

REFORESTING NEEDED SAYS COL. GREELEY

WASHINGTON, March 31.—Timber depletion has now reached a point in this country where three-fifths of the primeval forests are gone and where 61 per cent of the timber that is left is west of the Great Plains, Col. W. H. Greeley, Chief Forester of the United States Forest Service, recently told the members of the Chicago Association of Commerce.

Liberal use of American forests was a necessary part of the commercial growth of this nation, Col. Greeley believes, but reforestation should have been practiced, if not from the start, at least in later years. There is an abundant area of forest land in this country to support all industries, and a liberal supply of wood is most necessary to the people of this country. It was thought that, like the European countries, we would use, when our civilization was older, but one-third or one-half as much wood per capita as we did in the early days. But this rule does not affect the American people. The older the States and communities in this country grow the more timber they seem to require in one form or another.

Demands for Timber Continue to Grow

Many substitutes have been devised for wood, and yet the great demand of the country for timber continues to grow. More wood is used in construction today than before the discovery of concrete, and more wood is used in building railway cars than before the steel or part steel car was developed. This is apparently true in nearly every industry.

Abundant and widely-distributed forests have meant to the United States homes for the masses of the people beyond the standards of any other nation. They have placed newspapers and magazines on the average family table. They have contributed largely to social and industrial conditions which promote democracy and constructive energy rather than discontent and destructive social forces bred by hard and comfortless conditions of life.

The idleness of \$1,000,000 acres of forest land, an area increased by 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 acres annually, destructive logging, and still more destructive forest fires, are the factors at work to increase the timber shortage.

Forest Land Enough if Kept Growing Trees

The exhaustion of American timber has not come about because the forests have been used so freely, but because of the failure to use forest growing land. In a nutshell, the problem is that the United States is cutting wood out of its forests three or four times as fast as it is being grown. Much of the land on which timber stands or has been cut off will always be forest land. It is ample to grow all the wood needed for the use of the people of this country and for export trade in lumber, and products manufactured from lumber, if the land can be kept at work growing trees. Timber for the future is sim-

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ply a matter of putting idle land to work.

A surprising amount of reforestation has come about by chance, but it is manifestly impossible to depend on chance for adequate reforestation of much of our cut-over lands. As lumber is a public utility, it seems wise for the Federal Government to acquire as many acres of forest as possible and administer it nationally; yet for the Government to acquire all the forest land in the United States is impossible. Over three-fourths of it is now in private hands, and a large proportion necessarily must remain

under private ownership.

Every reasonable encouragement should be given to the land owner to grow timber on his own account in the ways best suited to his own purposes, but by some means or other the public must see to it that forest lands not needed for agriculture do not lie idle. The regulations imposed must be reasonable and equitable. Obviously the owner of the land can not do it all. The public must aid him in overcoming the hazard of forest fires and must recognize that the present methods of taxing forests in many regions are equivalent to tax-

ing a farm crop twice a week during the growing season.

To grow timber on the average tract of land, doing it as a public utility, three things must be done. The owner must be given the benefit of a moderate tax while his crop of timber is being grown. It must be protected from forest fires due to the negligence of his neighbor or the

negligence of the community, and he must be required to employ sufficient safeguards in the way his timber is cut, his slashings disposed of, and fire danger avoided to actually reforest the land.

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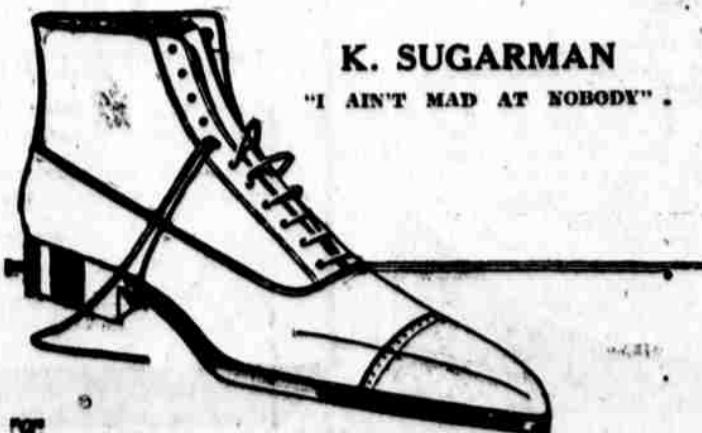


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