

## TAX LAWS IN OTHER STATES.\*

Twelve of the states have enacted various tax laws to encourage the planting and cultivation of trees and the practice of forestry. Under these laws there is allowed entire or partial exemption from taxation, rebates of part of the taxes or bounties to be deducted from the taxes. In most of the states the law provides for complete exemption from taxes on land and trees for a definite period of time, ranging from five to thirty years. These exemptions, rebates or bounties are generally granted to owners of timberlands in consideration of the public benefit derived from the planting, cultivation and growing of trees.

None of the laws providing for exemptions, rebates or bounties has solved the problem of forest taxation. Practically no results have been obtained under them, although many have been in force for years. It is not difficult to see why results have not been obtained, because most of these laws are impractical from a forestry standpoint. Almost uniformly they apply to plantations and fail to include natural reproduction. In some of them the required number of trees to be planted to each acre is too large or the planting is restricted to certain species which are not always well chosen, or else valuable species have been omitted. The proper care of the trees after once planted is often interfered with by requirements of the law. Even if these defects were not present, it is not believed that the laws would be productive of the results intended.

## PROBABLE RETURNS FROM FOREST INVESTMENTS.

It has been shown that the burden of taxation on cut-over land is proportionately much greater than upon timbered land, although the actual assessment is, of course, less. Thus, if the assessment on timbered land is \$15 per acre and the actual true value of land and timber is \$30, the ratio of the assessed to the true value is 50 per cent. If on the other hand, the land is cut-over the assessment is perhaps reduced to \$6 per acre, but if the land is only worth \$3 per acre, the ratio of assessed to true value is 200 per cent. That few objections have been registered in the past to this state of affairs is undoubtedly due to the fact that timberland owners have

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\* Taxation of Timber Lands, by Fred R. Fairchild, in the "Report of the National Conservation Commission," Vol. II, pages 584-589.