

## FOREST DEPARTMENT, BILTMORE ESTATE.

BILTMORE, N. C., February 3, 1899.

J. STERLING MORTON,

Editor THE CONSERVATIVE,  
Nebraska City, Neb.

Dear Sir: Some time ago last summer I had the pleasure of receiving a note from you asking me to supply you with some short information relative to the Biltmore Forestry School. I was then unable to say anything concerning it, as I did not know whether I would have any students to take advantage of the opportunity offered at Biltmore.

The Biltmore Forestry School is, of course, a more modest, on the other hand a more practical institution, than the forest academy at Cornell university. I have framed the course of the forestry school in such a way that in the run of one whole year all forestry questions are talked over with the students. In spite of being well acquainted with the theory of forestry as being preached in Germany, having derived my *Ph.D. Summa Cum Laude* owing to some knowledge of German forestry ways and means, I do not think that it is worth while to preach German forestry in this country during the next century even. I do not think that foresters, trained in the German way, will be required in the United States unless German economic and legal conditions are transferred to the land of the Stars and Stripes at the same time. The main differences between German and American conditions are:

First. Absolute lack of forest protection by state authority in this country.

Second. Higher taxes on forestry land in this country than abroad; the taxes in Germany, for instance, being only two pro mille on the forest value per annum.

Third. Entire lack of a system of well-graded and well-kept public roads in this country, which roads in Germany and France trench all forest sections in such a way that the transport of forest produce is greatly cheapened.

Fourth. Higher prices, especially of the better qualities of lumber abroad.

To return to the scope of the undertaking at Biltmore, I can only say, that two hours every morning are devoted to theoretical forestry. The rest of the day is spent in practical work in the forest, the students participating and superintending in winter the cutting of trees; in spring such nursery work and planting as is required on the Biltmore estate for landscape purposes; in summer road-making which is going on on the Biltmore estate at the rate of about 15 miles a year; and in fall preparation for another year's run and nursery work.

As special agent of the United States Division of Forestry, with Mr. Vanderbilt's permission, I have undertaken to prepare plans for forestry work on various estates in the Southern states. In

laying out plans for such work, I have the assistance of my students, who at the same time get fully acquainted with the forestry conditions of various forestry districts—not only with those prevailing in North Carolina. I consider such a course of instruction extremely valuable as it will ripen practical results.

From the enclosed statement some more details relative to the course of instruction at Biltmore may be taken. It is worth mentioning, perhaps, that the students get acquainted at the same with all office work coinciding with forestry administration on a comparatively large scale.

Again as regards the necessary preparation of a student for a course of studies at Biltmore, I do not think it wise to insist on a thorough college preparation in natural sciences, mathematics, political economy and principles of law. Forestry is business. The forester is a business man. A business man has not the time as a rule to spend three years at a university in order to obtain a degree. On the other hand he will be glad to receive instruction in a condensed way in the above-mentioned branches. It is impossible for one human head anyhow, to master botany, mineralogy, zoology, geology, climatology, mathematics, political economy, etc., etc. All we can do, to be absolutely honest, is to swim on the surface and to take a deep plunge into a science only when necessary. The college preparation should enable the forester to quickly master any more complicated questions of natural sciences, etc., in case they come up. It will be impossible for him to be prepared for all emergencies a priori.

I have recently recommended to various universities in the south the adoption of a plan similar to the university extension courses now spreading over Germany and Austria. These courses give in a concentrated way information in the various university branches to business men for business purposes. I think that a one year's course would be sufficient for a bright young man as preparation for Biltmore work and hereafter practical forestry work. After having left Biltmore it will be very necessary for him to get fully acquainted with the lumber interests of the various sections. This seems to me more necessary than a trip abroad with the view of studying German or French forestry.

I must confess that since I came to this country I have had to shake off so many prejudices acquired by my education in German forestry, that I have often wished not to have known anything about German forestry previous to coming to this country.

In preparing working plans for various sections of this country the leading points are:

First. The mapping of the forests.

Second. Study of the lumber interests, freight rates, etc.

Third. Stock taking of the forest,

viz.: ascertaining the market value of the mature and immature stumpage.

Fourth. Ascertaining whether it is financially wise to decrease the capital invested in the forest by rapid lumbering, or to increase the capital invested by road building, etc. At a certain figure of money invested in the forests the entire undertaking must prove most beneficial to the owner. This figure is the one which the forester must ascertain to begin with.

Fifth. Study of the rate of growth of the various trees and of the possibilities of regeneration from self-sown seed. There is no need stating that in almost no case planting of forests by artificial means will be found remunerative in this country.

THE CONSERVATIVE is filling a great social mission when advocating the forestry interests of the West. Under your guidance there cannot be any doubt that the results achieved will be great. Very respectfully,

C. A. SCHENCK, Forester.

Before the campaign for the presidency in the year 1900 shall have fairly begun the utter impossibility of a second term for William McKinley, "the reluctant," will have so "expanded" that even the place-hunters will fail to annex themselves to his cause. His eulogists and photographers depict McKinley as so gigantic intellectually and so magnificent morally that alongside of his individuality Washington, Jackson, Jefferson, Cleveland, Lincoln, and all the other celebrities who have ever been domiciled in the Executive Mansion seem pigmies, puny Tom Thumbs. The adulation of a man in the presidential office is stimulated by an increase of opportunities to secure patronage from that office. The Spanish war created thousands of new offices and with each one a new fountain of adulatory slush and gush was established and its hose turned at once upon "the reluctant William."

According to the Railway Agent of Cleveland, the pennant for fast running on American railroads has been transferred from the East to the country west of the Mississippi river. The splendid showing made by the Burlington fast mail trains between Chicago and Council Bluffs is what has brought about the change. These trains now make the 500 mile run between Lake Michigan and Missouri river at the rate of nearly 50 miles an hour including stops.

The first exclusive fast mail train for the West left Chicago, March 11, 1884. It consisted of a mail car and a baggage car. Two trains, one of four, the other of five cars are now required. The schedule of the first fast mail was 15 hours 50 minutes. The present schedule is 10 hours 15 minutes.