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Forest Products Production in Oregon Put at \$700,000,000 a Year; Payroll \$250,000,000

76,000 Workers Employed; Fires the Big Threat to This Great Oregon Industry; Help Keep Oregon Green the Duty of Every Citizen

By R. KENNETH EVANS

Fire is forest enemy No. 1, and during the five years from 1943 to 1948 an average of 85,000 acres were burned in Oregon. Almost one-half of the state's land grows trees. These 30 million timberland acres has enabled the state to keep well at the head of the list of lumber producers in the United States. Oregon's annual production of forest products is conservatively estimated at 700 million and almost \$250 million is paid annually by the wood working industries in wages, to approximately 76,000 workers. Therefore, fire prevention is everyone's job and every individual in the state can join with others in helping to "Keep Oregon Green." Public cooperation is developing better protection practices and reducing, every year, the number of man-caused fires.

The first business in America, established in 1608, was the forest industry. It started on the continent at Jamestown, Virginia, and has grown and advanced since that time to mammoth proportions. Old records of the Virginia company show that John Smith shipped to England in 1608, timber from the forests of Virginia. Some 600 years before John Smith came to America adventurous Vikings took forest products from Labrador to Greenland and Iceland. But the Vikings did not continue the lumber trade. The colonists of Jamestown, therefore, must be given credit for starting the first business in America, viz., the forest industry.

These facts are according to research made by the American Forest Products Industries, Inc., 1319 Eighteenth street, Washington, D.C. This is an organization of forest owners, producers, distributors and users of forest products. An objective of the organization is to perpetuate the supply of forest products through sound forest management, sustained yield operations and to promote better understanding of forest ownership and enterprise. Other similar associations have worked consistently to this end, in America and the Pacific Northwest. The never-ending effort for fire prevention in the forest is everyone's job.

Importance Is Exemplified

The importance of this industry to the general economy of the nation, the state of Oregon and Salem can best be further exemplified by the statement that one-third of the United States is best suited to the growing of trees. If all of this tree-growing area were placed in one piece of land it would be a tract 387 miles wide and would stretch nearly from coast to coast. It covers 625,828,000 acres of land of which 481,044,000 acres are called commercial forest lands. From this land, equal to 15 states the size of New York, is harvested the annual crop of trees. There are four acres of this land for each man, woman and child in the nation. There is enough wood growing in each of these four acre tracts to build a boardwalk, one-inch thick, six feet wide and more than 2,000 feet long.

Three-quarters of this vast area, which is growing trees for everybody's use, is owned by thousands of every-day people. The balance is owned by the public which means federal, state and local governments. But, everyone, whether he actually owns a forest or not, has a big stake in the future of the forests.

One-third of this forest land is on farms and in Marion county the cultivated lands provide an opportunity for farm forestry in conjunction with the production of agricultural crops. Farmers own 139,000,000 acres of American forest lands which is more than all the forests in Sweden, Norway and Finland. Therefore, the farmers earn money from their farm forests by growing and harvesting their trees much as they do other crops.

Forests keep working for the people living in Marion county, Oregon, and the nation, all of the time, day and night. That's why they are called the most lasting natural resource. Other resources such as coal, iron ore, petroleum and other minerals are important to the nation, as a whole, but when these minerals replacing the old trees which have been harvested and converted into lumber products.

In Marion county and the Pacific Northwest many forests consist of trees of the same age and size. In this region the tree-farmer may harvest blocks or patches. He can then leave other blocks or islands of trees, which will reseed the logged parts so that they will grow more crops. Many of the commercial forests are now being handled in this manner on a sustained yield basis to perpetuate the industry for the future.

Too often, uncontrolled fires prevent nature from helping the tree-farmer. Fires destroy, seed trees and seedlings and can ven burn the ground so that the seeds cannot get rooted. Nature can do a good job if fire is kept out.

Oregon's timbered lands also provide the finest recreational areas in the entire Pacific Northwest region. Thousands of tourists visit Oregon every year to take advantage of these vacation regions. They come from all sections of the United States and, in many cases, they come from regions where trees are not known for their importance to the general economy, and are considered only as adapted to supply shade or for decorative purposes. The tourist industry has, also, grown to be one of Oregon's major industries and, visitors would, no doubt, appreciate being advised of the importance of keeping fires out of the forests.

Even wildlife, such as deer fleeing for their lives, have been caught in forest fires. In the 24 hours of August 24-25, 1933, the great Tillamook fire burned 236,000 acres of Douglas fire and other lumber trees. Yet, when it started, a boy with a bucket of water could have put it out. Most of private and public forest lands have some fire protection but, they need more and losses would be less if everyone were more careful.

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