1. THE FUTURE OF THE SOIL SURVEY IN OUR NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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The ancients, so far as the history and traditions which are available to us show, were curious as to what made plants grow and as to why crops grew differently in different localities and on different soil types. In the earliest stages of the life of human beings on the earth, when men depended upon the wild things of nature, they were keen for a knowledge of where their necessities could be obtained. In the early nomadic life of the people, it was essential for them to know where the best natural food for their flocks and herds could be obtained. Such people needed only general information.

As the nomadic life gave place to the sedentary life and the growing of crops, men needed more particular information, since to produce crops they had to settle on a definite piece of land. The selection of the land where they should settle became of supreme importance. When a country was sparsely settled, knowledge of the soil type was relatively unimportant because of the abundance of land available and the people were able to support themselves in a way on the product of their labors. As the country became more densely settled, more and more organization had to be introduced, with a consequent increase in taxes and in public improvements, and competition became greater and more intensive effort became necessary.

According to the early Chinese records, which are apparently authentic, in the Yao dynasty from 2357 to 2261 B.C. certain parts of that country were then so thickly settled that the emperor directed...