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OF THE  
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*Commissioner of Labor and Industrial Statistics*



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The department of State Forestry was created by an act of the legislature in 1903 and some 40,000 acres of land in Forest, Oneida, Vilas and Iron counties were reserved from sale as a forest reserve. In 1905 an entirely new act was passed creating the State Board of Forestry and granting all state lands north of town 33 for a forest reserve.

Scattering and agricultural lands have been sold in some counties and other lands acquired by purchase and grant. On October 16, 1908, the area of forest reserve lands in the various counties was as follows:

	1906	1908		1906	1908
Ashland.....	4,941	4,941	Marquette.....	4,783	4,687—
Bayfield.....	4,768	4,608—	Oneida.....	35,719	49,929+
Burnett.....	25,828	17,835—	Polk.....	1,520	1,320—
Douglas.....	7,023	8,230+*	Price.....	27,634	27,734
Florence.....	3,762	3,762	Rusk.....	3,404	3,404
Forest.....	35,656	35,656	Sawyer.....	12,317	12,317
Iron.....	26,039	29,174+	Vilas.....	15,142	21,556+
Langlade.....	2,700	2,700	Washburn.....	12,497	11,264—
Lincoln.....	10,326	5,126—	Total.....	234,065	253,573

Note. + indicates increase in acreage since 1906 on account of purchases. — indicates decrease in acreage since 1906 on account of sales. \* although 3,519 acres have been sold in Douglas county, the original acreage has been increased by grant and purchase.

The policy of the state to sell the forest reserve lands which are scattering and agricultural, the proceeds going into a forest reserve fund which is used for the purchase of other lands more valuable for forestry purposes than for agriculture, and so located that they will form important additions to the permanent reserves is a most important one and is based on the sound common sense idea that every acre of land should be used for the purpose to which it is best adapted. No agricultural land will be held as a part of the permanent forest reserves and the settlement and development of the northern part of the state will in no wise be retarded by the forestry work.

In many states the demand for forestry comes almost entirely from the rapid destruction of the forests and the feeling that the state must take a hand in conserving the timberlands. This, of course, in itself is a most important reason for establishing state forest reserves but in Wisconsin in addition to the question of providing a future supply of timber, there is the even more important necessity of protecting the headwaters of the important rivers,

which means also the conservation of the water powers and navigation as well. As the manufacturing interests of the state will become more and more important in the future, the water powers must be protected, as they are the great source of energy, the state having no coal deposits. The third object of the forest reserve is to preserve and increase the attractions of the lake region of northern Wisconsin and make it a pleasure ground for multitudes of tourists which will result in bringing large revenues to that region.

Governor Davidson in addressing the conference at Washington for the conservation of natural resources, said:

"Wisconsin has, however, awakened to its duty to the public; it created the first state forest commission ever appointed by any of the states, and this commission has already developed into a Board whose labors are characterized by a continuous and progressive policy of forest administration. Vast tracts of public lands have been made into state forest reserves. Agriculturally profitable land has been sold and the proceeds used to extend the resources in less fertile soil. The United States government has added a large tract, aimed to protect the head waters of our large rivers; while lumber companies, at last recognizing the state's wise policy have dedicated several thousand acres to the forest reserves. Wisconsin has acquired over 300,000 acres, and this acreage is constantly being extended. It has been the policy to concentrate these holdings in counties having the greatest number of lakes feeding into large streams, and in some counties the state now holds ten per cent of the entire land area."

The enormous losses in the state from forest fires in 1908 have emphasized the need of forestry regulations. The timberland owners and lumbermen of the state have organized a forest conservation association to assist the state board of forestry in its work in the preparation of suitable laws to conserve the forests.

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