

Forestry

I. Condition of Forests

The official statistics of the Ministry of Forests and Mines for 1925 give the forested surface of the S.H.S. Kingdom as 7,586.026 hectares or 30.5% of the total area. If from this amount we deduct the area occupied by clearings, roads, streams and other small areas not covered with trees we get an area actually covered with forest of 7,039.583 hectares, or 28.3% of the total area of the Kingdom. The area of forest per inhabitant therefore is 0.54 hectares. Since it is usually considered that 0.30 hectares of forest per inhabitant is sufficient for the needs of a country in timber, the S.H.S. Kingdom counts among the countries able to export wood.

Of the 7,586.026 hectares which are registered as forest land, the actual forest land amounts to 6,200.863 hectares and the area relatively forested to 1,385.163 hectares. But in addition quite a part of the land noted in the survey as barren is also really forest land. Of this area it is reckoned that those rocky districts which were formerly covered with forest might again be forested, an area of about 2 million hectares. Moreover some of the present pasture land, which was formerly forest should also be reckoned as such, since forestry would be the most profitable way of exploiting it. Consequently there is more forest land in the country than is actually covered with trees, and if sufficient care were given to the maintenance of forests and to reforestation, the forested area of the Kingdom might be considerably increased.

Both during the war and for some years afterwards forestry was altogether neglected, but during the last two years systematic efforts have been devoted both by the State and private owners to afforestation.

As regards kinds, there are 59.3% of lofty forest (useful for providing wood for engineering purposes), 6.2% of medium forests, 23.9% of low forest and 10.6% of scrub.

The official statistics give the following classification as to age: 2,089.420 hectares, or 29.7% are over 80 years of age; 1,787.604 hectares or 25.4% are from 40—80, and 3,162.559 hectares or 44.9% are under 40 years old.

The forests are owned as follows: 3,619.566 hectares or 47.7% are state forests; 1,442.854 are collectively owned, and 2,523.606 or 33.3% are private