

THE FOREST CONFERENCE IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

The Grover Cleveland Memorial, Forest Taxation, State Forest Policy,
Federal Control of the Water-sheds of Interstate Streams

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A VARIETY of interesting topics was discussed at the Forest Conference held at Bretton Woods, N. H., August 3 to 6, under the auspices of the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests. These included forest taxation, the reforestation of denuded areas, the scope of a state forest policy, forestry in the public schools, the preservation of water-power, and Federal control of the headwaters of interstate streams. In connection with the Conference there occurred the eighth annual meeting of the New Hampshire Society, a meeting of the directors of the American Forestry Association, of the New Hampshire State Forestry Commission, and of the state foresters of the northeastern states, Maine to Maryland. A notable group of friends of the forest and experts in the care of forests was present, including Mr. George H. Maxwell, of Chicago, executive chairman of the National Irrigation Association; Mr. E. P. Whipple, of New York, state commissioner of Forests, Fish and Game; Otto Luebkert, treasurer of the American Forestry Association; Mr. James H. Cutler, of Washington; Austin F. Haines, state forester in Vermont; Alfred Gaskill, state forester in New Jersey; F. E. Besley, state forester in Maryland; E. C. Hirst, state forester in New Hampshire; C. E. Pettis, state forester in New York, and Asa F. Williams, forester of the Lidge-wood Manufacturing Company.

Ex-Gov. F. W. Rollins, of New Hampshire, presided. Ex-Gov. Chester A. Jordan was in attendance, as were the forest commissioners of New Hampshire, Robert P. Bass and W. Robinson Brown.

Dr. John H. Finley, president of the College of the City of New York, presented a striking paper on the Grover Cleveland Memorial Road in Tamworth, N. H., a road laid out by Mr. Cleveland. Mrs. Grover Cleveland was present. Doctor Finley remarked that to establish this memorial—which goes straight up the hill, with every element of beauty—large contributions are not solicited, but a large number of small ones will be welcome as a tribute to the man whose work also went "straight up the hill." By resolution of the Conference, friends of the forest movement are invited to send contributions to Doctor Finley. Mr. Cleveland established the first National Forests.

The proper taxation of forests, said Mr. Allen Hollis, secretary of the New Hampshire Society, is an important element in forest preservation. If the law of taxing all property equally is enforced, and the owner must pay on this crop two per cent per annum taxes for fifty years, no one can afford to hold woodlands. Fortunately, in New Hampshire, this provision of equality is systematically violated by the assessors, which makes it possible for woodlands to be held until maturity; but there are as many systems as assessors.

with the greatest variation in practise. Mr. Hollis advocated, first, that the land be taxed annually, apart from the forest, and second, that as soon as it could be brought about without hardship to the towns now dependent upon taxes from woodlands, and as soon as constitutional difficulties can be solved, the forest should be taxed once only, viz, when felled. As a step in this direction, he urged exemption of woodlands properly planted, and those so cut as to leave adequate forest cover. This exemption could gradually be extended to the whole forest area.

Commissioner E. P. Whipple, of New York, urged the maintenance of our great water-powers through preservation of the forests on the mountains. In a series of rarely beautiful lantern pictures he showed the progress of moisture, the forests alone serving to prevent erosion and keep the soil on the mountains. The forest history of China, France, Germany, Italy, and Canada were traced to show examples of what is inevitably true in this country as in every other. The vitality and permanence of our entire civilization depend upon the preservation of the forest and the reforestation of denuded areas.

That the fundamental work of a forest service is educational, was the view of Robert P. Bass, president of the New Hampshire Forestry Commission, and of Austin P. Hawes, state forester in Vermont. This education should bear fruit in three main lines, the prevention of forest fires, the maintenance of the forest cover, and the acquisition of forest land by public authorities, Federal, state, or local, in order to guarantee that the forests are

regulated in the interest of the whole people. Mr. Bass spoke particularly of the new forest-fire law in New Hampshire, which is progressive in that it provides for patrolling the woods in dry seasons to prevent fires, and provides for the arrest without warrant of persons found violating the law.

An admirable address on "Trees Along the Highway" was read by Dr. John D. Quackenbos, of New York and Lake Sunapee, N. H. Prof. B. S. Pickett, of the New Hampshire State College, urged that a well-equipped forestry department be established at that institution. Mrs. P. S. Peterson, of Chicago, chairman of the forestry committee of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, presented in a practical manner the need for educational work everywhere as to the meaning and importance of forestry to the country.

The most notable address in this notable series was that of Mr. George H. Maxwell. With faith in the future that cannot be shaken, he said that the principle of Federal control of the headwaters of interstate streams must be accepted by the country. He urged New Hampshire and the people who live in the East to take courage and push forward the Appalachian bill for national forests in the White Mountains and Southern Appalachians, because this is only the beginning of a necessary policy. He said it is more important to save the forests than to build battle-ships, for the safety of the people depends more upon them. To prevent the consequences of forest destruction it will prove of the utmost value to introduce forest instruction into the public schools.