

The Demonstration Forest

83. In 1927 the Swiss Confederation acquired a 519-acre forest situated on the northern slopes of the Uetliberg Mountain, in the immediate proximity of Zurich. This forest was placed under the management of the School of Forestry, and is now the field headquarters from which term-time practical exercises are undertaken by forestry students. The buildings are models of simple timber construction, providing a classroom, tool-sheds, offices, and general facilities for a caretaker; adjoining is a small forest experimental nursery.

84. The forest is a practical demonstration of the silvicultural principles propounded by Schadelin (former Professor of Silviculture) and now widely accepted in Swiss forestry; a natural broad-leaf forest of ash, sycamore, oak, beech, hornbeam, &c., with some introduced spruce, silver fir, Scots pine, and larch, the object of management under extensive treatment is to improve the fertility of the soil and increase production by the selection of the best trees, without following any rigid cutting system.

85. Although unable to meet Professor Knuchel (the doyen of the School of Forestry), who was absent from Zurich, the writer is deeply indebted to Professor Leibundgut (Professor of Silviculture), whose co-operation made it possible to gain a thorough appreciation of Swiss higher forestry education, and some insight into Swiss forestry in general.

FEDERAL FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE

86. The Research Institute is not a function of E.T.H., but is closely affiliated to that Institute and has its headquarters in the same building as the School of Forestry. The Director, Professor Hans Burger, is directly responsible to a Federal Commission which consists of—

- (a) President of E.T.H.
- (b) Inspector-General of Forests.
- (c) Five forest officers representing the Cantons.

87. The staff consists of the Director, eight research foresters, and seven non-professional assistants; for office and laboratory facilities the Institute is dependent upon the co-operation of E.T.H.—an arrangement which is evidently not entirely satisfactory.

88. The Institute publishes its research results in “*Annales de l’Institut Fédéral Recherches Forestières*,” to which the New Zealand Forest Service subscribes.

89. Dr. Burger (whom the writer first met at Helsinki) has an outstanding personality, not the least of his qualities being a quiet sense of humour, and obvious ability in directing team-work, which is a characteristic of this relatively small research organization. Switzerland was the first country in the world to undertake scientifically controlled investigations on the effect of the forest on the water complex of a catchment area, and as early as 1915 Dr. Burger was following up the pioneer erosion work of Professor Engler with his own series of hydrographic observations. The international significance of Swiss research on erosion is evidenced by the reproduction of Dr. Burger’s published “Results of an Erosion Experiment from 1927–1942,” in the “Indian Forest Records” (1945, Vol. 6, No. 1).

90. There can be little doubt that the intensive study of Swiss methods of soil protection and hydrographic research by a suitably qualified New Zealand graduate would prove to be of great value to this Dominion, and further consideration of this project is strongly recommended.