

In 1877, further legislation was had, instituting in the Ministry of Finance, a forest inspector, technically trained, with two assistant inspectors, also technically trained, to superintend the outside work. A forest survey was begun in 1879, but interrupted in 1880 for lack of funds and personnel. The same law placed the duty of guarding the State property in the hands of the general police or gendarmerie, 50 officers and some 340 guards, and during the fire danger (June to October) 110 more, being detailed for this service under direction of the Minister of War. The pernicious permit system, however, was continued.

Dr. Chloros, who obtained his education in Germany, became finally Forest Director and was responsible for securing further legislation in 1888, the object of which was, as a first step towards improvement, to survey and delimit and round off the State property. It provided that enclaves, and all absolute forest soil was to be expropriated. If no amicable agreement with the owner could be reached, the price was to be determined by the net yield which had been obtained from the property during the last five years, capitalized at 5 per cent. No attempts, however, at an efficient organization or change of the destructive permit system were made.

Private Forestry Discouraged.

By general law, the State has the right to surveillance of private property, although the extent of this right is not fully defined. The government may take for its own use, by paying for it, upwards of one-sixth of the annual cut; it collects a tax of 12 to 18 per cent. for all woodwork cut; it forbids the pasturing of woods that have been burned within 10 years, and obliges all owners of over 1,200 acres to employ forest guards. This and other interference with property rights naturally acts as deterrent to private forest management. A notable exception is the small private royal forest property near Athens, which, since 1872 under a Danish forester, appears to have been managed under forestry principles.

A thorough re-organization of the forest service was effected in 1893, when 20 district foresters were employed, the number of forest inspectors was increased to four, and a regular Division of Forestry was instituted in the Finance Department. The general police or gendarmerie was continued as forest guards. Until a native personnel could be educated, foreigners were to be employed for the making of working plans.

Reforms Came Slowly.

Yet in 1896, the then Director of the Forest Department, a lawyer, still complains of the absence of a proper organization and of any personnel with forestry knowledge. Apparently no progress had been made. In that year, however, the gendarmerie was to be replaced by forest guards (52 superior and 298 subaltern), who were to be appointed from graduates of a special secondary school, which had been instituted at Vytina some two years before. This replacement could, of course, not be effected at once, since hardly more than 25 men could be graduated annually; hence even this improvement in the lower class police would not be completed for six or eight years. No steps had been taken to educate officers for the higher grades, and in this direction, propositions merely were discussed.

In 1899, a change in the permit system was made, but hardly for the better, justices of the peace being empowered, under certain conditions, to issue such permits. Nor do we find in 1901 anything more than expressions of good wishes, and desire for further legislation, besides some attempts at popular education through the formation of tree-planting associations under the patronage of the Crown Princess. In 1905 no change in conditions were reported. Forest fires still continue as a common occurrence.

While the government makes efforts to improve conditions, the indifference of the people and the long established abuses prevent rapid progress at reform.