

RICHES FROM PHILIPPINE FORESTS

Billions Will Be Realized
When the Millman Does
His Work—Demand for
Foresters—Hardwoods—
Wasteful Ways.

Since Aguinaldo started things in 1895 woods have rained upon the Philippine. It is no wonder that he has been so slow to raise himself to the height hoped for by those who wish him well. Mr. Haskin will show that the brown brother is doing quite as well as could be expected, and all things considered, and that he should soon begin to advance rapidly on his own initiative.

By Frederic J. Haskin.
Washington, Aug. 17.—According to government estimates, the forest area in the Philippine Islands is 32,000,000 acres, and the standing timber worth \$2,500,000,000. This means that if the forests are suitably protected and properly exploited, the development of the islands will make Manila one of the important lumber ports of the world, and give the island a large perpetual source of revenue. The question is whether or not the Bureau of Forestry will be granted sufficient funds to render the scope of its work as large as it should be. At present the department is struggling along under an insufficient appropriation, although its usefulness is beyond question.

There are nine white foresters and twenty-five Filipino rangers and guards. Japan has, in about an equal area, 325 foresters and 1424 rangers and guards. In Java, the Dutch maintain 1,309,000 acres of forest land with 30 foresters and 1000 rangers and guards. In India, where there are 35,000,000 acres of forest, there are 312 foresters and 9203 rangers and guards. Germany, a pioneer in forestry and a demonstrator of its economic usefulness, maintains a look after 5,000,000 acres of forest, 806 foresters and 3739 rangers and guards.

Forestry Always Self-Supporting.
That forestry is an economic science is plain from the fact that the net revenue in various countries bears about the same relation to the expenditure. It is only necessary to increase the size of the Philippine forest service in order to increase the net revenue. Of great importance to the question of revenue, however, is the duty of the present generation to make plans to so protect the forests now standing that ruthless exploitation will not follow upon the heels of railroad development and destroy timber which is the natural resource of the islands, and which, because of its influence upon agriculture, is really the first resource.

Lumber Center of Far East.
Manila is the natural lumber center of the Far East. Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nagasaki, Singapore, and other ports are the great markets for the products in various forms, are within easier reach of Manila than are the second markets, and the Philippines are not only competing in these markets, but are improving their position. The islands have vast areas of excellent hard and soft wood lies untouched in the island forests. The Philippine Islands produce 1,000,000 worth of lumber and building material every year.

Except for the vast vanishing areas in the Appalachian region, the Philippines contain the only considerable quantity of hardwood under the United States flag. In the Philippines, the finest woods in the world are found here. Without ebony, and several other hardwoods which have no counterpart in the states, the Philippine forests could replace every furniture wood now in the home markets. This is not mean, of course, that if no effort is made to protect the American hardwood supply, the Philippines could fill the demand and meet the market.

Valuable Varieties.
Softwood is even more abundant in the Philippines. It is composed of Oregon pine or California redwood is much harder, heavier and stronger, and is in all the same varieties of trees in the archipelago, or three times as many varieties as are boasted by the entire United States. It is said that there are approximately 1000 kinds now unclassified. Of course, many of these are not merchantable, but about 100 kinds are in the market now. As lumbering operations have moved in America from Pennsylvania to the Pacific coast, and as the "maximum cut" has been reached in the farthest American west, the old time slogan of the lumber king, "westward ho" should in time bring them to the Philippine forests. It will be necessary when that time arrives to no administer the forests as to provide for their exploitation without destruction. In the meantime much valuable timber, after having reached maturity, is going to waste for want of cutting.

Famous Wrecks by Burning.
Nomadic agriculture has been one of the worst enemies of the forests in the Philippines. But for the fact that the forests are large and the population small, serious inroads upon the timber supply would have been made long ago. As matters stand the denudation of watersheds has increased flood damage, and millions of dollars worth of magnificent timber has been destroyed to make room for rice patches where product might be counted in thousands of dollars. The established custom in parts of the islands is for the farmer to burn down 10,000 or 15,000 worth of timber to grow 100 worth of "paddy." The principal cause of the destruction of the forests is by no title, gives a sack of seed rice and authority to go into the forest, to burn down the trees and plant rice where the soil is enriched by the ashes. After one or two years the weeds begin to grow in the clearing and the agriculturist moves to a new place and repeats his method of preparation his ground.

Wasteful Destruction.
Maps made by the forest service show where this has been done and how the destruction of forests has been increased thereby. In Luzon, where floods have recently wrought great damage, is a land of mountains and valleys. The forest service maps show that in the provinces of Tula, Camarines and Cagayan, 66 per cent of the land is abandoned clearings and only 15 per cent of the land is under cultivation. In forests these provinces are annually devastated by floods. It has been demonstrated by actual experience in Germany and Switzerland that a mountainous country where there is less than 50 per cent of forest, trouble may not only be expected, but will inevitably come. It has also been shown that while five-sixths of water falling on a forested mountain runs off, a forest area retains five-sixths of the rainfall, and that this appears later in springs and streams when it is needed. From this it is evident that the destruction of the forests in the Philippine Islands, followed by destructive exploitation, would result in denuded areas.

Philippine Good Will.
Much of the timber in the islands is found along the coasts, where it may be skidded to the beach, and along navigable rivers, where it may be cheaply handled. Great deal is also being done where railroads must be constructed for some distance to bring it within the scope of transportation. For instance, the pine lands of Benguet and neighboring provinces, 2000 feet above the sea. One hears a great deal about the unwillingness of the Filipino to do manual labor, but in the lumber industry this has proved untrue. The Filipino has a natural aptitude for running machines and is fond of the work. Under an American foreman he makes a fine sawmill hand and a mill operator. A Filipino "crew" does not shut down for want of efficient or willing labor. The chief difficulty at present is that the transportation rates are prohibitively high, and railroad transportation does not exist to any extent.

Wonderful Hardwoods.
In the offices of the forestry bureau in Manila one may see specimens of many varieties of wood in the form of "cuts" from logs, and in the form of finished products. The Philippine woods show the high quality of hardwoods that compare with mahogany, cherry and black walnut in the uses to which they are put. The Philippine woods are of many varieties. One of these tables was exhibited at the Louisiana Purchase exposition and attracted no little attention. In the case of the Philippine woods, there is a pulp made from a single piece of timber. The entire interior of this building is finished with beautiful hardwoods from native forests.

Dangers of Forestry.
Forestry in the Philippines is at present sufficiently hazardous to appeal to the most daring young adventurer. Long journeys of exploration must be made, and the explorer must be a man who is not a "fearless" man. The service has lost a number of valuable men. The question of the Philippine forests is a very serious one. Three Filipino forest guards became the victims of treacherous guides in the island of Negros. The savages are said to have worked the guides to their campfire to make sure of slaughtering their victims while they slept. When the bodies were discovered by a searching party, the wild men explained that their chieftain needed the guides, and as they had no money, they had to kill them. The guides were found with their hands tied to their chests, and their bodies were found with their heads cut off.

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