Teachers for Foresters

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The pioneering stage of forestry and forestry education is past; we are now in the stage of real development, and the future of that development will depend largely on the education of those who carry on in the teaching capacities. Every man who desires to teach should realize his responsibility and prepare himself to meet it.

Undergraduate work for one interested in forestry teaching should be complete and thorough; the student must show, by maintaining a high scholastic average, that he is mentally alert and able to think clearly and to the point. Graduate work is desirable, and it should be taken at a different school in order that the student may have the benefit of the broadening effect which a change in instructors and different ideas and methods of approach to a subject afford.

Professional experience is a tremendously important adjunct to professional education. There are some branches of forestry, such as wood technology and a few others, where experience may be gained by graduate study and actual teaching work; but in fields of management, silviculture, and forest utilization professional field experience is highly desirable.

There is always some one branch of forestry which appeals most strongly to each man, and should he specialize in that branch he should work in it in as many regions as possible. He must know his work from all sides.

The time to be devoted to experience must be left to the student himself, but it should be from three to ten years. The broader the experience and more exact the knowledge gained, the better the teacher.

A successful teacher must enjoy working with men and boys who are younger than himself. As the years go by that difference is constantly increasing. He must have the proper mixture of dignity and good fellowship, both in and out of the class room. He must maintain an understanding of his students and a sympathy with their problems and give his work a personal touch which is an incentive for greater effort. He will get a large part of the pleasure in his work from watching each succeeding group
develop into strong, more self-reliant, and continuously better-informed men.

The instructor must be able to impart his knowledge to the student by either speaking or writing, and he will find that first hand knowledge gained through field experience, when used to supplement an explanation of the text, will help him greatly.

The instructor must study constantly to keep abreast of the times and up-to-date in his instruction. He should do as much research work as time and allotted funds will permit.

The teaching of forestry is similar to all other instruction, but the training requirements that have been mentioned are more necessary in this subject than in others. Some persons have certain inherent qualities which may help them materially in teaching work, but the necessary qualities can be developed by anyone who is willing to make the effort.