NATURE RAMBLINGS
FORESTRY
by Frank Thone

Multiple-Purpose Forestry

➤ FORESTERS in this country a generation ago were taught to admire and follow the lead of German foresters, who had been making and caring for forest plantings while we were still in the stage of wasteful exploitation of our own natural timber resources. Men who had visited the carefully cultivated woodlands in the *Vaterland* were loud in their praise of the orchard-like spacing and regularity of arrangement, with trees all of the same kind and age in blocks, so that all would grow up together and be ready for harvest together. They commented favorably on the table-like neatness of the forest floor, swept clear of dead branches, snags, stumps and debris generally. These were held up as models for the young profession of forestry in America.

Even if these practices had been entirely correct (they weren't), they would not have been well adapted to American conditions. That strictly drilled arrangement, with trees like soldiers and the forest floor like the floor of a well-policed barracks, was possible only in a land where plenty of intelligent labor was available, and at relatively low wages, too. The complete sweeping up of dead limbs and other rubbish was due in part to the intense need for domestic fuel in nearby towns—a situation hardly paralleled in the endless wildernesses of our West or in the piney woods of our Southern coastal plain.

But even where achievable, this highly regimented German forestry was not ideal. Having all the trees of the same kind and age over large blocks tended to encourage epidemics of tree diseases and outbreaks of insect pests, that could sweep through the solid blocks without a break. When all the trees in a block

were felled, too much soil surface was left exposed to the weather and consequent erosion, necessitating expenditure of much labor for protection.

There is a definite trend in the later American reforestation programs to mix the plantings, putting clumps of hardwoods in among the spruces and pines. Some authorities even advocate the inclusion of such trees as wild cherry and hawthorn, which foresters used to term "weed trees," because they furnish food for game animals and birds, thereby enhancing the recreational value of the forest.

Certainly no progressive forester now would tolerate the completely clean cutting of any timber area, whether natural or planted. Mowing a forest down like a wheat-field is condemned by all hands as bad business; selective cutting is the present-day watchword. And in the succession-growth that follows such cutting, the forest of mixed species and all ages has a very definite advantage.

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B&L Altimar f:4 lens in Fairchild (F-56) Aerial Camera.

From 65° Below to 160° Above . . . *No Lens "Blackouts"*