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MICE AND CHIPMUNKS

HELP RESTOCK FORESTS.

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Washington, D. C. Mice and chipmunks are helping to reestablish the forests of Oregon and Washington, according to officials of the Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Studies made by J. V. Hofmann, Director of the Wind River Forest Experiment Station at Stabler, Wash., have shown that a large part of the young fir growth coming in on burned or logged areas in these States is not wholly due to seeding by occasional trees which are left, but in part to seed buried by small rodents beneath the duff of the forest floor.

In the West mice and other rodents are usually condemned as workers of evil in the forest. They often do considerable damage to food supplies, and their appetite for pine and fir seed is chiefly responsible for the abandonment of attempts to reforest burned-over and waste areas by direct seeding methods. Sometimes, however, the work of these little animals is beneficial.

"In the Douglas fir region," says Mr. Hofmann, "the forests produce a heavy seed crop every two or three years. Rodents collect the seed from

the cones in large quantities and bury them just beneath the surface of the soil. Part of the seed thus stored away is eaten, but snow and soil movement often cover many of the hoards so that they are never found. When logging operations open up the stand, these seed germinate and produce a new stand of little trees."

The Wind River Experiment Station is but one of several similar establishments maintained by the Government in the National Forests for solving forestry problems. In this particular case many thousands of dollars have been saved annually to Western lumbermen through the assistance of rodents in restocking cut-over lands. This is one example of the value of the experiments being carried on by these stations, which are so important to the perpetuation of our forests and dependent industries.

In the Pacific Northwest $50,000 annually is needed for this work, and only through adequate funds can much needed results be secured.

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