

## Forestry

In the early part of 1910, with the assistance of an appropriation of \$250 from the office of the Register of the State Land Office and ex-officio Commissioner of Forestry, the government sent Mr. J. H. Foster, Assistant Chief of Co-operation of the United States Forest Service, to look over the forestry resources of Louisiana. Mr. Foster made an extensive report, covering some one hundred and twenty pages to the ex-officio Forester, containing a great deal of valuable information, from which source has been drawn liberally to prepare the report herein on forestry.

Investigation has shown conclusively that, notwithstanding the fact that the natural forest resources of Louisiana are probably greater than any other State east of the Pacific coast, unless the methods of management, particularly of the cut-over lands are improved, there will be very little hope for valuable yield of timber after the present merchantable forests are exhausted. The most urgent need is for fire protection on the cut-over pine lands. This is so important that if it alone could be guaranteed, there would be little cause for anxiety concerning the future timber supply.

With a total stand of pine in Louisiana of about forty-two billion feet and an annual cut of over two billion feet, the present standing pine will be exhausted in only a little more than twenty years. The commercial supply of cypress will be exhausted in a comparatively few years. The available hardwood forests are more extensive than in any other State, but the cypress and much of the best oak and ash have been culled from the parishes of Northern Louisiana, and the most valuable remaining tracts are in the hands of a few individuals, companies and syndicates. Much of the great alluvial region will be cleared for cultivation as soon as drainage systems are more fully perfected.

These conditions emphasize the urgent need for the Legislature to take up at once for consideration the problems involved in order that the forest growth on lands chiefly valuable for timber purposes may be perpetuated.

The chief purpose of investigation should be to suggest a forest policy which should provide for a permanent supply of timber for the people. This involves two propositions. Conservation of that which we have, and renewal of that which is consumed.

In order to achieve these ends, the forest must be regarded the same as any other crop. The young timber should be preserved and protected from fire. The old timber should be carefully cut and protected from fire. These views will be met with little interest at present from the majority of land owners, for the simple reason that they see trees all around them, and in every direction, and they have little thought that the time may come when this product will be exhausted. They have always had plenty of timber, *ergo*, they always will have plenty of timber.

To teach land owners is a problem of education. Indeed, education is one of the chief ends of conservation boards and commissions, for the reason that regulative legislation cannot be had without public opinion favoring it; and besides a healthy public opinion on the proper conservation would do a great deal that legislation cannot do.

### AVERAGE LOSS BY FIRE IN LOUISIANA.

No accurate estimate can be made of the fire loss in matured timber in Louisiana at this time, as there are no statistics covering the question. But it would be safe to say that perhaps there is an annual damage done to matured forests in the yellow pine region of 4 per cent.

The damage done on the sprouting timber on the cut-over lands practically amounts to total extinction.

### QUANTITY AND VALUE OF FOREST LANDS.

In accordance with the returns compiled from each parish in the State the acreage of total standing yellow pine timber for the year 1909 was 4,116,800 acres, of an average value of \$10.75, and of a total value of \$44,204,009; 520,123 acres of cypress, of an average value of \$12.90, equal to \$6,249,912; of hardwood, 4,343,744 acres, of an average value of \$3.52, total \$15,318,224. From these figures it appears that the total standing forest