

Military Demands on French Forest

Severe Cutting for Trench Purposes Creates Perplexing Problem for Government Forest Service

We gave some description recently of the destruction that has been wrought in the French forests by the artillery of the contending armies and of the suggested plans for reforestation after the war. There are some interesting notes in the "Revue des Eaux et Forests" in regard to cutting that is being done in the forests for the requirements of the French army, from which the following notes are taken:

Timber operations more and more important are being carried on in the Government forests for the needs of the army. After the smaller trees the finest trees of the stand are now being cut in several places. These operations are especially intensive in the forests situated at the front near the armies. The military authorities state that on account of the necessity of working rapidly and on account of the difficulty of transportation by railway they cannot go far for the wood which is required, and as the front changes very little the result is that the same forests are being constantly placed under contribution.

Military Needs Urgent.

The necessary consequence will be great lack of wood in certain regions of the north and east of France after the war, the more so because very probably the Germans will leave more or less completely ruined forests situated in the same region on the territory provisionally occupied by them. There is enough in that to disquiet and even to frighten those who while occupying themselves with the present situation are not disinterested in the fu-

ture. It is greatly to be desired that the armies should look for wood in the interior whenever they can so that the impoverishment may as much as possible be spread throughout the whole of France and not confined in large measure to the regions to the north and east already so terribly tried in other ways.

On the other hand, always under the necessity of haste, the operations carried out by the military parties have taken place often under more or less defective conditions. Evidently the rules of management and silviculture take second place in the present circumstances, but that is far from taking no account of them at all. There is nothing opposed to the cut being arranged according to the prearranged order of the rules for operations. However, it is often very difficult to reconcile the imperious demands of the army's needs which must evidently be given consideration before anything else, with operations satisfactory to the future of the forest. The military men think that the forester gives them wood that they want too parsimoniously. They do not think that if the French forests had not been administered with a wise foresight and with the object of conservation they would be far from being able to provide the heavy demands which are now imposed on them. In place of reproaching the foresters with being conservators, the military authorities ought rather to congratulate them on having been so.

The foresters who have the task of administering the forests at the present time fear that the military authorities ask very much more