FORESTRY IN U. S. S. R.

By P. M. BARR

A RECENT article in the Swedish periodical "Skogen" (1) reveals the energy with which the Soviet authorities are attempting to rationalize the management of their forest resources.

Forest education and research in the U.S.S.R. are centered in the Lessnoj Institute, an amalgamation of the Forest Institute of Leningrad and a similar institute in Moscow. Its activity began at the end of the last century, and includes practical forestry work as well as investigation and education.

The Leningrad Forest Institute, according to more recent reports (2) appears to be devoted principally to educational work, and its new programme, as a contribution to the general plan of industrialization for the entire country, calls for the training of 2900 specialists over a five-year period. The Leningrad school is now 126 years old, and during its history before the war graduated some 4000 foresters.

The first years of the revolutionary regime produced serious effects on Russian forestry. Entire districts were logged off without any regard to the future and without any control by forest officers. It was impossible to protect valuable timber from devastation, which especially was wrought in accessible deciduous stands of aspen, beech, and other species which for a long time had been under proper management, particularly for the purpose of producing fuel.

During the period 1921-22 the new government began to appreciate the value of the forest resources of Russia and the influence which a rationalized lumber export would have upon the country's balance of trade. As a result, funds were provided at once for the reestablishment of experimental activity in forestry.

In its new form the Lessnoj Institute combines both a forestry school and a central research organization and it also controls several experiment stations for field work. Attention is given to nearly all branches of forestry, the work of the Institute being divided into six sections,—forest management, technology, estimation, botany, soil science, and forest strategy. The last is apparently a study of the economic effects of forest policy in foreign relations.

About 200 technical officers are employed, some of them scientists of recognized standing who are well known, to European foresters at least. Among these may be mentioned Kobranov, Bortkievitsj, Matreninskij, and Milovanovitsj. One feature of the work is the programme of numerous conferences—fifteen to twenty annually—at which the scientists of the Institute

(1) Vol. 23, 1929, translated by S. R. Schenstrom.

(2) Journal of Forestry, Vol. 28, p. 776, 1930.

speak on the results of their latest investigations, thus keeping both students and teachers familiar with new developments. Close touch is maintained also experimental work in other countries, and after travelling abroad the members of the Institute are required to report their observations, both in speeches and reports.

The official organ of the Institute is "Lessovedenie i Lessovodstvo" and a periodical, "Lessnoje Khosaistva i Lessopromysjlennostj" is also published. Both publications are valuable in respect to their scientific content and it is to be regretted that due to the language they are comparatively inaccessible.

The following extract from the programme of lectures will serve to indicate the interest in forestry science which seems to have existed in recent years. Matreninskij lectured in 1925 on "Forestry in Great Britain and its Colonies," Baranov on "The Forest Survey of Northern Russia," and Orlov on "Forest Estimation." In the following year some of the subjects dealt with were "The Strategic Importance of Forests," "The Improvement of the Country's Waterways," by Sjestakov, "Acclimatization Researches Concerning Forest Trees", by Bogdanov, and Nedrigajlov reported on a forest expedition to Karelia.

In addition to its scientific work the Institute is required to undertake any economic or industrial investigations which may be submitted to it by the Supreme Economic Council of the U.S.S.R. and at present, when exports of lumber and pulpwood are playing such a conspicuous role in foreign relations of the Soviets, it is of interest to note that the Russian authorities have at their command an experienced and well organized research institute from which they may obtain authentic information on which to base their national forest policy.

There are some well-informed authorities among North American lumbermen who claim that the competition of Russian exports looms as a disturbing factor of major consequence to the forest industries of Canada and the United States. Whether such an ogre exists or not is difficult to prove by information available at present. If it should exist it is to be the more feared when we realize that the timber export policy of the U.S.S.R. is based, to some degree at least, on economic studies carried out by a scientific organization.

The wheels of trade travel slowly in ruts; they move forward most swiftly on the firm roadway of organized rational production, and they must be oiled with efficiency. Canadian forest policy and forest exports are independent and mutually interwoven. If Canada's exports of forest products are to be put on a nationally sound and permanent basis they must be the consequence of a national forest policy, and this in turn is impossible without an adequate scientific background.