REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREST AND ORGANIC SOILS.

The committee has concerned itself with three subjects bearing upon forest soils. First, the matter of terminology for the surface accumulation of organic soil; second, sampling for moisture determinations; and third, a phase of the ecologic relations between plant associations and soil types.

The surface accumulation of organic matter, and the mixture of organic and inorganic matter, which appears universally on soils occupied by forests, is a fact of great practical significance especially to the forester or the silviculturist. It is also a fact which cannot be ignored by the taxonomic pedologist, since it is a part of the complete natural soil profile. The terms which are now in use to describe this part of forest soils are not very clearly defined, or carry quite different implications when used by different individuals. The need for clearer definitions of old terms or the invention of new terms, is obvious.

The problem of names and definitions, however, becomes involved immediately with the chemical nature of the organic matter, and with biologic factors. Organic chemists pretty generally and freely admit that the determination of the organic compounds presents a baffling problem, and that satisfactory methods are lacking for accurate determinations which would be of most practical use to pedologists. While the committee does not believe that it is at all necessary to delay the defining of terms until the organic chemist has solved all of his problems, still it does not feel that it is wise at the present time to offer any definite recommendations as to the particular terms which should be used, but has preferred to list the matter for discussion before the association.

In reference to soil moisture, it is generally accepted that the seasonal amount of water is one of the best indices of the tree crop productive power of soils. The committee therefore urges that a greater number of soil moisture determinations be made. It also recommends that the soil samples for moisture determinations be collected according to the natural horizons of the solum and by natural layers in the substratum to such depths as roots may penetrate, in preference to the method of taking only surface samples or in taking samples at uniform intervals of depth regardless of the natural horizons of the soil profile.

In reference to certain ecologic relationships, the committee wishes to call to the attention of the members of this association, the scientific value and practical importance