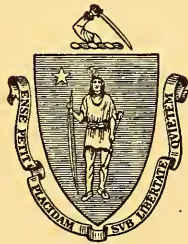


FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST
COMMISSION.

1918.



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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST COMMISSION.

At the end of the period of four years and a half, for which the General Court, by chapter 720 of the Acts of the year 1914, made its appropriation to purchase waste lands to be planted as forests, it is our duty and privilege to report a summary of what we have done.

The Commonwealth has acquired by purchase four areas, — one in Plymouth County, one in Essex County, one in Worcester County, and one in Berkshire County, and this year has acquired by gift another area in the southern portion of Berkshire County. The first contains 7,000 acres, and is in the towns of Plymouth and Carver, and has been named the Myles Standish State Forest for historical reasons; the second contains 1,200 acres, and is in the towns of North Reading, Andover and North Andover, and has been named the Harold Parker State Forest, in memory of the first chairman of the Commission; the third contains 1,700 acres, and is in the towns of Winchendon, Templeton and Royalston, and has been named the Otter River State Forest from the river which flows through it; the fourth contains 1,200 acres, and is in the town of Savoy, and has been named the Savoy Mountain State Forest; and the fifth contains 1,000 acres, and is in the town of Monterey, and has been named the Arthur Wharton Swann State Forest, in memory of the late husband of the generous donor, Mrs. Susan Ridley Sedgwick Swann of the city of New York. Upon all these areas, except the second, are one or more buildings, which came with the land without cost to the Commonwealth, and which are used for administration purposes. The average cost of the purchased areas is between \$3 and \$4 an acre.

These areas differ materially in topography, soil and growth. The Myles Standish State Forest is light and sandy, mostly

covered with scrub oaks, and has been burned over many times. The few old trees now remaining show that Scotch, red and white pines will attain good size. The Harold Parker State Forest is rolling and rocky land, adapted to both soft and hard woods. There are no ponds nor brooks in this area. The Otter River State Forest also is rolling in character, but is not rocky, and is adapted also to soft and hard woods. It is abundantly watered by the Otter and Miller rivers. The Savoy Mountain State Forest is on high land, 2,000 feet above sea level, where ashes, birches, spruces and firs will flourish. It has no ponds nor brooks. The Arthur Wharton Swann State Forest, unlike the four already mentioned, which are forests as yet only in prospect, is an actual forest, with fine, large chestnuts, oaks, spruces and pines. A mountain brook flows through it. For economical management these forests should be enlarged by gradual additions. With the consent of the Governor and Council takings have been had of the Myles Standish and Otter River State forests, so as to make certain the title of the Commonwealth within the lines of the outside boundaries.

These areas have not been developed as we had expected. The act provides for the purchase of the lands by the Commission and for their development by the State Forester. Unfortunately he has had no money for this purpose. Nevertheless considerable work has been done, though at the cost of the appropriation for the Commission. The buildings have been kept in repair; roads have been cleared of brush; and fire lines established and brush burned; and there has been a good deal of planting; but we felt that we ought not to spend in planting very much of the appropriations, which were intended primarily for the purchase of land. An inspection of the planting shows that 98 per cent. of the pines of all kinds are alive and doing well.

The Commonwealth is pursuing a wise policy in the purchase and development of these areas, in order that a continuous supply of timber may be secured. The fuel shortage has demonstrated our dependence upon our own forests, especially reinforced by the lessons of the war, which has made such inroads into the world supply of timber as imagination could

not have pictured. The forests of Europe have been almost destroyed, and the forests of the United States and of the Dominion of Canada have been cut to a very large extent. The demand for timber for pulp wood, railway ties, telegraph and telephone poles, manufacturing and chemical industries, will far exceed the supply for a long time to come. It is of pressing necessity, then, that preparation be made now, and this must be done by the Commonwealth itself. The burdens upon private capital will be so many that it will not be available for this purpose, even if it could afford to wait thirty to fifty years for a return. No man plants for himself but for posterity, and few are able to lock up their capital in an enterprise which will not yield its full return until it is inherited by the children or grandchildren of the present owners. Therefore the State must take the matter in hand, or probably it never will be done. The Commonwealth can do this, and meanwhile will furnish employment to its people. We can grow our lumber here for less than it costs to transport it from the south and west and from Canada.

Another consideration presses upon us at this time. Our soldiers and sailors will be returning in the near future from their service across the ocean. Some of them will fill their old places, but many of them must look for new employment, and some of them will not be able physically for many occupations. Our allies, notably Great Britain and its colonies, are making extensive plans for the public reclamation of waste lands. Here is the opportunity for the Commonwealth to be just and generous, and also to reap a profit. The manhood of our Commonwealth is its most precious asset. Death will claim a large proportion of our young men who in days of peace would have become the fathers of our race. It will be wise statesmanship, then, and no more than common gratitude, to take care of those who escape. Many can find permanent employment in road building, in fire-guard patrolling, in cutting of timber, and in planting, and those not equal physically to any of these occupations can be employed as forest rangers. It is possible, also, to establish upon areas of considerable size a woodworking shop where returned soldiers and sailors unfitted for outdoor labor can be employed. It is probable a still larger area can be acquired in southern Berk-

shire, near the Arthur Wharton Swann State Forest, and possibly adjoining it, where such a community can be established. There also is an area of some 3,000 acres in the southern portion of Mashpee, upon the east side of Waquoit Bay, with the State road of the south arm of Cape Cod passing through it, which is admirably adapted for forest purposes; but the prices asked put it beyond the possibility of acquisition under the law. There is quite an area upon Martha's Vineyard, a solid block of 1,500 acres in the town of West Tisbury and about in the center of the island adjoining other property of the Commonwealth, known as Heath Hen Farm, and now under the charge of the Fish and Game Commission, which probably can be obtained. These areas can be handled so as to insure a continuous yield of timber and continuous employment in the sawmill, the shop and the woods. As the employment will be continuous, both the shop and the forest workers can live in their own homes with their families. Such a community will impart at once new life to several little villages, and would meet with the favor of their inhabitants.

We have arranged with the Fish and Game Commission so that bird and animal life is protected in these forests, and there is no reason why they shall not be used for the recreation of the people of the Commonwealth. They have been visited much more frequently this year than in all the four preceding years. The Massachusetts Forestry Association held its annual field meeting in the Myles Standish State Forest in June, and early in July several members of the Appalachian Mountain Club tramped through the Otter River State Forest, and another party of this club later in the month went to the Savoy Mountain State Forest. Camp privileges can be given, especially upon the shores of the beautiful ponds in the Myles Standish State Forest, under permits like those given by the United States Forest Service in the White Mountains. Proper signs will be posted this winter in all these forests, and upon the highways leading to them, so that the people may know of them and visit them. The State Forester intends to erect upon the Myles Standish State Forest, for observation purposes, a steel tower formerly used in Chelmsford and now replaced by a larger tower. This smaller tower will be a useful acquisition to the forest.

We have given our engineer, Frank L. Haynes, a year's

leave of absence, so that he may go overseas as a Y. M. C. A. secretary, his position to be open to him upon his return.

Only a beginning has been made in the reclamation of the waste lands of the Commonwealth. A million acres still remain, — land now producing nothing of value and paying little in taxes, but which covered with forests would have a large commercial value. For these reasons we recommend to the General Court an appropriation of the sum of \$30,000 a year be made for five years, with the provision that if any part of the \$30,000 remains unexpended at the end of any year it may be expended in the following years, that the average cost be increased to \$10 an acre, and that the sum allowed for the expenses of the Commission be increased to \$1,000 a year.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE OF FORESTS.

Balance from 1917,	\$12,230 20	
Appropriation for 1918,	20,000 00	
	<hr/>	\$32,230 20
Expenditures: —		
Services,	\$3,939 81	
Travel,	763 14	
Land,	1,978 69	
Supplies,	304 06	
Equipment,	158 11	
Maps, photos, etc.,	65 20	
Express, freight and teams,	62 90	
Printing cloth signs,	49 00	
Sundries,	25 65	
	<hr/>	7,346 56
Balance Nov. 30, 1918,		\$24,883 64

EXPENSES OF COMMISSION.

Appropriation for 1918,	\$500 00	
Expenditures: —		
Travel,	\$271 53	
Stationery and postage,	18 42	
Sundries,	50 30	
	<hr/>	340 25
Balance returned to treasury Nov. 30, 1918,		\$159 75

HARVEY N. SHEPARD.
ELISHA M. WHITNEY.
FRANK W. RANE.