

# SCIENCE

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## FOREST POLICY FOR THE FORESTED LANDS OF THE UNITED STATES.\*

THE RESERVED FOREST LANDS OF THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.†

THE peculiar topographical and climatic conditions of western North America would appear to make the preservation of its forests essential to the profitable and permanent occupation of the country. The precipitation of moisture west of the one hundredth meridian is unequally distributed throughout the year; the summers are hot and dry, and the whole territory, with the exception of the coast region of the northwest, is watered so imperfectly that forests are restricted to the slopes of high mountain ranges or to elevated plains and mesas, the valleys of the interior and of all the south being practically treeless. In all the interior and southern regions precipitation is insufficient for certain and profitable cultivation, and permanent agricultural prosperity can only be assured through irrigation. Much of the region is traversed

\* Extracts from the report of the committee appointed by the National Academy of Sciences, transmitted by the President to Congress on May 25th. The report is signed by the members of the committee—Charles S. Sargent, Henry L. Abbot, A. Agassiz, Wm. H. Brewer, Arnold Hague, Gifford Pinchot, Wolcott Gibbs. It is dated from Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University, May 1, 1897.

† In the first part of the report the importance of the conservation of forests is considered in the light of European studies and the forest administration of foreign countries is reviewed.