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THE CLARKE-MCNARY FORESTRY ACT

The Clarke-McNary Act of June 7, 1924 is a measure of outstanding merit looking toward the establishment of an enlarged forest policy for the United States. Previous legislation along this line recognized primarily the obligation of the federal government to grow timber while the central feature of the Clarke-McNary Act is the recognition of the need of private forestry in the United States, and it seeks to make it possible for the individual to practice forestry by offering him financial assistance in forest fire protection, thus recognizing the fact that the growing of timber by private owners entails risks which the public should share.

Section 1 of the Clarke-McNary Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to cooperate with the states in devising such forest protection systems as will adequately protect potential forest lands from the ravages of fire with a view to keeping them covered with growing trees for the production of a future timber supply and for the conservation of water resources.

Section 2 provides that the Secretary of Agriculture may extend federal aid in such protection in any given state if he is convinced that said state has adopted measures which will insure continuous timber growth on lands best suited to this use, provided, however, that in no case shall federal aid exceed the funds expended by the state and private owners for this purpose.

Section 3 of the law authorizes an annual appropriation by congress

up to \$2,500,000 to carry out this plan for nation-wide forest protection, except that a small portion of this sum may be used in a study of taxation as applied to forest lands and in assisting the states to devise such tax laws as will encourage private forestry. The annual appropriation for forest fire protection in the various states under the Weeks Law of March 1, 1911, now superseded by the Clarke-McNary Act, has been \$400,000, of which Idaho has been receiving around \$21,000 annually. It is not expected that the full amount of the authorization will be made available at once. Probably not to exceed a million dollars will be requested at first. But even this amount should give Idaho two and one-half times what she has been getting for cooperative forest protection, and when the full amount of the authorization is appropriated, Idaho's share should be six times what it has been or around \$125,000 annually, provided the state shall adopt a forest policy which will enable her to qualify as one of the cooperating states.

But Idaho's forest fire laws are admittedly weak as regards the protection of cut-over lands, and adequate protection here is the key to a future timber supply. Idaho, therefore, in order to share the increased appropriations proposed by the Clarke-McNary Act for cooperative fire protection must so amend her forestry laws as to insure permanency in timber growing on state and private lands.

Section 4 authorizes federal aid to the states in growing and distributing forest trees to establish

windbreaks, shelter belts and wood lots on the farms and permits an appropriation of \$100,000 a year for this purpose.

By section 5 the federal government in cooperation with the states is granted authority to assist farm owners in establishing and renewing wood lots, shelter belts, windbreaks, and other valuable forest growth, and in growing and renewing useful timber crops. An annual appropriation of \$100,000 is authorized to carry out the provisions of this section. In the application of sections 4 and 5, any cooperating state must expend an amount at least equal to that expended in that state by the federal government for the same purposes. The object of these two sections is to make forestry a part of the program for diversified agriculture. In view of the need for forest planting on the farms of the treeless belts in Idaho and of the further fact that the state is credited by the federal census of 1920 with over eight hundred thousand acres of wood lot areas, the importance of these features of the law to the state is at once apparent.

The secondary purpose of the Clarke-McNary Act is to extend forest ownership by the federal government, and the accomplishment of this purpose is sought through sections 6 to 9.

Section 6 amends the Weeks Act of 1911 by authorizing the purchase, by the government, of forested, cut-over or denuded lands specifically for the production of timber as well as for the regulation of stream flow within the watersheds of navigable streams.

By section 7, the federal government is authorized to accept gifts of land chiefly valuable for timber production, provided that such lands are so located that they may be economically administered either as separate national forests, or as parts of national forests already established.

Section 8 authorizes, with con-

gressional consent, the extension of the national forest areas to include vacant public lands chiefly valuable for stream-flow protection or timber growth. Idaho still has several hundred thousand acres of such forest lands that should be made a part of the national forest system so as to bring them under the management of the Forest Service.

The 9th and last section of the law gives the president power to establish as national forests, lands within government reservations other than reservations for mineral deposits, or water power purposes, national parks, national monuments, and Indian reservations. The object of sections 8 and 9 is to give further assurance that all public lands primarily adapted to the purpose shall be kept in growing timber.

To enable Idaho to take advantage of the various provisions of the Clarke-McNary Act, as herein set forth, the North Idaho Chamber of Commerce and the South Idaho Commercial Clubs have appointed a committee of fourteen members to formulate a forest policy in line with the Act and commensurate with the needs of the entire state. This committee consists of F.G. Miller, Moscow, Chairman; C.K. McHarg, Jr., Coeur d'Alene, Secretary; G.B. Mains, Emmett; W.D. Humiston, Potlatch; L.E. Dillingham, Boise; Ben E. Bush, Moscow; Hugh Sproat, Boise; Chas. A. Fisher, Elk River; Carl E. Brown, McCall; R.E. Shepherd, Jerome; H.C. Shellworth, Boise; W.B. Kinne, Orofino; B.H. Hornby, Dover; and W.G. Swendsen, Boise.

On the committee are represented the irrigation interests the stock growers, the lumber industry, the merchants, the state and federal government. The committee has for some months been studying the state's needs in the way of forest legislation, has held numerous meetings, and is now formulating a constructive forest policy to be introduced at the coming session of the Idaho legislature.