

Obviously working in concentration areas not only permits more economical handling of the work, but the inter-relation of one farm to another in this protection is important. The work at present is largely confined to as highly concentrated areas as possible, knowing that continuous parallel belts running east and west will protect three times as much acreage per lineal mile of shelterbelts against the damaging winds from the north, west, and south, as one isolated mile of shelterbelt.

There are other very important values to be derived from shelterbelts, some as simple as wood products for the farm and others as important and far-reaching as -well, too much speculation and optimism on the part of some was misinterpreted at the beginning and started the ballyhoo that still echoes, but in the minds of the foresters who have been with this Project from the start, it's "We've got something here." But we have to hurry or we may be outflanked. The desert is steadily marching on.

#### MAN LIKES FARMING IN FOREST

By E. A. Foster, Washington

Not an argument for nor an exposition of the joys of farming marginal lands, but of good lands available here and there in most forest regions, is an article entitled "I Like Marginal Farming" by Walter J. Muilenberg, written in the first person as a farmer in the Huron National Forest ("Country Gentleman" for August).

The writer infers that good farms in the forest regions are branded "marginal" by the State and Federal agencies in charge of public land programs. In extolling the advantages of farming such lands, he ignores the problem of the man whose farm is definitely too isolated, or too small, or too poor to yield a decent living and who does not have adequate sources of supplementary income. Nevertheless, a valid objection is made to forest acquisition programs as now carried out.

Asking the question "Why does the government wish to take our farming land from us?" the author says "It may be suggested that the farmers need not sell." But, he shows, it is not so simple as that. "Note this", he says, "once it becomes public land it will never again be subject to purchase by anyone who wants to buy it. Do you see how this method, if adhered to, will gradually gnaw away the boundaries of our community?"

We in the Forest Service may say that insofar as National Forests are concerned, it is not true that acquired lands are never again subject to purchase. We can point to specific authority for the resale of lands better suited to farming than forestry. We can also refer to the practice of granting permits for the farming of lands suitable for farm use, but so integrally related to forest lands and forest management as to require a greater degree of public control than is possible over private lands.

Yet, the charge tends to be true. Decision in the matter of using acquired lands for farming is vested in a bureaucracy controlled from Washington. In most National Forests there is no vehicle for regular systematic participation of local people in planning the use of National Forest lands.

This brings us face-to-face with the fact that the democratic process requires some definite means by which the interested local people will have a hand in formulating policies and plans of land use. Does it not point directly to some kind of National Forest advisory council or planning board for each National Forest community?

Furthermore, does it not mean that administrative convenience, often served by tearing down buildings and planting acquired land with trees, is not always desirable, socially?

Does it not mean, moreover, that cooperative planning based on sound land classification may result in an increase in the number of farms in certain forest communities, rather than a decrease?