

**PURCHASE OF FOREST LANDS:
HEARINGS, SIXTY-SEVENTH
CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION,
JANUARY 13 AND 14, 1922,
SERIAL N**

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JANUARY 13 AND
14, 1922, SERIAL N**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIXTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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PURCHASE OF FOREST LANDS.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Friday, January 13, 1922.

The committee met at 10 o'clock a. m., Hon. Gilbert N. Haugen (chairman) presiding.

Also present: Representatives McLaughlin of Michigan, Tincher, Sinclair, Thompson, Clague, Clarke, Jacoway, Aswell, Kincheloe, Jones of Texas, and Ten Eyck.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee has met this morning to give consideration to H. R. 9667, to authorize appropriations for expenditures under the act of March 1, 1911. Mr. Sherman, we will be pleased to hear you.

STATEMENT OF MR. E. A. SHERMAN, ASSOCIATE FORESTER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, you are starting this morning on the fifth consecutive day of hearings on forestry measures. I know you realize the gravity of the situation and that something should be done. I know you want to reach a conclusion at the earliest possible date consistent with the public welfare. It is my hope we may be able to finish the hearing this forenoon. I will say just a few words in explanation of the measure and the purpose of bringing it before you at this time.

The committee will remember that in the appropriations for the fiscal year 1922 the Agricultural appropriation bill carried an item of \$1,000,000 to enable the National Forest Conservation Commission to continue purchases of lands on the headwaters of navigable streams under the provisions of the Weeks law. The committee will also remember that a point of order was made on that item upon the ground that it was new legislation and should have been reported out by this committee. You will also remember that the point of order was lost by a rather narrow margin. The estimates for the coming fiscal year for the Department of Agriculture carry a small item for this work. In discussing it with the chairman of the subcommittee on agriculture of the Appropriations Committee the position was taken that inasmuch as a point of order had been raised against this question previously he felt it was wise to have it brought before the Agricultural Committee to again reaffirm the policy.

The CHAIRMAN. Not to reaffirm the policy, the ruling. I do not think we could say that the committee reaffirmed what was ruled out on a point of order. I take it that no one wants that ruling made again. I think that is pretty clear, and for that reason they come to this committee now to get the matter straightened out.

Mr. SHERMAN. I may not exactly have understood the attitude of the chairman of the subcommittee. That, of course, is a matter for you to determine. He said he felt that last year, since this committee did not at that time have an opportunity to hold hearings on this measure, and that it had previously reported out three appropriations which Congress had approved for carrying on purchase work, he felt at that time it would be unwise for their committee not to report out such a measure, since that would result in a discontinuance of the work; but that at this time we do have an opportunity to consider the matter of policy upon its merits and to take action in accordance with the judgment of this committee, and he advised me that if the policy was approved by this committee that, so far as the Appropriations Committee were concerned, they would be prepared to recommend an appropriation of an appropriate sum to carry on the work.

Mr. CLARKE. Pardon me, who said this?

Mr. SHERMAN. This was a statement of the chairman of the subcommittee on agriculture of the Appropriations Committee.

Mr. CLARKE. Mr. Sydney Anderson?

Mr. SHERMAN. Yes; and he wished the matter of policy to be determined by this committee.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. Did he speak as if he thought it would be enough for the committee to express its opinion as to what the policy ought to be or to report a measure and put it through the Congress?

Mr. SHERMAN. He felt that, so far as he was concerned, at any rate, it would be sufficient for this committee to express its approval of the item.

Mr. ASWELL. I presume he meant to express it by passing a bill through the House.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. That is what I thought.

The CHAIRMAN. A point of order would undoubtedly be sustained unless it passed both Houses and was approved by the President.

Mr. ASWELL. We would have to put the bill through both Houses of Congress and have it signed by the President in order to make it not subject to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes; if proceeded in the proper order under the rules.

Mr. ASWELL. It might have a good moral effect if the committee should act on it.

Mr. SHERMAN. At any rate, that is what was suggested, that a measure of this kind be introduced and brought before this committee.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. Have you a copy of the Weeks law? It has been spoken about here a number of times and it seems there is a great deal more in it than I remember. They talk about fire protection and cooperation with the States and a division of money and all that sort of thing which I do not recall.

Mr. SHERMAN. I have a copy here.

Mr. ASWELL. May I inquire whether you have certain other lands in mind that you are ready to purchase now?

Mr. SHERMAN. We have.

Mr. ASWELL. To what extent?

Mr. SHERMAN. Following the statement I have just made, I would like to introduce the next witness who will give you all the facts as to that. I have observed during the last four days that the committee wants facts and figures.

Mr. ASWELL. Briefly stated.

Mr. SHERMAN. Briefly stated, and that when the \$50,000,000 purchase item was before you, you did not get the exact information you desired. We are prepared now to submit as to this item our complete program in so far as it has been possible to work it out. I will ask that you allow the next witness to lay our cards on the table and then proceed with the cross-examination, if you will.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Sherman, I notice this bill provides for the appointment of a commission. Is it the purpose to appoint a new commission?

Mr. SHERMAN. Not at all. This bill simply authorizes the appropriation of money for the continuance of the work.

STATEMENT OF MR. L. F. KNEIPP, ASSISTANT FORESTER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. KNEIPP. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: I have here data bearing on the following points and am prepared to submit them so far as the committee desires to hear them: First, on the original plan of the eastern national forests and the reasons therefor; second, on the expenditures and the acreage acquired to date; by regions, States, and purchased units; third, on the present situation, the progress which has been made and the results to date; and, fourth, on the subject of future plans—first, on the basis of the appropriations contemplated by Mr. Wason's bill, 9667; second, on the basis of an appropriation of \$2,000,000; third, on the basis of the \$50,000 provided in the Budget for 1923.

Mr. CLARKE. \$50,000?

Mr. KNEIPP. \$50,000 is what the Budget provides.

The CHAIRMAN. For the acquisition of land?

Mr. KNEIPP. For the acquisition work; yes, sir.

Mr. ASWELL. Is that for next year or this year?

Mr. KNEIPP. That is for next year, 1923.

Mr. ASWELL. So this would be an additional appropriation to the appropriation under the Budget.

Mr. KNEIPP. This bill, 9667, contemplates an appropriation which is not in the Budget.

Mr. ASWELL. An additional appropriation?

Mr. KNEIPP. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Two million dollars for 20 years or a total of \$40,000,000.

Mr. KNEIPP. Yes, sir.

Mr. TINCHER. How did they arrive at that \$50,000 through the Budget Bureau.

Mr. KNEIPP. Rather arbitrarily, I think.

Mr. ASWELL. They cut it down as low as possible.

Mr. KNEIPP. They cut it down to the absolute minimum amount that would retain a few of the most highly experienced men in the present organization.

Mr. ASWELL. Who did that cutting?

Mr. KNEIPP. The Budget Bureau.

Mr. ASWELL. I know it was done in the Budget Bureau, but by which one of them.

Mr. KNEIPP. That I could not tell you.

Mr. TINCHER. I understand that \$50,000 was for the acquisition of land, but you say it is just enough to keep the men working.

Mr. KNEIPP. I separated it in that way so as to show what our plans are on either one of the three bases, so the committee would understand the situation.

Mr. TINCHER. It ought not to take many men to buy land now.

Mr. KNEIPP. The movement for the eastern national forests took practical form in 1899, and the act was passed in 1911. During the period of about 12 years when the movement was under consideration, it received the attention of 6 different Congresses and was the subject of 47 different bills and resolutions. There were very extended debates on the subject. Meetings were held and there was a great deal of scientific discussion. President McKinley discussed the subject favorably in a message to Congress and President Roosevelt did the same thing. There were detailed field examinations made. As a basis of all this 12 years of consideration, there was a very definite plan formulated immediately following the passage of the bill. This plan contemplated the acquisition of approximately 1,000,000 acres of land in the White Mountain region and of approximately 5,000,000 acres of land in the southern Appalachian region.

The reasons for limiting the eastern national forests to these areas were about as follows: In the western United States, the States practically on the other side of the Mississippi River, almost all of the important streams have their headwaters in national forests already established. That would be true of the Milk River, the Little Missouri, the North and South Platte, the Arkansas, the Pecos, the Rio Grande, the Colorado, the Sacramento, the Rogue, and the Columbia. All of those streams largely originate in national forests that have been established for many years. In the Adirondacks and Catskills the State forests of New York already formed a very desirable degree of protection to the streams originating there. In the Lake States it was believed at that time that because of the relative level quality of the land, the character of the soil, the relation of the wooded areas to the navigable streams and the effect of the innumerable lakes, it would be difficult to find areas of sufficient size for proper administration that would receive the approval of the Geological Survey, which is required by the Weeks law to give their approval to all such areas.

Mr. CLARKE. I did not quite understand that.

Mr. KNEIPP. I say that in the Lake States it was felt that the country was so level and the soil was of such a character and the influence of the innumerable lakes was so great that it would be difficult to get the Geological Survey to approve areas in that region at that time. On the other hand, the southern Appalachians and the White Mountains are very broken, rugged, with relatively high elevations, with steep slopes and types of soil that erode very easily, and within that range the logging operations are very extensive and very intensive. On the other hand, fire damage is high, and the relation to navigable streams is very important, because many of the important navigable streams of the East find their origin in that range of mountains. So that is the reason purchases were concentrated within that general range of country.

In the course of time the plan was modified to a very limited degree by including the Alabama National Forest in Alabama, the Arkansas and Ozark forests in Arkansas, merely to permit minor consolidations and to acquire some lands which could not be obtained by exchange or from the public lands.

More recently an area was established in northwestern Pennsylvania on the North Fork of the Allegheny River as a part of the whole scheme of flood control that is being considered in western Pennsylvania. The flood losses in and around Pittsburgh are, of course, very heavy, and the plans of the Pittsburgh Flood Commission clearly recognize the important relation of forest regulation to this big problem.

Those facts are the ones which have led up to the present system of eastern national forests as established under the Weeks law.

I have here a map which shows graphically the present eastern national forests. Those in dark green are the ones already established. Those in light green are the ones that are tentatively considered in connection with future work. These blocks show the relative area of each forest and the parts that are hatched show the part that has been acquired.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. Relative to what?

Mr. KNEIPP. Relative to each other. Two inches is equivalent to 1,000,000 acres. For example, in the White Mountains, you will notice about 2 inches which represents about 1,000,000 acres, of which we have acquired 448,000 acres so far.

Mr. SINCLAIR. The dark color represents that which has been acquired?

Mr. KNEIPP. That represents those which are already established, and the light color those which are considered in connection with future plans, and these little blocks show the rate of progress made to date in acquiring lands within the limits of these areas. The white shows what remains to be acquired. In some instances there has been none acquired, as in the Allegheny and down here in Smoky Mountains, and over here in the Yadkin, and up here in the Youghiogheny.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. What is that spot in the northeastern part of Michigan?

Mr. KNEIPP. That is an area where we believe a national forest ought to be established. The dark colors are national forests now in existence. The light colors adjoining them and connecting are areas which we think ought to be under Government ownership.

Mr. CLARKE. What is the red in Minnesota?

Mr. KNEIPP. That is a tract of land that is now in an Indian reservation, the Red Lake Indian Reservation, upon which there are 107,000 acres of timbered land. It is unallotted land and undoubtedly will be disposed of, and it is felt that that constitutes an area of this kind and has a very important relation to the headwaters of the Mississippi; and adjoining that is a large area of land in private ownership which would be very desirable for a national forest.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. What is the river you would protect up there near the Soo in Michigan?

Mr. KNEIPP. Mr. McLaughlin, I could not tell you the name of the river. I have some memoranda here, but I am not personally familiar with that section of the country. This area was not examined by me personally.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. I can not think of any river up there that is threatened with navigability except the St. Marys River, which is the boundary line between the two countries.

Mr. KNEIPP. I might mention in this respect that with regard to certain of these areas, it probably would require a modification of the existing restriction to navigable streams to carry out this plan, although in a majority of instances it would not, but in some of these cases in the Lake States, there is some question as to whether the Geological Survey would find a sufficient relation between the forest and the navigability of a stream to justify creation under the present act; but this is a part of Michigan where Government ownership of a tract of forest land would be in many respects desirable in developing better forest control all through the region.

Mr. CLARKE. What is that area in Louisiana?

Mr. KNEIPP. There is an area here [indicating] that lies on the Sabine River partly in Louisiana and partly in Texas that has been examined during the past summer and found to be quite a desirable area. I might say that further along, in connection with our future plans, I would discuss this in a little greater detail.

Mr. JONES. Have you made any estimate as to the amount of land this appropriation of \$2,000,000 would enable you to add each year?

Mr. KNEIPP. I have that further along in my statement. I can give it to you now, but I could probably work it in better later on, if you have no objection.

Mr. JONES. That is all right.

Mr. KNEIPP. Up to date, there has been acquired under the Weeks law in the White Mountains region, 439,412 acres at a cost of \$2,924,792. In the southern Appalachian region, there has been acquired, and when I say acquired I mean also land which has been approved and covered by option but where the title has not been absolutely perfected yet.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN of Michigan. And there is money available to buy it?

Mr. KNEIPP. The money has been set aside as an obligation and everything consummated except the acceptance of title by the Attorney General.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN. of Michigan. It has been practically acquired.

Mr. KNEIPP. Practically acquired; yes, sir. Technically, it is not, but to all practical purposes it is acquired. In the southern Appalachians, the purchases amount to 1,608,306 costing \$7,532,017.

Mr. CLARKE. A little over \$6 an acre.

Mr. KNEIPP. Yes, sir; about \$6.

Mr. TINCHEP. What kind of land is that you pay \$6 for.

Mr. KNEIPP. The land we pay \$6 for or better than \$6 is land which is heavily timbered. I might say that for the land itself the average price paid to date is \$2.77.

Mr. ASWELL. Is that cut-over land usually?

Mr. KNEIPP. In appraising the land, we divide the appraisal into two parts, one is the basic soil value including the young growth that is nonmerchutable in character and the other part of the appraisal is of the mature timber which is merchutable. We have divided the appraisal in that way, and for the land itself, including the young growth and nonmerchutable timber, the average price paid to date has been \$2.77. That has ranged all the way from as low as 25 or 50 cents an acre for some badly burned land at high elevations up to about \$6 an acre for the very choicest and most productive types of land in the southern Appalachians.

This means that to date under the Weeks law the Government has acquired 2,047,718 acres for which it has paid for the actual title itself \$10,456,000.

I have here a sheet showing the distribution of purchases by States, the acreage purchased in each State, the average price paid, and the total expenditure in that State. I can read it to the committee or I can simply submit it to you.

Mr. TINCHEP. It will not be very long, suppose you read it.

Mr. KNEIPP. In Alabama, 79,007 acres; average price, \$4.67; total cost, \$368,620.91.

Mr. ASWELL. Did you buy that of private individuals?

Mr. KNEIPP. Yes, sir.

Summary of land approved to Dec. 31, 1921.

State.	Acreage.	Average price per acre.	Total cost.
Alabama.....	79,007	\$4.67	\$368,620.91
Arkansas.....	54,061	3.64	197,018.13
Georgia.....	154,367	6.71	1,035,430.33
Maine.....	22,320	3.56	179,754.47
New Hampshire.....	413,678	6.61	2,735,040.80
North Carolina.....	348,565	6.24	2,173,800.71
South Carolina.....	18,546	3.47	101,842.49
Tennessee.....	265,936	4.90	1,322,948.80
Virginia.....	473,947	3.67	1,737,224.80
West Virginia.....	307,431	3.02	626,449.39
Total.....	2,047,718	5.11	10,456,860.43

Mr. ASWELL. What did you say was the average price paid for all of it?

Mr. KNEIPP. The average price, including timber and everything else, paid for the land is \$5.08, I think.