THE APPLICATION OF THE MICHIGAN LAND ECONOMIC SURVEY TO MICHIGAN'S LAND AFFAIRS
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For a number of years Michigan has been greatly concerned with problems arising out of millions of acres of idle cut-over and tax-delinquent lands in the northern part of the State. These problems came about by the passing of the pioneer conditions through a period of exploitations and land booming to the present depletion of the forest and associated natural resources of these lands.

The problems in Michigan are concerned principally with 2½ million acres of State land, and 10 million acres of idle cut-over lands in the hands of private owners, still waiting development. It was realized that before any intelligent plan or remedy could be devised a complete and detailed inventory had to be made of these lands. The Michigan Land Economic Survey was presented with this job.

Since 1922 the Survey, cooperating with Federal and State departments and institutions, has inventoried approximately eight and one-half million acres in Northern Michigan counties. This inventory, showing the physical character and economic environment of these lands has been made available in the form of maps and reports. The two major maps are the soil map and the farm-forest map. The soil map is made according to the standards of the United States Bureau of Chemistry and Soils and shows in addition the lay of the land in five classes. The farm-forest map shows the farm lands, pasture lands, abandoned farm land and the different timber or cover types. Other important phases of the Survey include the geological inventory, the water power inventory, land ownership, lake maps, game tally, stream records, and the economic inventory which includes a study of land ownership, assessed valuation, tax delinquency, trade areas, habitations, business, and production.

The policy of the Survey, until recent years, has been to function merely as an inventory-taking organization. The application of the Survey's findings has been left entirely to outside agencies or individuals. The State departments and institutions have learned to interpret and apply the inventory data to their respective land affairs. A special effort has been made, however, to acquaint the local people with the Survey's findings and to show them how to apply the information to their needs. This is done by presenting the maps and reports as soon as they are completed, to the people at public meetings. The meetings are usually sponsored by the local chamber of commerce and the county agricultural agent.

The Department of Conservation is Michigan's official agency for the supervision and development of the forest and associated natural resources of these lands. It has therefore been the chief agency to apply the Survey's information necessary on important homestead questions.

Private agencies have used and applied the Survey's work is clearly shown by citing the following:

The boundary of the Ogemaw State Forest originally laid followed along section and township lines with little regard to the natural boundaries on the ground. This was probably due to the fact that one knew where the natural boundaries were. The problems of the Ogemaw Forest had been placed by more or less guesswork by the hasty reconnaissance of the area. This resulted in the closing of the forest land more valuable for agricultural and other purposes. As it is the policy of the Conservation Department to withhold from homesteading any land within a State forest, it was necessary for the department to know where and how much of this land should be reserved for the refuge, and to find out the facts. The inventory revealed that the local people were having thrust upon them. They wanted to develop these lands, but the government was preventing them from acquiring other lands as fast as possible, it was apparent that the local people were having a hard time. The actual application of the Survey's findings has been to function merely as an inventory-taking organization. The application of the Survey's findings has been to function merely as an inventory-taking organization. The application of the Survey's findings has been to function merely as an inventory-taking organization.

Considerable local dissatisfaction was expressed concerning the north boundary of the Presque Isle State Forest. The people contended that a large tract of undeveloped but desirable farm land was being withheld from sale or tax roll purposes. The Land Economic Survey was requested to inventory this area and find out the facts. The inventory revealed that the boundary of the forest should be moved north so as not to include several sections of good farm land.

An area in Ogemaw County had been laid aside for game refuge purposes. The closing of the lands was the result of an hasty reconnaissance of the area. This resulted in the closing of the land more valuable for agricultural and other purposes. As it is the policy of the Conservation Department to withhold from homesteading any land within a State forest, it was necessary for the department to know how much of this land should be reserved for the purpose of the survey. The Survey sent a mapping crew into the area and found out the facts. The inventory revealed that the local people were having a hard time. They wanted to develop these lands, but the government was preventing them from acquiring other lands as fast as possible, it was apparent that the local people were having a hard time.