

FORESTRY'S BIRTHDAY 1000 YEARS AGO

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According to Fernow's History of Forestry, and others, France appears to have taken a lead in real forestry when Charlemagne, the first great king of the Franks, more than a thousand years ago began the protection of forests and the regulation of their uses. As early as 1291 there were regular laws applying at least to parts of the forests and regular official foresters. In 1402 a general law was promulgated by the king. In 1669, after eight years of labor by a commission of twenty-one experienced and informed men, the Minister Colbert, of Louis XIV, promulgated the famous forest law, "*l'Ordonances des Eaux et Forêts*," which at that time was the most complete forest law in existence. This law provided a very full machine for its enforcement; every important cut of timber had to be marked out by state officials; it prescribed the minimum age at which to cut timber, set forth officially the seed tree method, "*methode a tire et aire*," etc.

In practice this law became irksome tyranny; it made grafters and bad men instead of interested foresters; it led good people to use bribery and other low means to escape its action. It hindered forestry in its development.

The motive was excellent, the organization, on paper, was perfect, the law did much good as well as harm, and its failure lay in ignoring justice and freedom of action, and in disregarding the initiative of the owners of the land and the peculiarities of the business. The commission failed to see that the details of handling a forest can no more be prescribed by law than the running of an ordinary mixed farm. In 1791 all was thrown overboard by the revolutionary government. But in 1803 Napoleon re-established the old regime, much modified, to be sure, but included a definite clause which forbade all forest clearing without permit.

In 1827, after things in France came to rest, a new law was established. This law of 1827, revised in 1859, practically re-established the law of 1669; left out the unwise prescriptions as to silviculture, but kept the order of 1803, so that to this day the old law of 1669 holds and the forests of cities, towns, and all public bodies are under the state authorities; private forest may not be cleared without permit and

may not be devastated, but any area cut-over must be restocked within three years.

Germany has gone through about the same experiences, but since it never was a single state, but remained in its more or less feudal form of a loose union of many states in which every lord and prince, every bishop, and every city or town had its own authority, there never was a single uniform forest law for Germany. In most states, and with most large forest owners, city or prince, the first regulations or orders forbade clearing the forest and forest devastation. Later on these were amplified by each owner for his particular locality. In some states the French revolution brought radical changes, as in Prussia where all private owners of forests were allowed by the law of 1811 full freedom to cut and clear and handle their property as they saw fit, while in other states, like Bavaria and Wurttemberg, the older laws, dating back to about 1500, were retained and are practically those in force today.

BRITAIN MAY BUILD WOODEN HOUSES

A special cable despatch from the London, England, correspondent of the *Montreal Gazette*, states that the probabilities are that Great Britain will adopt wooden houses as a solution of the acute housing problem in that country. The cable further states that F. C. Wade, agent general for British Columbia, has offered to have 500 wooden houses delivered in Great Britain and ready for occupation by Christmas. While there is a certain amount of opposition in certain quarters to wooden houses, it is significant that the by-laws prohibiting the erection of wooden structures are being amended. If wooden houses are finally adopted by Great Britain it will mean an immense boom for North American lumber.

—*Southern Lumberman.*