

and when better understood will command equal attention and be recognized as a factor that enters largely into the more important economic questions of the day. Just as our agricultural colleges and experimental farms require a large number of professional men with superior technical training to teach the principles of agriculture and investigate the new problems that are constantly coming forward for solution, and just as our mining schools and our Geological Survey Department need highly trained specialists to teach us how to develop our mineral wealth, so our forestry schools and our Bureau of Forestry will be expected to employ highly trained specialists for the teaching of the principles of forestry and the investigation of its complex problems. Twenty years ago the science of forestry was regarded as an abstract and debatable theory, and all knowledge of it was confined to a few scientific experts and enthusiasts whose views were regarded as of doubtful value. To-day the most intelligent and public-spirited members of the community regard the treatment of our forest resources as a vital and urgent economic problem, and there seems to be widespread recognition of the fact that the preservation of a due proportion of the land in forest for all time is the only possible means of securing either agricultural fertility or a lasting supply of timber. The whole question is an exceedingly complex and difficult one, and calls preeminently for the exercise of the providential functions of the state to counteract the destructive tendencies of private exploitation. The state being an institution for the purpose of insuring not only our present, but our future and continued welfare must, necessarily, take an interest in the permanence of the natural resources upon which its welfare rests.

Inasmuch as the time required for a crop of trees to reach the most profitable age for cutting is so long that very few private owners can afford to adopt this branch of farming on a large scale, it can best be conducted by the state—by the people as a whole, and for the benefit of all. The experience of centuries goes to show that while the individual makes the best farmer, the state makes the better forester, and usually the only safe and good forester. This being the case it seems to be the plain duty of our legislators to make adequate provision for the training of an efficient corps of men with the technical training necessary for the proper management of our magnificent forests. Under rational management their producing capacity can be increased manifold, and a handsome revenue obtained from them. No other economic problem confronting our legislators is equal in importance to that offered by the present condition and future fate of our forests. The opportune time seems to have arrived when effective public interest in forestry education and forest preservation should be persistently aroused and stimulated.