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EDITORIAL

"What's In a Name?"

"TREE farming" is on the march. Starting only a little more than a year ago in the Pacific Northwest, the movement has now attained national proportions. At that time the *Conservation News Digest* remarked, "The 130,000 acre Clemons tree farm in Grays Harbor County, Washington, is an important milestone in the progress of private forestry. About half of the area belongs to the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and the remainder to the State of Washington and to Grays Harbor County. It marks the initiation on a large scale of an effort to regrow trees on lands which have produced a great crop in the past and can do so again in the future."

Subsequent events lend weight to this optimistic forecast. Last spring the West Coast Lumbermen's Association reported that 16 tree farms comprising 727,000 acres had been examined and officially approved for designation as "Tree Farms," and that applications had been made on an additional 1,005,000 acres. On April 4, 1942, the "Alabama Tree Farm System," sponsored by the Alabama State Chamber of Commerce, was inaugurated with the presentation by Governor Frank M. Dixon of "Tree Farm" certificates to 25 individuals or companies whose forest land management policies had been approved by State Forester Brooks Toler as conforming to state standards. To receive one of the certificates an owner must protect his property from forest fire, and must practice selective logging or other controlled partial cutting with the view of assuring continuous production of commercial timber crops in accordance with practices approved by the State Conservation Commission. In pledging his cooperation in the enterprise the governor stated that "there is almost no limit to the benefits which perpetual forestry can bring to the people of Alabama," and warned against the danger of "regimentation from outside the state."

Arkansas on June 6, 1942, launched the Arkansas Tree Farm System with a celebration featured by a barbecue lunch and the crowning of an Arkansas Tree Farm Queen, whose coronation was preceded by a skit symbolizing the contribution of the pine forests to the war effort. Official Tree Farm signs and certificates were presented by State Forester Fred Lang to 22 forest owners whose lands had been examined and found to be managed in accordance with the Tree Farm requirements of the State Forestry Commission. Governor Homer Adkins, himself the recipient of one of the certificates, predicted that through tree farming growth in the forests of Arkansas, which he stated is already in excess of the drain, can be increased by 25 per cent with a resultant increase in income in the form of pay rolls and of wood purchases of 10 to 15 million dollars a year and as many as 15,000 new jobs. This result, he emphasized, will be achieved by voluntary action on the part of forest owners and not by compulsion on the part of the Arkansas Forestry Commission, which has no desire to "achieve a dictatorial strangle hold on people."

Further evidence of southern interest in tree farming is the recent action of the Forestry Committee of the Florida State Chamber of Commerce in agreeing to accept sponsorship of the movement in that state. Most important of all is the whole-hearted support that the program has received from the National Lumber Manufacturers Association and American Forest Products Industries. These organizations have gone further than merely to endorse a new and catchy name for an old idea; they have embarked on an active campaign to put it into practice.

But, someone may ask, what is the idea? Just what is a "tree farm"? According to its sponsors, it is an area "dedicated to the growing of forest crops for commercial purposes, protected and managed for continuous forest production." The term is "used to designate the application of

common-sense forestry practices to many types of privately owned forest lands. It is easily understood by the general public and accurately describes the methods now being used by lumbermen, timberland owners, and farmers in the management of their forest properties. The Forest Conservation Committee of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association is anxious to see that the use of this term be confined to describing definite and concrete forestry measures now being used in growing forest crops for sale on a commercial basis. This may range from the production of 100 million board feet per year on a single tree farm to the woodlot which furnishes one cord of wood annually for sale as a cash crop. We must guard against using it in any way than can be termed window dressing or propaganda."

Foresters generally will approve of these objectives, which they themselves have of course always advocated. Some may be irritated at the occasional suggestion by overenthusiastic spokesmen for the movement that they are the first discoverers of the fact that trees grow. Others will regret that the sponsors of the movement felt it necessary to invent a new term to describe practices which in fact and by definition are actually forestry. Still others will resent the implication that "common sense" is a novel characteristic of tree farming as contrasted with other forestry.

On the other hand, if we are honest, we must admit that as a profession we have not been conspicuously successful in presenting forest production as a business enterprise in such a way as to command public understanding or to induce its general practice by private owners. This is exactly what the tree-farming slogan and program are attempting to do. Disregarding the many other products and services with which forestry is concerned, such as forage, wildlife, recreation, amelioration of climate, protection of the water supply, and prevention of erosion, the movement centers attention on the single activity of growing wood for commercial purposes. According to Dr. Wilson Compton, "It is intended to stimulate the interest of private forest landowners everywhere to explore and utilize the permanent productive possibilities of their forest lands—to dramatize them in terms of public interest and public recognition."

Tree farming is industry's attempt to emphasize one major aspect of forest land management

in terms that everyone can understand. It aims to make this particular phase of forestry as simple, as nontechnical, and as appealing as possible. Perhaps "farming," in spite of the obvious question as to its accuracy and appropriateness, is as good a word as could have been selected for this purpose. Certainly it has the advantage of stressing the fact that forest trees are just as much a crop as are corn, wheat, and apples, and just as capable of giving increased yields under intelligent management. It implies that the forestry activities of the federal government should be centered in the Department of Agriculture, and that tree farmers, who potentially include all forest owners, should be eligible for the same preferential treatment as other farmers. Whether any unfavorable reaction will result when people discover that straight rows of planted trees, carefully pruned and intensively cultivated, are as rare in a tree farm as in any other forest, remains to be seen.

The most encouraging feature of the entire program is the fact that it originated with and is being promoted by the owners and operators of privately owned forest lands. Nine years ago, in speaking of Article X of the Lumber Code, Dr. Compton said, "This is an industry undertaking. It will be so administered." Tree farming is a continuation of that undertaking, a fulfillment of that promise. That one of its purposes is frankly to forestall federal regulation, the likelihood of which will be much increased unless private owners voluntarily adopt improved practices, is certainly not to its discredit. That it is being pushed during these troublous times, when the industry is under such pressure to increase production, deserves high commendation.

Tree farming appears to be off to a good start. Its permanent contribution to the general practice by private owners of continuous forest production in this country will depend on its success in attaining its stated objectives. This will be a difficult task, in which forest owners who are sincerely trying to improve the management of their lands should have the sympathetic support and active cooperation of foresters in public and private employ alike.

Whether the movement is called forestry or tree farming is of relatively little moment; what it does, is all-important. "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." The question is—is it a rose?