Hampshire turned out 60,000,000 in 1905 as against 23,000,000 in 1899. Even Oregon, Montana and other western states came into the list with unexpected amounts. In all of the states west of the Mississippi valley the supply is small and can never become much of a factor.

"The largest estimate for standing hard woods is 400,000,000,000 feet. Enormous quantities are required each year for railroad ties, telephone and other poles, piles, fenceposts and fuel, and a great amount is wasted in lumbering and manufacture. The forest service experts say that it is not extravagant to put the hardwood cut at 25,000,000,000 feet yearly. At this rate the present standing supply will be exhausted in sixteen years."

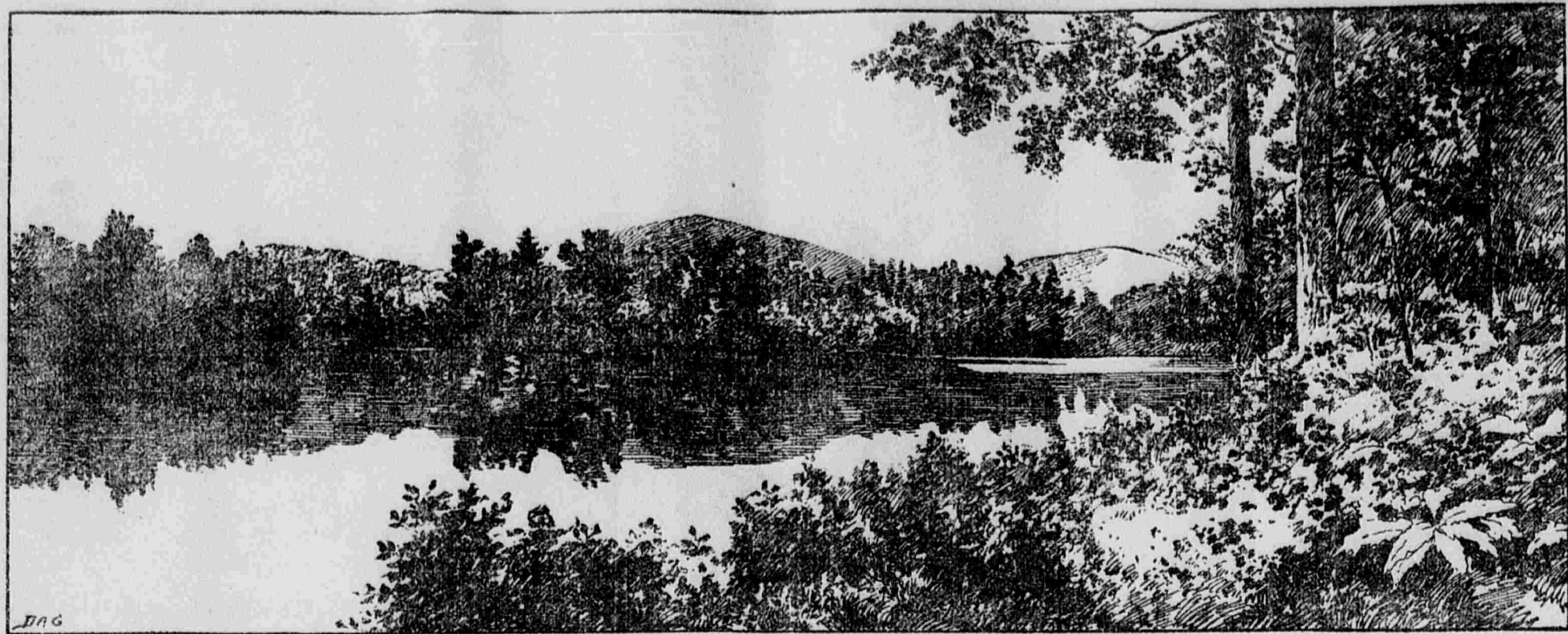
Approaching Extinction.

Most wonderful of all is the fact that since the slaughter of the American forests began no native species has disappeared entirely. The experts who have been making the investigation ordered by the last congress report that black walnut is nearly exhausted. The extent to which this noble American wood has been sacrificed can hardly be appreciated. The investigators found many rail fences and in some places barns and stables built of high grade walnut. Cherry is another American hard wood that is nearly extinct. No large tracts of either walnut or cherry remain in the country.

The following extract from the report to congress sets forth the most logical reason for the further safeguarding of the American forests before it shall forever be too late:

"National forests are made, first of all, for the lasting benefit of the real home builder. They make it impossible for the land to be skinned. They benefit the man with a home and the man who seeks to build one by insuring protection and wise use of the timber and grass and by conserving the water. In considering what national forests are for and how they affect the resources of the mountains the fact should never be lost sight of that they are for the home builder first and that their resources are protected and used for his special welfare before everything else."

ELLIS STEPHENSON.



LAKE SAPPHIRE, IN THE PROPOSED SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN RESERVE.

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000 acres of forest land are under the jurisdiction of the forest service.

Rapidly as the population of the United States has increased, the lumber consumption has increased still more rapidly. In round numbers, and allowing for incomplete reports, the lumber cut in 1880 was 18,000,000,000 feet; in 1890, 24,000,000,000 feet, and in 1900, 35,000,000,000 feet. The increase in population from 1880 to 1900 was 52 per cent, but in lumber cut 94 per cent. The United States is now us-

"In the last twenty-five years the combined lumber output of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pennsylvania was almost 256,000,000,000 feet, or 36 per cent of the total production of the United States. The western and southern movement in timber cutting is strikingly illustrated by the statement that the northeastern states reached their relative maximum in 1870 and the lake states in 1890. The southern states are near their maximum today, with about 35 per cent of

lumber produced. There was a time when white pine alone constituted one-half of the total quantity. In 1900 this species furnished only 21.5 per cent, and in 1905 only 15 per cent of the lumber cut. On the other hand, Douglas fir is credited with 5 per cent in 1900 and 13 per cent in 1905. The days of white pine are rapidly passing. Since lumbering began in the lake states, some seventy years ago, it is estimated the cut of white pine has not been less than 250,000,000,000 feet.

"The devastation of the hardwood forests has kept pace with the slaughter of the pine forests. The supply of Indiana and Ohio, the original center of hardwood production, is practically exhausted. The cut of hard wood is now widely distributed and is heavy in every state where there are even small bodies of hard woods. In 1889 Illinois, Ohio and Indiana produced 25 per cent of the hard wood. In 1906 they produced only 14 per cent. It is declared by the forest service officials that these

POVERTY IN The TRANSVAAL

AND really the case is so hopeless. There is no prospect of an immediate revival. What caused the collapse matters little. Perhaps it was the Liberal government in England. Perhaps it was Chinese labor—or the lack of Chinese labor. Perhaps it was swindling flotations. Perhaps it was simply the fact that we built for a population that a country which lives upon

Imported goods could never support. Whatever was the cause, the effect is clear enough. There are men here today whose salaries have been cut down by 50 per cent. There are others who have no salaries at all, and whose children live on bread and tea bought with borrowed money. They may be outwardly prosperous-looking, like the town I met two men the other day, well dressed, apparently well-to-do. "It's the clothes that last," one of them confided to me. "That's all. If

we get one meal in two days we consider ourselves lucky. Yesterday we dined—perhaps we shall be able to again tomorrow. Today we don't." It is the shrinking process. Some financial geniuses manage to live fairly comfortably on nothing—how they do it nobody knows. The majority of the retrenched who had not enough money to get out of the sub-continent altogether are slowly starving. Their position is hopeless.

Perhaps you think the state of the Golden City cannot be so bad as this—that the story is exaggerated. There is poverty in other lands; distress in others towns. They do not make these ululations. But the Rand has not been

used to poverty like this. Its bad times have never lasted so long or sunk so deep. And the trouble is the people cannot get away. It is useless to go to Kimberley or Durban, or Cape Town or Port Elizabeth. They are just as badly off. They, too, are shrinking. The out-of-work clerk or accountant might as well starve on the Rand as at the coast. To leave the country altogether is too expensive. So he stays, a misery to himself and a burden to his friends, a living example of the shrinkage of Johannesburg.

The European shareholder need not feel nervous. The poverty of the Rand will not hurt him. Rather will it bring him bigger dividends. It will

force down wages and working costs, and thus send up profits. His dividends will not shrink, whatever is the fate of the center from which the gold is produced. But the only thing for the out-of-work to do is to go away—perhaps the government will expatriate them. There will be no boom on the Rand; no sudden revival. Steady, patient work throughout the country will gradually restore prosperity. But the shrinking process will continue for some time.

Do not come to the Transvaal for at least five years—then stay away if you can. In five years it may have settled down as a small but prosperous commercial center—the commercial

capital of a small colony. But today it is shrinking.

By the way, the gold output is still rather more than £25,000,000 a year. But if it were twice that amount it would not help us much. It nearly all flows out of the country, either as dividends or in payment for imported goods.—Correspondence of the London Mail.

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