



Rooted Counsellors

BEFORE you decide whether farming or forestry should be encouraged in a given region, go out and look at what is already growing on it, Prof. Raphael Zon, of the U. S. Forest Service, advised conservationists attending the University of Pennsylvania Bicentennial Conference. The natural vegetation can tell you where you can hope for a profit from corn or potatoes, and where you had better leave the land unplowed and put in the slower but surer tree crops.

Prof. Zon, who is director of the U. S. Lake States Forest Experiment Station at St. Paul, cited several examples from his own region. A growth of sweetfern, bearberry and blueberry indicates low-fertility soil best suited for jack pine or red pine. Presence of maidenhair fern, hepatica and large-flowered trillium is a sign of fairly good soil, which will support hardwoods like sugar maple, yellow birch and basswood. A forest of elm, ash, soft maple and other bottom-land hardwoods tells of heavy loams and clay loams, which when cleared and drained are suitable for agriculture.

Disregard, in past years, of such ecological guideposts as these sent farming in many communities down the road to rapid and irredeemable ruin.

Prof. Zon's findings for the country around the Great Lakes were confirmed by parallel studies on the entirely different conditions in the Southwest, reported by Dr. Gustaf A. Pearson, senior silviculturist of the U. S. Southwestern Forest and Range Experiment Station.

Dr. Pearson divides his terrain into seven distinct vegetational zones, ranging from desert through several types of

forest to alpine. Each vegetational zone, he stated, is also a local climatic zone, with its own distinctive ranges of summer and winter temperature, and of rainfall. Only by consulting the natural preferences of any proposed kind of planting, and putting it in the zone where it naturally belongs, can the farmer or forester be assured of success.

Science News Letter, October 12, 1940

PUBLIC HEALTH

Big Influenza Epidemic Due As 25-Year Cycle Nears End

A BIG epidemic of influenza, such as occurred during the World War, is about due although at present England is free of this and other epidemics usually associated with war.

The report of no epidemics in England at present was brought back by Dr. John E. Gordon, professor of preventive medicine and epidemiology at Harvard Medical School, who left England Sept. 17.

Dr. Gordon would make no predictions as to when, where or whether influenza would strike, but he admitted that we are near the end of the 25-year-cycle which world-wide epidemics of this disease seem to follow.

Crowding and cold temperature in air raid shelters and lowered resistance due to lack of sleep may pave the way for an influenza epidemic to start in England, he said. If an epidemic comes we shall probably be no better able to stop it than we were during the last war, Dr. Gordon said, although influenza is at present one of the most active fields of medical research. Chief centers for this work are the Medical Research Institute in England and the laboratories of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, where a promising vaccine has recently been developed. This vaccine was tried during an epidemic in Puerto Rico this summer, but no conclusive evidence of its value

has yet been reported. If another epidemic breaks out, it is likely to be tried again. The Puerto Rican trials were handicapped, it is believed, by the fact that the peak of the epidemic had passed before the vaccination trials could be started.

Science News Letter, October 12, 1940

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

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Washington
District of Columbia

ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia aforesaid, personally appeared Watson Davis, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

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Editor

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