SOIL SURVEY PROBLEMS OF EASTERN UNITED STATES.

By Austin L. Patrick, Pennsylvania Soil Survey.

The topic has been assumed to include the following states: Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and the New England States. This group of states, taking them as a whole, are not pushing soil survey work as is being pushed in many other sections of the country east of the Great Plains. The New England States are doing less work than the North Atlantic States, though Rhode Island was completely mapped in 1903. In preparing this paper, I have tried to divide it into two parts. Part I deals with possible reasons for the apparent lack of interest in soil survey work, as manifested by the amount of work done. Part II deals with local soil survey problems. Realizing that the subject is a large one, the opinions of persons in touch with or interested in, soil survey work in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts have been solicited.

Part I.

In reply to a letter requesting reasons for apparent lack of interest in soil survey work in the New England States, and especially in Massachusetts, Prof. Haskell, Director of the Massachusetts Agricultural Experiment Station, writes as follows:

"I am interested in your letter of October 19, for, while it is some years since I have been actively and personally interested in soil survey work, yet I think I have always had an appreciation of the possible value of this work to the agriculture of the country. This letter, however, must be taken as stating impressions rather than proving facts.

I look upon the soil survey as being in the main a tool, the use of which is the evaluation of soils. The fact that soil and soil fertility workers in New England are typically unenthusiastic over this tool must have its basis in lack of satisfactory experience in using the same. There has been sufficient work done in New England, I believe, to warrant our fertility workers in passing judgment on the usefulness of the surveys as at present carried out. I wonder, therefore, if the most productive line of thought may not be to attempt to find the reasons for the apparent failure of the tool when used in New England, as compared to the generally favorable and unquestionable success of its use in most other parts of the country?

I must admit that I have not thought out the matter at all clearly, but submit below several suggestions which may be of value:

1. The difficulty may be due to the reputed inherent conservatism of New Englanders. Opposed to this, however, is the fact that in three out of six states the head of that department having to do with soils and soil fertility is from the Middle West. I refer, of course, to Professor Simmons of Maine,