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Indian Forest Administration

By ROBERT MARSHALL
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The primary objective of Indian forest administration is to keep the forest lands on the Indian reservations perpetually productive. Consequently it is the purpose of the Indian Forest Service never to permit any cutting on which ample provision is not made for a new stand of timber at least as heavy as the old one which was harvested. It is definitely against the policy of the Indian Forest Service to permit any further clear cuttings on large contiguous areas. Even though forest devastation would in many cases yield the Indians a higher immediate return, it is always so disastrous to the permanent welfare of both the Indians and the general public, that there are no instances where this higher return will not have to be foregone in order to maintain the forest land in a productive condition.

This primary objective will be linked with the policy of

Timber and water—the heritage of the Indian.
cutting the timber on a sustained yield basis, so as to insure a continuous moderate income for the Indians instead of a sporadic large income. It is considered far more advantageous to the Indians, as it likewise would be to any other people, to assure them a regular return from their property rather than to give them for a few decades a large income which invites splurging and waste, and then leave them impoverished. Furthermore, the permanent community life which can be built around a sustained yield operation has immense and obvious social advantages. However, there are some reservations on which the stand of timber is too restricted to ever make possible a sustained yield operation. Here the best we can hope to do when the timber is cut is to insure its reproduction.

Wherever possible logging operations on Indian reservations will be run by the Indians themselves, so that in addition to stumpage they can also get the labor from developing their timber and whatever profit may be made in the operation. Even though the stumpage which the Indians can pay themselves will in many cases be less than private companies pay, the total income to the Indians from the three sources of stumpage, wages and profit should be far greater than the income from a somewhat higher stumpage alone. In addition, it is much more healthy for people to work for a living than to merely live on an unearned income.

In those cases where the Indians can not develop all of the sustained productive capacity of their timber, or where the land ownership of their timber is so complicated by allotment as to make communal operations impractical, the surplus volume may be sold to white operators for the maximum stumpage obtainable if the Indians so desire.

On all sales, both Indians and white, it is the policy to employ Indians for every job they are capable of holding and only to employ white men for jobs which no Indians can fill. However, any Indians who refuse to meet the responsibilities of their positions will be dismissed just as quickly as would white men.

Finally, it is the policy of the Indian Service to damage as little as possible the scenic values along public rights-of-way and at places of exceptional recreational value.