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## FORESTRY EVENING.

## Michigan Horticultural Society.

*Michigan's Interest in Forestry—The Future Problem—Pine as a possibility for Re-forestation.*

Charles W. Garfield, Michigan's forest champion, introduced the general subject of the session in a few words, in which he recited some of the struggles he himself has gone through to awaken proper interest in the Michigan forestry problem. He told of how a bill was finally introduced in the legislature and left to die in the hands of a committee and of all the steps that have been taken in the direction of saving the forests.

The first speaker on the evening program was Fremont E. Skeels of Harriette. His subject was: "The Interest of the State in the Forestry Problem." He said in part:

"I am expected to say something of the interest the state has in the forestry problem. There are two classes of these interests—one embracing those interests which the state has in forestry treat it as a cold business proposition, and the other class of interests which would be shown when treating upon the subject from the more sentimental views of forestry for the love of the trees or the beauty of the landscape. We fear that the mass of people of the state still look upon the forestry agitation with suspicion. The benefits are too vague; the profits seem too much of the air-castle brand to cause them to look with much favor upon what seems a doubtful undertaking. In discussing a question in economics we are often forced to consider this question: Can we afford not to do this thing? We must consider that the forests of the state have provided in the way of industry, what they are still providing, and the figures are of such magnitude as to interest almost any person who is capable of getting out of the area covered by his own business affairs.

"Without going into detail, we find from as careful estimates as can be deduced from any statistics obtainable that the annual average cut of lumber of all kinds in Michigan is about two billion feet. The capital employed in the manufacture of this lumber runs far into the millions and an army of 75,000 men is engaged in the work in this state. So great has become the area of stripped lands that many of the smaller mills have ceased operations and many of the large ones are seeking new fields in the forests of the west and south. Others more fortunate still have tracts of timber that will keep their mills busy for the next few years, varying from five to twenty. Can the state of Michigan afford to lose this great industry? Is it not of great interest to this commonwealth to make such provision as will keep a portion of this business, at least for the future? Yet of all questions of vital importance to the welfare of Michigan this forestry problem has received the least attention. The interest which the state has shown in the manufacture of sugar is important, and the cause a most laudable one, yet the business which can come to Michigan from this new industry fades from view in the light of the more important one she is allowing to slip from her grasp. The

lumbermen themselves are too busy to look out for any future timber for their mills, beyond that which they can purchase and hold until wanted for manufacturing, but if the state were to take hold of the project and make a showing these men would aid us in many ways. Many of them have already signified a willingness to deed to the state their cut-over lands instead of letting them go back for unpaid taxes. It is not necessary for me to again cover the ground to explain how Michigan resorted to extreme means to get rid of her forests, how she gave vast tracts of her finest timber to induce railroads and other enterprises to invade the wooded areas to cut down and destroy the trees, nor at what sacrifice to her wealth she sold her best timbered lands at ridiculously low rates. She but followed the example of her sister states and in the footsteps of the national government. We can not however pass over the outcome of all this work. These vast areas given to meritorious enterprises, or sold at almost gift prices to the lumbermen and speculators, have been stripped of their values and are again the properties of the state, or at least claimed by the state for non-payment of taxes. The transfer to the state has not been made by warranty deed, we assure you. When the lumberman had taken what he wanted he ceased paying taxes and by virtue of the existing laws of this state the lands were bid in at the tax sales and in this way again came under public control.

During the past ten years the railroads and highways of the northern portion of the state have suffered more damage from washouts, caused by freshets, than in all their previous history, and culverts and drainage have been increased in capacity or constructed new, where none were needed before. When these thoroughfares were first constructed, and for some years of their early use, they traversed these great forests tracts, and the earth's surface, like a sponge, because of the decaying leaf mold and other forest debris, allowing it to pass off slowly through the springs, brooks, and rivers in a clear, limpid flow. The forests have been cut away, the fires have burned off the sponge-like humus of the woods, and when we have a heavy rainfall there is nothing to prevent the water from rushing in torrents to the lower levels, taking with it the fertile upper stratus of the soil. These rivers of a day, or perhaps a week, force great channels through turnpikes and railway fills, depositing their load of rich soils and other debris in the rivers, which carry it along to make room for the steam dredge, where it is finally left in some harbor at the river's mouth. The first arrangement of nature was an admirable one. The wood cutters have raised havoc with this arrangement, but reconstruction is already in progress. The success of this great region depends largely upon the assistance we shall render, and it is of great interest to the state to give aid at once.

"Briefly, then, the solving of the forestry problem, from a business view, will show some of the interests of the state to be: The growing of the raw material to keep the vast lumber business of the state from being entirely blotted out, the growing of

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timber upon barren, worthless lands rather than to induce settlers to eke out a miserable existence where success in agriculture is impossible; the effect of adjacent woodland tracts upon the fields and orchards of cultivated lands by the windbreaks which they furnish; the holding back of the water after severe rains and heavy snow falls, thus maintaining the springs and the brooks and streams that have their sources in them, instead of permitting it to run off in torrents, making dangerous and expensive breaks in embankments and impoverishing the lands by robbing it of its best soil.

"The people of this state are bound to face this proposition in time. Nature has done about all she can do, unaided to restore the forests. Should her efforts be unassisted much longer, fire and thieves will destroy all that she has done. The state should start the work in time to use the progress already made."

Following Mr. Skeels came John P. Brown, secretary of the Indiana Forestry association. His subject was: "What shall Michigan do to perpetuate her forests and continue her manufacturing interests?" He said in part as follows:

"The subject of forestry has attracted the attention of the world's statesmen for several centuries, while the proper management of forests, for their perpetuation, both as a means of revenue for their individual owner and for the nation, as well as a regulator of climatic conditions, is to-day the subject for thought in all the older countries of the world. America, with her unequalled wealth of forests a century ago, has been wasteful in the extreme and is the only nation of importance which has no system for the management of her forests. As a people we have slight appreciation of their importance. It became necessary to destroy much of the timber in order to make homes, farms, and states, so much labor expended in clearing up the land, we have come to think of the forests as an incumbrance possessing no value except that established at the saw-mills; we scarcely realize their consequence, their necessity, the wonderful influence they exert upon a nation and upon every individual, upon each occupation and industry. If the state has an interest in the permanency of her manufactures and a continuous timber supply it must be public policy to take such steps as will insure this result and to adopt a settled economic policy with reference to the forests.

"The United States has disposed of the cream of her timber lands, which are now held by private individuals, and no administrative policy has been provided except for the limited forest reservations. It must devolve upon each individual state to carry out such method as will best serve the interest of that region.

"We have left Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri, with the northern portion of Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi to supply the markets of the interior manufacturing states—a total of 147,000 square miles of timber land, or 12.5 per cent. of our original forest domain, a larger portion of which has been logged and can not afford very much good timber. Under the present rate of

consumption and relatively small increase from new growths, I ask you how long will this small per cent. of forest continue to supply the manufacturing of Michigan and her competitors in other states?"

In discussing "The pine as a factor in the restoration of cut-over lands," Prof. V. M. Spaulding, of Ann Arbor advanced the theory that nature is forever trying to put back what man has taken away, and to bring conditions back to what they naturally were. If man would keep his hands off part of the pine problem is solved. Man is the disturbing factor, and still holds the balance of power, so that it simply becomes a question of ways and means, time and outlay, before Michigan can be reforested. If the work of reforestation should begin now, Prof. Spaulding said, three varieties of pines should at once be introduced, the jack pine, the Norway and the white pine.

The last regular speaker was Dr. W. J. Beal of the State Agricultural college, who was assigned to talk on "Some Important Features of the Fire Problem." An outline of his talk is as follows:

"In a report covering forestry made twelve years ago I said the subject of forest fires in northern Michigan was the one question demanding most careful attention. Since that time timber has become scarcer and has raised rapidly in price, so that the subject of stealing timber has surpassed in importance that of fires. The chief sources of fires take rank in the following order, beginning with those occurring most frequently:

"Burning brush and other rubbish in clearing land for crops.

"Setting fires by railway engines.

"Fires started by hunters, tramps, adventurers, etc.]

"So long as the present condition in northern Michigan prevails there is little encouragement for any person, corporation, or even the state, to attempt to grow timber with the view of any profit. But this condition of things must not prevail; we won't let them. I have no patent panacea to offer you as a sure preventive of fires, but we must keep making a diligent effort along this line, feeling certain that much good will be accomplished.

"Light and leachy soils that bear cone-bearing trees are more likely to suffer from fires than other lands. Where the soil is suitable for farms and the country becomes older and more thickly settled, the risks from fires in the forests will diminish. Perhaps there is a smaller proportion of rascals to the quarter section, and thieves are more likely to be detected in the old country.

"One of the most economical schemes that I have to suggest, and the one the state has usually been following for most of its existence, so far as immediate cash expenditure is concerned, is to keep pretty quiet and wait till other states about us have spent time and money and thought in solving the problem satisfactorily. But in all seriousness, we have already waited too long, and the people begin to realize that we have been losing every year a hundred times as much as it would have cost to execute some pretty effective laws, and now at the close of 1900 we have inaugurated no plans.

"I place a good deal of stress on

education, though in some regions, I admit, the difficulties seem to be well nigh unsurmountable, but the conditions can be improved. A good system of earnest fire wardens, who will hustle around after the guilty with as much persistence as a man working for a clerkship in the state house, or for his election to the legislature or to congress is about what we want to prevent forest fires. Every little while one warden after another should show the citizens the bad results of forest fires. Besides talking agents must have attractive printed matter to reach people through the mails. Some of the printed matter should contain graphic accounts of great losses of property where great fires have prevailed. Since the State authorities have been able to select a tax commission and the people have voted to have the constitution amended that railways shall be taxed like other property, it may be, while the people are about it, they can devise some plan which shall prevent these roads from blowing live coals along their lines into dry fields and forests.

"We cannot accomplish everything in forestry at once. After beginning any great enterprise the subject continues to grow on those who are engaged in the work. Work and thought and experiments suggest new things to be tested, new laws to be enacted."

The session closed with a general discussion.

### School of Horticulture.

The Rhode Island College aims to be of service in all ways that it can to those who desire training in agriculture or horticulture. It recognizes that, while there is no short-cut to an education, there are many who, by reason of circumstances, feel unable to take a regular college course. It is felt that there are many young men and young women who would derive benefit from a closer acquaintance and immediate contact with the college, even if but for a limited period. For this reason brief courses have been offered for the benefit of those interested in certain lines. In accordance with this policy a short course in horticulture was held at the college, beginning February 26th, 1900, and continuing two weeks.

In 1901 the time will be increased to six weeks. The course will open Wednesday, Feb. 20th, immediately following the Poultry School, and close Friday, March 29th.

An important feature of education in any line consists in becoming familiar with sources of information, in learning where to look for help on the subject in hand. To assist the student to do this is one of the principal objects of the present course. The incentive to further inquiry and the knowledge of how to pursue that inquiry intelligently, will prove of more value to the student who pursues such a course than the mere facts which he may acquire.

Contact with others interested in similar lines of work, and especially with practical men who have made a success in these lines, will afford an incentive to further study and progress.

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