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"Forest Schools the Foundation of Forest Wealth."

THE NORTH WOODS

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Chief Forester Scents Danger



WARNING of the "woodchuck" in a bill introduced in Congress providing for the opening and entry to settlement of lands fit for agriculture in the national forests, has been issued by Henry S. Graves, chief forester of the federal government. In an article in the Saturday Evening Post, Mr. Graves flays the speculators who, in years gone by, have gained control of hundreds of thousands of acres of forest land, and who have secured in them, oftentimes, the most valuable water power sites.

Cities Example Resulting From Opening Land in Olympic National Forest.

The eagerness with which the speculators in timber pursue every opening for the spoliation of the national forests is made in a striking manner by Mr. Graves, when he cites the results of the elimination from the Olympic national forest in Washington of over 700,000 acres of heavily timbered land, on the pretense that it was chiefly valuable for agriculture. He says that ten years later not over 600 acres of the more than 700,000 eliminated, had been brought under cultivation; that title to 523,000 acres has passed into the hands of owners who are holding it purely for its timber value.

In this article he gives the following list of the "farmers" who are now the owners of large bodies of these "agricultural" lands:

	Acres.
Milwaukee Land company.....	81,630
James D. Lacey & Co.....	48,370
Edward Bradley	16,360
James W. Bradley.....	16,360
Weyerhaeuser Timber company.....	15,560
Henry & Larson Land company.....	13,840
Simpson Logging company.....	12,360

	Acres.
E. K. Wood Lumber company.....	10,670
Polson Logging company.....	10,040
George F. Stone.....	8,920
Ruddock & McCarthy.....	7,810
Olean Land company.....	6,040
Puget Mill and Timber company.....	5,760
W. H. White company.....	5,280
O'Neil Timber company.....	5,200
Edward and Susan Lowe.....	5,040
St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba R. R.	4,760
H. S. Upper.....	4,360
Merrill & Ring company.....	4,160
Union Lumber company.....	4,120
C. C. Bloomfield, et al.....	3,720
Goodyear Land company.....	3,640
George M. Burr.....	3,480
C. H. Davis.....	3,440
C. E. Burrows & Co.....	2,780
James Campbell	2,760
Mason County Logging company.....	2,680
V. H. May.....	2,560
James McNealy	2,420
Lincoln Timber company.....	2,280
Carston & Earle.....	2,240
Total	318,640

Constant Vigilance Required to Defend the Public Areas.

Our public land areas, and particularly the forest areas, require the constant efforts of vigilant and incorruptible government agents to defend them from the cupidity of men eager to possess themselves of timbered areas of great value or of water power sites, also of great value, on the terms of the homestead law. Mr. Graves says that many of the areas that speculators are now seeking to obtain contain from 100,000 to 200,000 feet of timber to the acre. Single claims of 160 acres would have a value of from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

It is not, however, the policy of the forestry service to withhold lands from agricultural uses where the public service would be promoted thereby. In 1906, he says, the forest service recommended the so-called forest homestead bill, which was passed. Under this act lands deemed by the Secretary of Agriculture to be valuable chiefly for agriculture and not needed for public uses are open to entry; approximately 1,400,000 acres have been opened to entry in accordance with its terms for the benefit of upward of 12,000 settlers.

The trouble with the proposed amendment, as he describes it, is not that land suitable for agriculture is to be opened for entry, but that land more valuable for its timber than for agricultural purposes is viewed as agricultural land, regardless of its value for the timber which it bears. The larger interest is subordinated to the smaller, and the land grabber seeks it because of that larger interest.