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AFFORESTATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

BY ARTHUR P. GRENFELL
(LATE INDIAN FOREST SERVICE).

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AFFORESTATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

THE United Kingdom is remarkable amongst civilized nations in two respects: it has a smaller area of forest than any other in similar latitudes; and though it has a Government Department called "Woods and Forests," that Department is not much more than an office for the State gardeners and gamekeepers. The science and the art of forestry, studied and practised by every other important nation and by ourselves in our Indian Empire and in our colonies, is so utterly neglected at home that people of ordinary intelligence rarely know that the science and art exist.

No doubt statistics afford us some excuse. By forests we do not mean the deer forests of Scotland and the heath-clad hills and moorlands which in England are known as Ashdown Forest and Dartmoor Forest and so on. We mean land covered with trees, and the percentage of forest in this sense is in Ireland 1·5 of the area, Wales 3·9, Scotland 4·6, and England 5·3, compared with 17 per cent. in France, 17·3 per cent. in Belgium, the most thickly populated of countries, 25·9 in Germany, 32·6 in Austria, 35 in Sweden and in Hungary, 42 in Russia, and 48 in Servia.

Our national want of attention to forestry is therefore accounted for by the scarcity of our forests. But, for reasons about to be explained, the time has come to establish in our country both forests and the science and art of forestry.

Report of the Royal Commission.

Such, at any rate, is the opinion expressed in the Report on Afforestation (Cd. 4460) of the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion, etc., issued in 1909.

The nineteen Commissioners comprised six professional men (two of whom were experts in forestry) and four officials (two State and two municipal); while of the nine politicians five were Liberals, including a Trade Unionist, two Conservatives, and one each from the Nationalist and Labor Parties. The Report was unanimous, with some reservations from one Commissioner, and proposed that the State should purchase suitable land in order to plant 150,000 acres yearly, at an average annual cost of £2,000,000, until a national forest estate of 9,000,000 acres had been created. In times of trade depression some of the labor required would be drawn from the ranks of the unemployed, a fair number of whom are fit to carry out the work with but little preliminary training.

As a piece of Collectivism the scheme is a striking one. No body of men as representative as were the Commissioners would have produced it unless a very strong case had been made out.

With but few exceptions, the Report was received with a chorus of approval by the press. The organ of the country gentlemen, the *Field*, in its issue of January 23rd, 1909, wrote :

The opinion of the Commission upon Afforestation is emphatic. In effect they say : "Yes, afforestation is both practicable and desirable." It would be passing strange if the decision had been otherwise. For many years the authorities best able to form an opinion have been urging not only the wisdom, but the national necessity, of safeguarding our timber resources.

We may reasonably hope that the work of this Commission will be positive, and not in the direction of that shunting which is so frequently the conclusion of costly official enquiries. To be effective, however, there should be no delay in the beginning. Nor is there any reason for hesitation. Upon the facts as to the necessity of systematic afforestation there is universal agreement, and the portions of the Report containing it may at once be taken as read. The existence of unemployed men is also too obvious for dispute. The real points of debate are : (1) Are the men fit for work ? (2) Will the work be profitable ? The assurances of the Commission upon these questions we cannot but regard as wholly satisfactory.

With this declaration on the part of progressive landlords little fault need be found, but the difficulty in practice will be to hold them and their agents to it.

Proposed National Forests.

The Commission report that 6,000,000 acres in Scotland, 2,500,000 in England and Wales, and 500,000 acres in Ireland, 9,000,000 acres in all, are fit for afforestation and should be afforested. They point out that the world supply of timber is being steadily depleted, that the price is constantly rising, and that (in 1907) we imported 8,315,937 loads of timber, valued at £20,127,943, from countries of similar climate and character to our own. This quantity of timber could be grown on 9,000,000 acres, planted to cut on a regular rotation, and the Commission report that exactly this area of suitable land is available for the purpose. This, of course, is a mere coincidence, and there is no reason to suppose that our imports will be constant at the figure of 1907.

There is, therefore, a clear *prima facie* case for the promotion of afforestation ; but this is one of those services which private enterprise has not yet undertaken, and, indeed, is unfitted to undertake. The initial outlay is substantial. The Commission estimate of cost of land and planting is £13 6s. 8d. per acre. Interest and management expenses have to be added annually. For twenty years there is no direct return whatever, and for another twenty years the thinnings yield but a small income. When forty years have elapsed the crop can be sold at £60 per acre, and if left for eighty years it will realize £175 per acre. But the investment of a substantial capital which will cost money to protect for twenty years, will yield very little for forty years, and between that and eighty years will give in lump sums, according to the acreage cut, a return of £3 16s. 6d. per cent. on the whole outlay is not a business proposition for an individual, however young and however wealthy. The State, which can borrow cheaply, which lives for ever, and can therefore afford to take long views, is the only body which could undertake afforestation on a large scale.

Germany has had State forest departments for a century. Saxony has 429,300 acres of State forests and obtains a net return of 22s. an acre. In Prussia, Bavaria, and four other States, the net revenue of the State forests is between 10s. and 15s. an acre, whilst in Wurtemberg the return is as high as 25s. 3d.*

Nearly every important nation not only owns and works State forests, but undertakes the systematic teaching of forestry, the science and art of the profitable growing of timber for sale.

In Switzerland 71 per cent., in Hungary 68 per cent., in Russia 60 per cent. of the forests, 25 per cent. of the whole area, belongs to the State, and in Germany 52 per cent. of the forest area is State or municipal. In other countries the proportion is considerable, though smaller, save in British India, where it is nearly 100 per cent., and in the United Kingdom where it is 2 per cent.

Climate and Soil.

Yet our climate and soil are suitable for the growing of timber; and English wood is as good as or better than that of other countries, if it is properly grown. In practice our home grown timber is usually inferior, because our woods are used primarily for ornament and sport. We grow fine trees with spreading branches and abundant space for underwood; the timber merchant wants tall trees with no big branches, and for this purpose they must be grown close together, as in natural forests.

Why Afforest at all?

The Commission demonstrate that 9,000,000 acres of land, now used to little purpose, employing scarcely any labor, and producing nothing but game and a little mutton, could be purchased and planted by the State, would yield in a generation or so a very large amount of wealth, larger, indeed, than the estimate if the price of timber continues to rise in the future as it has in the past, and would in the end return what is for the State a fair profit on the whole enterprise.

But there are the special reasons for undertaking it. Commercially the proposition is sound but it is not exactly attractive. It is the expected social results which determined the Commission to recommend afforestation to the nation.

Forestry and Unemployment.

Afforestation has an important bearing on the problem of unemployment in two main ways.

1. It can be advantageously used as a direct palliative, or, to put it more correctly, a preventive of unemployment both during trade depressions caused by cyclical fluctuations and in the slack periods of seasonal trades.

* These figures are, presumably, the net annual income, that is the difference between receipts and working expenses per acre averaged over the whole area. The forests are mostly natural, and no doubt State property from time immemorial. These figures therefore have little relation to the finances of the scheme proposed for the United Kingdom.

2. Its permanent effect will be to help in, what is an essential part of the organization of the labor market, the better distribution of labor.

Everyone knows what the "casual labor system" means. Round the dock gates in London and Liverpool and Hull, and all our other great ports, to take only one example, there is constantly hanging an army of "under employed" men fighting for a bare existence, and that army is partly recruited by country-born men who have drifted away from the rural villages and farms. Now, if unemployment is to be satisfactorily dealt with, it is necessary, as the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission has shown, that the casual labor system should be abolished, the recruiting of the "casual" army stopped, and the present congested masses of the "under employed" dispersed. The men who are squeezed out in the process of decasualization will have to be absorbed eventually into regular and self-supporting employment, and one of the forms of that employment will be the work of afforestation. Thus afforestation will play an important part both as a preventive of the "drift to the towns" and as an absorbent of much labor which is at present unemployed or "under employed."* Incidentally, of course, the creation of forests would develop other industries beyond the mere growing and felling of timber, e.g., its conversion and manipulation, and the wood-working trades generally. It has been estimated by a high authority that the afforestation of a million acres would afford regular work on the land for 100,000† men, which means, to put it another way, life in the country for half a million persons, counting five to the family.

The peculiar value of afforestation as a preventive of unemployment is, however, its applicability to times of great industrial depression and to seasonal slackness. It is hardly necessary to say that it must not be used for relief works, which are thoroughly unsound, and can have no place in a well organized system. But the peculiarity of afforestation is that it lends itself admirably to temporary work. Planting can, to a great extent, be put in hand at intervals according to the state of the labor market, without detriment either to the work itself or to the interests of the community.‡ In giving evidence before the Royal Commission, Professor Schlich was asked, "If you had to regard periods of depression in the labor market,

* This does not mean that every under employed dock porter or builder's laborer could go straight to tree planting. Training will be a necessary part of such re-organization of industry. It is worth remembering, however, in this connection, that the Report on Afforestation found that "there are sufficient unemployed persons willing to submit to and able to satisfy ordinary labor tests, who could advantageously be employed without a period of special training." This is a conclusion based on the experience of a number of practical foresters and others who have actually used the "unemployed" in their work. (See the Report, 1909, Cd. 4460, pp. 15 foll.).

† The discrepancy between these figures and those at the end of the section is due to the deduction of labor displaced allowed for in the latter estimate.

‡ Provided that, as in India with famine relief works, schemes are carefully elaborated to this end beforehand.

would it very seriously interfere with systematic operations if you had to do little planting for two or three years, and had a correspondingly increased quantity once in three or four years, we will say?" His reply was: "I think it would make very little, if any, difference, provided you did a certain amount within a certain number of years, say within every ten years approximately the same amount. . . . Generally speaking, I can say it does not matter whether you do a double amount in one year and nothing in the next year in the shape of planting—really it makes no difference in the long run so long as you do every five years, or every ten years at the outside, approximately the same amount."

It is clear, then, that a large part of the work in the national forests could be (and ought to be as the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission suggests) "executed out of loans on a ten years' program, and within the decade, made to vary in volume in such a way as to ebb and flow in a manner complementary to the flow and ebb of private industry."

It is clear, also, that another part of the national (or municipal) forests can be used to prevent seasonal unemployment. The actual planting of trees is confined to the winter months (roughly from October to April), whilst preliminary work, such as fencing, clearing the ground of brushwood, draining, etc., may be done either in winter or summer. Obviously, therefore, silvicultural operations will fit in with agriculture. Thousands of men who will be busy during the summer at haymaking, harvesting and the hoeing of roots, can find employment in the woods when ordinary farm work is slack during the winter. Moreover, with a proper organization of the labor market, that is to say, with national labor exchanges and training establishments in full working order, there is no reason why forest work—the rougher and less specialized departments of it at any rate—should not be the alternate trade of many urban laborers, men in the building trade for instance. There is afforestable land in the neighborhood of many great cities (such as London, Portsmouth, or the towns of the West Riding), while several of the great municipalities (e.g., Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool), have water catchment areas, which really need afforesting.

Two and a half million acres is England's share of the area proposed to be planted. It is here that forestry has its principal bearing on the unemployed question. In Surrey, Kent, and Sussex, not to speak of Essex, there are 36,000 acres of afforestable land, about 90,000 acres in Hampshire, nearly 300,000* in the South-West of England. Here are demonstration areas and training grounds close at hand, where men can be tested and, if necessary, trained until they are fit to be drafted to the Yorkshire moors or the highlands of Scotland. In Scotland there would not be enough men unemployed in times of depression to do the work on the large areas proposed to be acquired unless men previously trained in England could be drawn upon.

* Moreover, out of 28,000 acres of hill and heath land in Suffolk about three quarters, or 20,000 acres, could be successfully planted.

Enough has been said to show the special value of afforestation in dealing with the unemployed problem. Important questions then arise as to the number of men employable on any given area of woodland and the amount of supervision and training necessary.

This is what the Commissioners arrive at in the way of employment :

- (a) *Temporary*.—Temporary employment is afforded annually to 18,000 men during the winter months. Subsidiary occupations would employ as many more. This is equivalent to the labor of 12,000 men for one year and increases gradually as the scheme matures.
- (b) *Permanent*.—Permanent employment is afforded to one man per 100 acres afforested, rising to 90,000 men when the whole area has been dealt with. The scheme is a "snowball." At first the labor of 12,500 men will be required ; ultimately it will rise to 90,000. The subsidiary industries will absorb a much larger number, so that finally this new industry will support an additional population of about two to two and a half millions.

Forestry and Small Holdings.

A large forest scheme started at several centres in England will greatly assist the development of many land reforms. For, to quote from the Report, "the conversion of comparatively unprofitable lands into forests enhances the productiveness of adjacent areas and should promote the development of the small holdings movement." This is fairly well understood in Scotland, and it should be the business of all south of the Tweed to see that it is equally well understood in England.*

The English Small Holdings Act on its introduction aroused great expectations among the rural population, which have since in many counties been disappointed. With the help of well considered afforestation schemes, the hopes of those fortunate enough to live in their neighborhood stand more chance of being realized. As an instance of the way in which a system of small holdings can be set upon a sound financial basis the evidence of Mr. Rawlence is much to the point. He stated that in Dorset, Wilts, Hants, and Kent (to which may be added Devon, Somerset, Yorkshire, Wales, and many other areas), there "must be hundreds of thousands of acres, taking that land the normal [annual] value of which would be less than five shillings per acre." He also gave instances of estates sold or for sale at £10 or less per acre, and added: "If you want to buy land of that sort, the better plan will be to buy an estate of 700 acres, taking my illustration ; and you would probably let several small holdings for almost as much as the whole farm is let, and you would have the residue left [for forestry purposes] practically for nothing."

* The Commission report that only half a million acres need be acquired for forest purposes in Ireland. This is a timid recommendation ; but to analyze the situation there, which is complicated by all kinds of political issues, would require too much space.

The advantage to the small holder of being able to earn good wages during the winter in the adjoining State forests is too obvious to need enlarging on. It will serve to tide him over the period it takes for his farm to become economically self-supporting, and afford him ready money for rent and the interest on the capital required for stock. If the county councils do not fall in with this idea, there is no reason, save the defects of the present Board of Agriculture, why the State itself should not establish the subsidiary small holdings, under section 20 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908. There will be a further advantage in that co-operation, which is so essential to the success of the small holder, ought to be initiated and fostered by central State action, and these "national" small holdings will provide an invaluable opportunity for this purpose.

Opposition to be Overcome.

IN ENGLAND: FOR HUNTING AND SHEEP FARMING.

In England, apart from the grouse shooting on the Yorkshire moors, the hunting rather than the shooting interest is to be feared. For example, there are, according to the Commissioners, many suitable areas in the West of England; for instance, in Somerset alone the Mendips, the Quantocks, and Exmoor. Now the prosperity of the present rather scanty population of Exmoor is based on two things—sheep grazing and the existence of the Devon and Somerset stag-hounds. It is true, as the Report points out, that much land could be devoted to forestry that is now being used as pasture for sheep, and that the system of farming could, without difficulty, be adapted thereto. If the poor upland pasture were improved by suitable cultivation and the use of artificial manures, as is being done with great success in Belgium and Denmark, and to a lesser extent in England itself, the diminished area of grazing could easily carry the same number of sheep as before. If additional land were required to be given up to the forester, great stock would be substituted for small, and cattle breeding and dairy farming would replace the production of mutton.

But the opposition of the stag hunters is more serious. In England the ownership of land in many cases, if not most, does not imply the management of a business, but rather the enjoyment of a luxury. Consequently, even though it could be proved as a matter of estate management that a landlord who lent himself to a large scheme of afforestation on Exmoor would benefit himself materially, it does not follow that this would move him to support locally unpopular improvements. Still less would he or his agent be influenced by the fact that such a scheme could indirectly benefit the unemployed of Bristol, Bridgwater, and Taunton during times of trade depression. For if new work were started on a large scale in his neighborhood, there would be a demand not only for comparatively unskilled labor from the towns, but also for skilled woodmen, planters, and men brought up on the land from the neighborhood. This would inevitably send up the wages of the rural proletariat; and

however much some of us may wish to see that (as it is the necessary antecedent from a financial point of view of most land reforms), it would for that very reason be opposed by the existing territorial interests. Increased wages, though they would ultimately pay for themselves in the better quality of the work done, might at first lead to reductions in rent; and whereas rents are now rising, the rise might be stopped. Changes in husbandry—even changes which would ultimately increase rents—are not often welcomed by the landowner. His immediate interest “is in getting the utmost possible rent, which may (and often does) come from such a use of the land as involves its producing a smaller quantity of foodstuffs than some other use”; just as “the farmer’s pecuniary interest lies in getting the highest possible percentage on the capital he employs, which may (and often does) lead him positively to restrict the intensity of his labor and the product of the farm.”*

IN SCOTLAND: GROUSE AND DEER.

Scotland, where the Commission recommends that 6,000,000 acres be acquired for plantations, is where afforestation is likely to be carried out on a large scale. In that country, outside the fertile lowlands, all classes of the country population are well aware that the rural economy is based almost entirely on the use of the land for sport. And this is a very unsafe position. Fashions in shooting change. Just as pheasant shooting is losing the esteem of sportsmen because over preservation has made it too artificial (and as a table bird the tame hand-reared pheasant is little, if at all, superior to a barndoor fowl), so in deer forests, where the ground is often overstocked and the beasts’ range limited, the stalker will seldom get such fine trophies as he can in Germany and Eastern Europe, where the deer live under more natural conditions. But the conversion of bare mountain land and heath into forest will not destroy the shooting. Except for rabbits (which are incompatible with afforestation, but which in any case are of no account in the Highlands), game will still flourish, though its character may be changed. As a well informed article in the *Academy* puts it: “People can make shooting for black game, capercailzie, and pheasants instead of grouse at no pecuniary loss. They can keep deer from destroying the young trees by giving them fodder, as they do in the German deer forests.” Pheasants reared in large areas of dense forest would be wild and gamey enough to satisfy the most critical shot or maître d’hotel, and this kind of shooting would soon recover its value. The able writer of the *Times* articles on British forestry, published between February and May, 1908, observes upon game preservation that “Any misgivings as to the effect of forestry upon pheasant shooting may be allayed by recollecting that the battue system is a fashion imported from Germany, where scientific forestry has been longer established than in any other country.”

* Sidney Webb: preface to the English translation of Hasbach’s “History of the English Agricultural Laborer.”

It may seem strange to devote so much consideration to un-economic sports hitherto enjoyed only by the leisured rich. But, according to the Royal Commission, the sporting rights would serve to cover the expense of local taxation and part of the upkeep of the woods until they began to pay expenses. In fact they are an economic asset of immediate value; and their exercise need not interfere with the proper tending and profitable exploitation of the forests, although perhaps their enjoyment in a more democratic fashion than at present will have to be deferred until the national income is more equably distributed. In the near future the State might let shootings to co-operative societies of sportsmen, upon trustworthy guarantees of fair usage.

The Scots will, therefore, be well advised to accept the Commissioners' scheme; for they will be in the pleasant position of eating their cake and having it too, at least a part of it. And on points like these those who wish to see the scheme carried through in its entirety do well to be posted. There are differences of opinion as to the best scale for a start. Mr. R. C. Munro Ferguson, M.P., who has been a conspicuous advocate of forestry in Scotland, said, in July, 1910: "The agricultural interest is exceedingly sensitive as regards the afforestation policy of the Commission on the ground that it may absorb some undue proportion of the available resources." This would be perfectly true if he had stopped there, but he continued: "That, however, is a groundless fear, because it must be a matter of some years before any large scheme of afforestation can be undertaken, and an expenditure averaging £50,000 for the first six or eight years is probably as much as could be well laid out on the requisite preliminary machinery." Here his view entirely conflicts with the view of most experienced men. They are of opinion that too much time is being spent in talk, and that there are plenty of men and sufficient experience accumulated in the United Kingdom to allow the work to be begun on a far larger scale with every promise of success.

THE OPPOSITION OF LAND AGENTS.

Even if landowners were less unprogressive than is often alleged, and many were prepared to support a large development of State forests in their neighborhood and run the risk of the increased value of the adjoining estates being largely absorbed by taxation, there would remain another very formidable class to be reckoned with.

Compare the amount received by the landlord and his agent. The landlord does 5 per cent. of the work and receives 95 per cent. of the rent; that is to say, the work of the landlord is rewarded 361 times as highly as that of the agent. Here is a disproportion that exists in no other business. If we turn to the provisions of the Commissioners' larger scheme, we find that the administration charges required to produce a net revenue of £17,500,000 amount to no less than £1,800,000, or nine and a half per cent. on the total of the two sums. The inference is obvious: either the agent is very much

underpaid, or the work is often badly done. Both conditions are true at once in varying degree. The result is that the land agent, as compared with other professional men, can only make a living by managing a very large tract of land in a routine fashion. He has not the time, even if he had the knowledge to do his part in adapting the husbandry of the estate to changing conditions. Were he to do so he would lose in two ways. Firstly, he would manage less land and get a correspondingly smaller income; secondly, until the improvement on the land he still managed became productive he would lose a part of his percentage on that. This is particularly true of forestry, because farm land given up to plantations would hardly become productive during the agent's lifetime. The consequence is that English land agents as a class (since they are but human) are quite ignorant of scientific forestry. Hence if their business were curtailed in one direction by the creation of large State forests, they could hardly hope, under any proper system of administration that is likely to be set up, to expand it in another by assuming the direction of these forest estates. Nor do they show any serious signs of improving. Only a few years ago the lecturer in estate agency and forestry at a well known college, which has been compared in efficiency with the Agricultural University at Copenhagen, qualified for his duties in teaching forestry by a short visit to Germany. And a few months ago a very capable land agent in charge of some large woods in the south of England told the writer that he was ignorant of the art, and more than hinted that it did not matter in the least.

ARTISTS AND SCENERY.

There remains a final objection which, as it is often raised by those who profess to love "natural" scenery, must be met and answered. It is said that afforestation will destroy the "natural" beauty of the moors and mountains, and that economic forests must necessarily be ugly. This is not so, for 2,500,000 acres devoted to forests in England will leave plenty of open space, while the additional charm of real forest scenery will be added. The author of the very able series of articles on "British Forestry" in the *Times* (February to May, 1908), completely disposes of the objection:

If woods are to be preserved they must be managed on an economic basis. We hope to convince readers that this can be done without sacrifice to sylvan beauty—that the best aesthetic results indeed can only be obtained as the outcome of sound forest treatment. The most delectable and special characteristic of English scenery consists in richly timbered parks, the finest of which owe their origin to ancient forests. Take as an example in the South the park at Ashridge. Nowhere else shall you see such statues of beeches in dense masses, in detached groups, and standing singly—the very perfection of tree growth. But do not imagine that such a result can be attained by dotting beeches about on open ground. The Queen beech at Ashridge had never attained her height of 135 feet with 90 feet of clean bole unless she had shared with ten thousand sisters the discipline of high forest.

Similarly Maeterlinck has waxed eloquent on the beauties of serried ranks of forest trees. Dealing with arboriculture in a park he says:

Plant it with beautiful trees, not parsimoniously placed as though each of them were an object of art displayed on a grassy tray, but close together like the ranks of a kindly army in order of battle. . . . Trees never feel themselves really trees nor perform their duties unless they are in numbers. Then at once everything is transformed—sky and light recover their first deep meaning, dew and shade return, silence and peace once more find a refuge.

Of the common Scots pine he adds :

You can picture nothing to compare with the architectural and religious alignment of the innumerable shafts shooting towards the sky, smooth, inflexible, pure. . . .

It is to be hoped that the town councils of England will lay the words of the practical man and the poet to heart, so that we, too, may have nobly timbered woods close to our big towns such as give a distinctive charm to many Danish, Belgian and German cities.

A New Department Wanted.

The Commissioners appear to have recognized this, for they advise that their scheme be administered by Commissioners specially appointed for the purpose. This is an admission that the Departments of Woods and Forests and of Agriculture, as at present organized, are unfit for it. With one or two exceptions, the officials capable of executive work have only the ordinary land agent's training. Mr. Munro Ferguson, in a letter to the *Times* in 1910, pleaded that we are not in a position to find offhand skilled subordinate officials and working foresters for executive duties. But this plea must not be exaggerated. "Offhand" does not mean five to eight years. The first essential step is a properly constituted Forestry Department. It would be idle to try developing this out of the Office of Woods and Forests, if "development" implied retaining anything more than the name of the department. Its first duties will be to secure demonstration forests, provide the necessary silvicultural training for the executive staff, make a survey of lands suitable for forests, and prepare schemes for planting them. So soon as this new department is ready to act, the Commissioners' scheme should be entrusted to it for execution. It may well have recourse to the large water "catchment" areas which several municipalities possess in the Midlands and the North of England, and which are being planted in a tentative fashion. These will be very useful as demonstration areas and training grounds. Moreover, since the representatives of these towns have already asked for expert advice and financial aid, the new Forest Department should be able to secure efficient management. We must not forget the recommendation of the Royal Commission that "this form of State work can best be performed by a central authority," a recommendation which all Progressives, with the object lesson of the administration of the Small Holdings Act before them, will cordially endorse.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, what is now needed in this matter is not enquiry, but agitation and definite State action. The experts have done their part. The case is made out. The only danger is lest a

scheme which has few, if any, open enemies should, through public apathy and official incompetence, be allowed to lapse. Reformers should press for proper publicity on matters of afforestation and especially for :

1. A well equipped executive Forest Department under the reformed Board of Agriculture, with an expert body to make a proper return of the land suitable for afforestation, to give advice, and to prepare schemes.

2. A settled policy of steady acquisition of land by the State and local authorities to be used for afforestation ; the local authorities to be advised by and, if necessary, subsidized and controlled by the Forest Department.

3. Proper technical instruction in forestry, both in rural schools and colleges and in the universities.

It is only by these means that this important measure of national reconstruction can be brought into being.

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