

The Maturing of California State Forestry, 1943-47

by T. F. Arvola

Editors' Introduction

Historians have paid less attention to forestry at the state level than at the federal level. Yet state government actions directly affect the use of the area of forestland in private ownership, much greater than that under federal jurisdiction. This detailed account of California state forestry in the mid-1940s reveals how one state government was convinced that it should formulate an active forest policy of its own.

California was slow in developing a full-fledged state forestry agency, as T. F. Arvola suggests. From the turn of the century until World War II, the government of California assigned widely varying priorities to forest policy. California created its forestry board in 1885; dissolved the board in 1893; then revived it again in 1903, and appointed California's first state forester in 1905. For the next four decades, the state government saw its own responsibilities in the forests as limited mainly to fighting fires and rarely appropriated any significant sums for forest management or research. As Arvola recounts, the state of California greatly expanded the scope of its forestry program during the mid-1940s, largely in response to the persuasive lobbying of forestry professor Emanuel Fritz.

These events had origins and implications beyond California as well. A number of state governments became more active in forestry in the 1920s and 1930s, often by acquiring tax-delinquent cutover lands for state forests. In California, however, the tax exemption granted to immature trees on cutover lands by a state constitutional amendment in 1926 diminished this possibility. The Lumber Code of the federal National Recovery Administration also provided some states with models for their own laws. Oregon, for example, passed its forest practice act in 1941. California's forest practice act was passed in 1945. The following account reveals the complex politics involved in preparing, passing, and enforcing such state legislation.

lost its leadership position when the legislature decommissioned that body in 1893.¹ Although the board was reestablished in 1903, the Golden State did not become one of the forerunners in forestry affairs again until four decades later. During these interim years, efforts were mainly directed toward the development and maintenance of a fire protection system. Lesser attention was given to nursery production, pest control, and the operation of forestry work camps.² These were years of slow but solid growth, especially after 1927 when the Division of Forestry was formed within the newly created California Department of Natural Resources. This reorganization enabled the governor to supervise forestry matters more closely, rather than leaving agency management to a board made up of political appointees meeting only occasionally.³

During those perilous and busy days of World War II, California state forestry expanded rapidly. This development, however, was not a considered design by political or government forces. It seems to have been sparked by one dedicated citizen—forestry professor Emanuel Fritz—who really had a much different and lesser objective in mind. Fritz was largely interested in improving forest management practices on the state's cutover lands, not necessarily in creating a full-fledged system of state forests. Despite these paradoxes, the efforts of this campaign eventually transformed the California Division of Forestry from a fire-fighting outfit into a well-rounded modern organization.

A Crusade Begins

As in other states, there was a long-held dream in California to acquire some state forests. The first forestry board had expressed hopes for such a program; hopes that would reappear intermittently thereafter, but there was little progress. From 1930 to 1944, four tracts were donated to the Division

¹ C. Raymond Clar, *California Government and Forestry from Spanish Days to 1927* (California Division of Forestry, 1959), ch. 4-6.

² These "labor camps" were opened in late 1931 to alleviate severe unemployment at the Great Depression, and the few regular state forestry employees were totally engaged in their operation during two winters. These camps set a pattern for the highly successful CCC program that followed in 1933, and even the common labor conservation camps that are still being operated by the CDF [this latter story is told in Lloyd Thorpe, *Men to Match the Mountains* (privately printed, 1972)].

³ C. Raymond Clar, *California Government and Forestry—vol. 2* (California Division of Forestry, 1969), covers the period from 1927 to 1945.

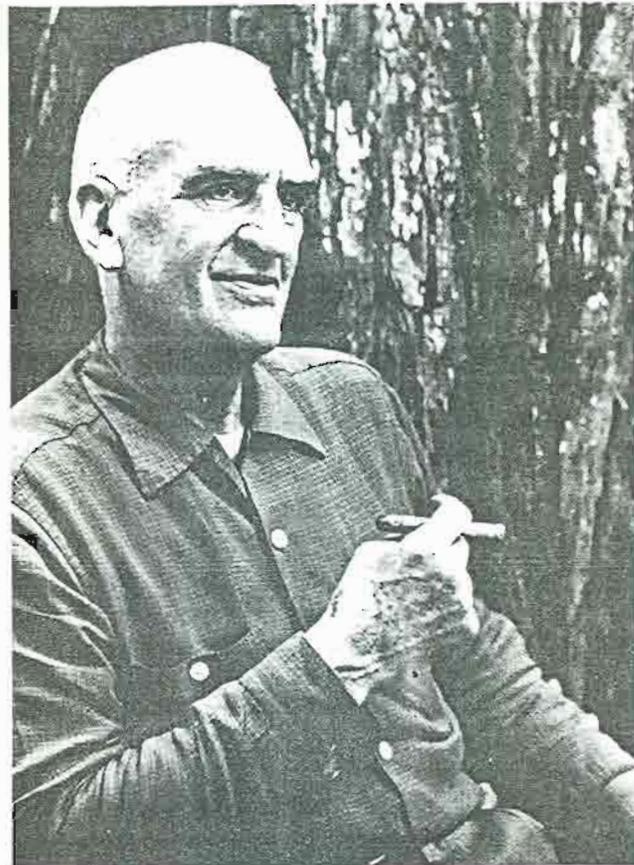
California was one of the first states to recognize a need for state policies on forests and forestry. The state Board of Forestry, established in 1885, accomplished much for those times in the way of investigations, surveys, nursery operations, and publications. However, California

of Forestry, but the aggregate area was only 1,188 acres, and the administration made no serious attempt to obtain funds for acquisition. This miserable showing was not improved after the passage of the U.S. Fulmer Act of 1935, which authorized federal financial assistance for acquisition of such state units, nor by the state law (Chapter 541) of that same year to accommodate this federal cooperation, because neither law included appropriations.

Interest in implementing a state forest program began to peak late during Democrat Culbert Olson's term as governor, preceding and early in World War II. Kenneth Fulton, the director of the Department of Natural Resources, and his eager deputy, Warner L. Marsh, a landscape architect and ardent conservationist, prodded the Board of Forestry to investigate possible action.⁴ This interest caused the board to hold four public discussions of the topic in 1941. After the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, general interest ebbed somewhat, but the aggressive Marsh kept pushing the board as much as he could, to the close of Olson's governorship at the end of 1942.⁵

In that year the board held six more meetings on the subject, hearing testimony from Fulton and Marsh from the Department of Natural Resources, professors from the University of California's forestry school, representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, and spokesmen for the timber and range livestock industries. Strangely, State Forester Merritt B. Pratt had but a small part in this project. Although a veteran civil servant, he was not any better accepted by the political appointees that came into power with Governor Olson in 1939 than he had been under Republican Frank Merriam's prior regime.

One person who became increasingly involved at this stage, but not because of his liking for the Olson administration, was Professor Emanuel Fritz of the forestry school at Berkeley. Fritz had been a teacher and researcher in forestry in California since 1920, a part-time consulting forester for forty years, a designated official consultant to the California Redwood Association since 1934, and a participant and adviser with the Save-the-Redwoods League.⁶ While pur-



University of California forestry professor Emanuel Fritz was the shaker and mover for big changes in California state forestry.

FHS photo collection

suing his favorite interests in the coastal redwoods, Fritz built strong associations with the principals of the industry and an understanding of their operations. At the same time, he was also well acquainted with the damage to trees and sites caused by logging of very large timber on steep terrain in an area of heavy rainfall.

Conditions worsened as the country prepared for war. Timber cutting increased sharply, and more operators migrated to northwestern California. This situation, along with the question of the uncertain future of cutover timberland, bothered the professor.⁷ He observed that acreage of cutover lands was increasing faster than that being reforested, and large ownerships were being fragmented. Fritz was convinced that these lands had excellent potential for growing timber to sustain a permanent industry. He vigorously preached his convictions that these areas should not be left idle or converted to agricultural use. Such attempted conversion was widespread but generally unsuccessful. Fritz also

⁴ C. Raymond Clar, "The Development of a Forest Fire Protection System in the California Division of Forestry, 1930-42," (Interview with Amelia R. Fry, University of California, 1966).

⁵ Official minutes of the Board of Forestry, Sacramento. The minutes of that period are the worst on record, mainly because the new Democratic administration and the board were not pleased with the incumbent state forester, so they discontinued using his well informed secretary to take the minutes. Such board action related to persons and not politics in this case.

⁶ This writer interviewed Professor Fritz on 27 April 1970. One wonders what other motives caused Fritz to get so deeply into extracurricular activities. Being strongly individualistic and conservative, and not hesitant to speak out and take positions, he rose rather slowly within the ranks of academia. Thus he may have sought to achieve greater career satisfaction through recognition outside the university. At any rate, Fritz made his mark so well he became probably the most prominent among the forestry school faculty within professional circles, in the industry, and among political leaders, forestry agencies, and the public.

⁷ Emanuel Fritz, "Teacher, Editor, and Forestry Consultant," (Interview with Amelia R. Fry and Elwood R. Maunder, Forest History Society and University of California, 1972).

suggested that the state government should acquire and reforest cutover lands as demonstration sites throughout the state. This plan seemed contrary to his normally strong advocacy of free enterprise, and inconsistent with his criticisms of the U.S. Forest Service for obtaining private cutovers in exchange for federal stumpage. In this case, however, Fritz decided that the state had a responsibility to get into the act for its own general welfare.

The Board of Forestry invited the professor to expound on his views at its October 1941 meeting in Eureka. He spoke again at the following November session, along with his colleague, Dr. H. R. Josephson. These scholarly presentations and the expressions of others finally convinced the board to recommend that Director Fulton initiate studies on establishing some state forests.

This progress, however, was soon eclipsed by the Japanese surprise attack a few days later, and no study was launched in 1941. State forest proponents were undaunted, despite the pressures and problems of wartime conditions, and got the board to discuss preliminary policy aspects of the subject only a few months later, in March 1942. The board instructed Deputy Director Marsh "to bring this to the attention of the various people who may be interested and to call them to a meeting for the purpose of discussing basic policy."⁸ One can surmise that the board was seeking more support before embarking on a major study during the war. (The minutes also show that the board asked for an investigation into making fire warden badges out of plastic to save metal badly needed by the military; apparently no thought was given to using wood!)

Marsh made the most of his opportunity. For the May meeting at the university in Berkeley, he mustered an awesome array of important citizens and officials to offer their opinions regarding a policy and program for state forests. He must have been the gadfly, because he was appointed acting chairman of the meeting by the board. The discussion of the state forests proposal occupied almost the entire meeting. Of course, Fritz was there, along with his superior Dean Walter Mulford, Extension Forester Woodbridge Metcalf (a close friend of the state Division of Forestry), and three associates from the university. S. R. (Rex) Black of the California Forest Protective Association, who had been a powerful member of the board in the previous Republican administration, and W. P. (Chet) Wing of the California Wool Growers Association represented the private sector. For the U.S. Forest Service there were a half-dozen high officials from San Francisco and Washington, D. C., and from the California Forest and Range Experiment Station. One Forest Service representative was C. R. (Tilly) Tillotson, who as federal Clarke-McNary Act inspector spent most of his time with the state Division of Forestry and was an avid supporter of the state organization and especially of state forests.

Surprisingly, all spoke in favor of a state forest program, even Black, who by his interest as an industry lobbyist was generally opposed to increased public (especially federal) forest ownership. He stressed the acquisition of tax-deeded and cutover lands, and state payments in lieu of taxes lost through such acquisition, revealing that in the context of the times such acquisition would in fact benefit his industry. The board concluded the meeting by reaffirming the position it took prior to Pearl Harbor Day and instructed State Forester Pratt, who displayed little enthusiasm on the matter, to survey potential areas without delay and report back to the board at the September meeting.

At the June 1942 meeting Forest Technician Fred Dunow of the state forester's office briefly reported on a plan to conduct the survey. Then in August he gave a progress report, including information about a quitclaim deed received from the Hammond Lumber Company for 6,185 acres of tax-delinquent timberland in Del Norte County, containing 140 million board feet of timber. That was fast action indeed, and the board eagerly accepted the gift. Professor Fritz had arranged for this transaction with George McCloud of the company. Forestry board member Frank W. Reynolds, a former assessor of Mendocino County, was also involved in this surprising maneuver. The title to this property apparently was questionable, and much legal sparring did not clarify the matter until April 1950, when a much later board resolved to claim no rights to the land.

Their appetites having been whetted by the Hammond deal, the board in September heard the report requested earlier of the state forester. Dunow's report was comprehensive and ambitious. He proposed acquisition of eleven areas amounting to 227,288 acres. He estimated that the average cost was five dollars per acre.

This report prompted the board to appoint Dunow, Professor Fritz, and C. R. Tillotson of the Forest Service "to draw up a statement of principles; estimate costs of purchase and costs of management of State Forests; estimate loss of taxes to counties where lands are taken for state forests; estimate returns which would accrue to the counties and state from the management of state forest lands; prepare a statement of justification for state forestry programs; and prepare tentative bills for submission to the Legislature and report same to the next meeting of the State Board of Forestry" —certainly a tall order!

In response to these complex instructions, Dunow and Fritz could only make a preliminary oral report at the next session of the board. But in November 1942 after the general election, which ushered in a Republican administration headed by Governor Earl Warren, this committee fulfilled its obligations nobly. The board requested the group to edit and reproduce the report for distribution to legislators and other key people. Two resolutions were also adopted: one recommending an appropriation of \$1 million for land acquisition, the other favoring in-lieu tax payments to counties for such state lands.

⁸ Board of Forestry minutes, 6 March 1942.



Governor Earl Warren signing reform forestry bills in 1945, in the presence of (l. to r.) State Forester DeWitt Nelson, Senator George M. Biggar, secretary Marguerite Bridg, Assemblyman Jacob M. Leonard, Professor Emanuel Fritz, and Gene Warren T. Hannum, director of the Department of Natural Resources.

Photo: California State Arch.

Unfortunately, these satisfying developments soon came to a decisive halt. With the change in government, Director Fulton and his deputy Marsh were gone, and the board was temporarily reduced to only a few holdover members because Governor Warren made no new appointments. Therefore the board held only three meetings in 1943, and absolutely nothing on the subject of state forests transpired. Moreover, State Forester Pratt could hardly provide any impetus because of the instability of state affairs and his own uncertain future.

Legislation Aborning

Despite this disappointing outcome, Emanuel Fritz was determined to move forward independently of the truncated board and the new hesitant state administration. He generally followed the original plan of previous deliberations. He continued to speak and write in favor of state forests. To promote action at a higher level for this aborted mission, he drafted a proposed bill for the legislature.⁹ By working through political connections, he recruited legislators from both houses to introduce companion state forest acquisition bills in January 1943. The authors were Senator George M. Biggar of Covelo (formerly of Fort Bragg) and Assemblyman Jacob Leonard of Hollister (with six coauthors). Only senate bill 509, calling for an acquisition program and an appropriation of \$1,560,000, began to move. The senate

⁹ Emanuel Fritz, "A Proposed System of State Forests for California to Help Solve Cutover Land and Future Unemployment Problems," *Journal of Forestry*, 41 (March 1943): 162-68. One of many of Fritz's speeches on the state forest proposal was given at the First California War Conference, sponsored by the state chamber of commerce in Los Angeles on 2 December 1942.

committee made only a few technical amendments in language during March. More serious erosion of the bill's major provisions began later, but Fritz was mentally prepared to accept defeat this first time. He rationalized that his legislative experience would pave the way for success in the next session. To enhance the proposal's long-term chances, however, he wisely included a provision in the bill to establish and finance an interim legislative committee for a two-year study of the forest situation in California. This provision really became the essence of the bill toward the end as the chances of actually establishing state forests dwindled.

Complete disaster almost struck in early May, during the hectic closing days of the session. To meet the legal adjournment date, the legislature had already stopped the clock in the chambers. Fritz was monitoring the deliberations closely in the capitol. His bill in reduced form still had life on one of those critical days, so he departed for his home in Berkeley. At a meeting that evening in San Francisco with private foresters regarding cutting practices, Rex Black of the California Forest Protective Association assured Fritz that his bill would pass. Despite this good news, to be on the safe side, the cautious professor returned to Sacramento the next morning. There, the unconcerned interim Director of Natural Resources William Moore shocked him by laughingly reporting that the state assembly had killed the bill the night before, after the senate had passed it.

Defeat did not cause Fritz to quit. When he discovered that the legislator responsible for the demise of the bill was Gardiner Johnson from his own hometown, Fritz immediately called on him. Johnson explained that he had downed the legislation because he had been advised that the proposal was a scheme to move State Forester Pratt out of office. The allegation seemed incredible, because Fritz had no suspicion regarding his old friend Pratt. Fortunately, F:

succeeded in changing Johnson's position that very night, with the help of Assemblyman Michael Burns of Eureka and a few other key legislators.

Thus, the next day Johnson succeeded in getting the demise of S.B. 509 expunged from the record and opened the bill for reconsideration. After some sparring, dogged lobbying by Fritz, and revision, the bill passed on 5 May 1943. Governor Warren signed the bill on 8 June.¹⁰ The new law: (1) appropriated \$15,000 for fiscal years 1943-44 and 1944-45; (2) created a Forestry Study Committee composed of two senators, two assemblymen, the chairman of the Board of Forestry, and the director of the Department of Natural Resources; (3) set forth the objectives of the study as investigation of the forest situation in the state; and (4) requested recommendations particularly with respect to restoration of cutover lands.

This legislation was remarkable in a number of ways. First, it had no support from the recently installed leaders of the executive branch, because a new forestry board had not yet been appointed and the remnants of the past administration still in state service were in limbo. The state forester, having had his troubles with the previous board and administration, was suspicious of what was transpiring. Without the tenacious efforts of Emanuel Fritz the chances for any legislative success were nil. The second surprising accomplishment of the bill was that its apparent retreat from an ambitious state forest proposal to a seemingly innocuous study was really a stroke of good fortune. Although it may not have been fully realized at the time, the study eventually yielded benefits far beyond the state forest program originally contemplated. Lastly, the legislation was developed during wartime and drew attention to forest management, even when there were many more pressing problems facing the nation and the state.

A Study Ensues

During Governor Warren's first year in office, the year immediately after the law was passed, his administration purposely left a vacuum on the Board of Forestry and in the state Department of Natural Resources. This gave the governor time to make plans for the future. On 10 January 1944 Warren finally selected a distinguished panel of citizens for the seven-man board. The new chairman, William S. Rosecrans, had been a leader in water conservation and the American Forestry Association.¹¹ There were three conserva-

¹⁰ Fritz had known Earl Warren when the latter was district attorney of Alameda County, on the east side of San Francisco Bay. The professor continued this personal contact by calling on Governor Warren a few times in 1943 to advise him about forestry matters and to recommend members for the Board of Forestry. Fritz, personal interview (1970).

¹¹ Rosecrans, scion of a pioneer Los Angeles family and grandson of the famous Union general, William Starke Rosecrans, was a keenly public-spirited citizen. His contagious enthusiasm and sparkling personality enabled him to motivate people.



Chairman of the Board of Forestry William S. Rosecrans, whose status as a conservationist and skill as a leader brought diverse elements together for a unified effort to improve California forestry.

Photo: California Department of Forestry

tive holdovers from the previous board. Soon after, the governor named General Warren T. Hannum to head the state Department of Natural Resources. About the same time the scene was further brightened with the appointment of DeWitt Nelson as interim deputy director to General Hannum; he had been deliberately placed there so that he could succeed State Forester Pratt upon his anticipated retirement late that year.¹² This new cast of actors assembled by the Warren administration finally set the 1943 law in motion in March 1944.

¹² DeWitt (Swede) Nelson, an Iowa State University graduate, was employed by the U.S. Forest Service in California for twenty years. Just before joining the state government, he was supervisor of the San Bernardino National Forest. He had a close acquaintance with Rosecrans, having cooperated on southern California conservation matters. His experiences are well documented in "Management of Natural Resources in California 1925-1966" (Oral interview with Amelia R. Fry, University of California and Forest History Society, 1976).



DeWitt Nelson served ably as deputy director in the California Department of Natural Resources during the first state forest policy studies in the 1940s, and later became California state forester.

Photo: California Department of Forestry

Under the new law, the legislature constituted the California Forestry Study Committee as follows: the regular members were Senator George M. Biggar as chairman, Senator Oliver J. Carter (Redding), Assemblyman Jacob M. Leonard (Hollister), and Assemblyman Paul Denny (Erna); the ex officio members were General Warren T. Hannum, director of the Department of Natural Resources,¹³ and William S. Rosecrans, chairman of the Board of Forestry. The committee could not really begin to function until after the latter two members had occupied their respective regular

¹³ Hannum replaced interim Director William H. Moore, who had been transferred from a civil service position in the Department of Finance. Moore had been appointed to reorganize the Division of Forestry and to establish administrative districts. The general had served as the district engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in San Francisco. Among the many projects he had supervised was the construction of jetties at the entrance of Humboldt Bay, an important port for the lumber trade of the redwood region.

offices early in 1944. Mrs. Marguerite Bridges of the legislative clerical staff was assigned as recording secretary.

The selection of a consultant to serve as executive officer of the committee became somewhat of a problem. Fritz himself had declined Senator Biggar's first offer of this important post.¹⁴ However, one of the legislators on the committee apparently saw this study as a chance to revive an attempt, which had failed in 1943, to create a sizeable state forest south of San Francisco in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The interests of the landowners there were being handled by a realtor friend of the lawmaker, and Fritz feared that the legislator wanted this same friend to be made the consultant to the committee. This sort of appointment was contrary to Fritz's strong belief that the study should be free from political influences as much as possible and be steered by a technically qualified person, so he quickly visited Biggar in Covelo to advise him that he had changed his mind and would take the job. Fritz received permission from his superiors at the university to accept this demanding extra work. Fortunately the teaching workload at Berkeley had dropped considerably because of prospective students going into the armed services.

The committee embarked upon an ambitious schedule of public hearings and field trips for the rest of the year—seventeen hearings and four field visits to sites from Crescent City in the far north to San Diego at the southern end of the state. Members of the Board of Forestry and Deputy Director Nelson attended; also timber owners and operators, community officials and leaders, foresters, sportsmen, and representatives from the fields of agriculture, livestock industry, water development, and conservation in general. William R. Schofield, the energetic new executive secretary of the California Forest Protective Association, actively participated in all the hearings and field trips to guard the interests of the timber industry. This involvement eventually led to considerable industry support for the subsequent recommendations of the committee and the legislation that ensued. Two important observers at some of the hearings and trips were legislative auditor Roland Vandegrift and state Director of Finance James Dean. Their participation broadened the legislature's and the state administration's understanding of California's forestry problems.¹⁵

The committee observed and received views about old- and young-growth forests, cutover lands, brush fields, forest fire burns, pest depredations, reforestation problems, timber harvesting and processing operations, and many other conditions and factors relating to forest production. In this way the committee obtained, first hand, a comprehensive body of knowledge on the forest situation in the state.

Basically, the committee concluded that forestlands were not productive enough to guarantee future wood supplies. Watershed, recreation, and scenic values were also being

¹⁴ Fritz, "Teacher, Editor, and Forestry Consultant." (1972), p. 249.

¹⁵ DeWitt Nelson. Personal communication, 31 January 1984.

impaired. The final 200-page illustrated report, largely written by Fritz, included fifty-one specific findings. The problems in need of immediate attention were determined to be: (1) cutting old growth so as to maintain productivity of forestland and to conserve the supply of old-growth timber; (2) reforesting as much as possible of the cutover land that could regenerate; (3) reducing the amount of standing timber lost to forest fires, insects, and disease, both in old growth and second growth, and also protecting the growing capacities of non-reforested cutover lands from further fire damage; and (4) providing for the continuity of state forest policy.¹⁶

To solve these major problems, the committee concluded that action by the 1945 session of the legislature was critically required. The committee recommended a variety of specific legislation, virtually all of which eventually passed. The recommended regulation of forest practices, to protect the future productivity of cutover forestlands and to conserve remaining timber supplies, was approved by the governor as Chapter 85, Statutes of California, on 23 April 1945.¹⁷ The committee's suggestions for staggered terms of membership on the Board of Forestry and clarification of its duties, powers, and member qualifications were incorporated into Chapter 316, approved on 10 May 1945. The acquisition of forestlands for demonstration areas and state forests was arranged through Chapters 317, 1464, and 1496, approved 10 May and 17 and 18 July, respectively.¹⁸ The committee's proposals for state cooperation in control of tree-killing insects resulted in Chapter 25, approved 20 February 1945. Finally, the Forestry Study Committee was continued, as the first such committee recommended, by Senate Resolution 151, approved 15 June 1945. The details of the development and passage of this legislation form an interesting story but are beyond the scope of this article. The lawmakers' response in all areas was a testimonial to the effectiveness of the committee, Emanuel Fritz, DeWitt Nelson, and other supporters. Close teamwork with Chairman Rosecrans and the new forestry board was also essential. These legislative accomplishments formed a benchmark for the subsequent remarkable progress of state forestry in California.

A number of recommendations in addition to the above were made by the committee in its 1945 report. These included continuing and accelerating state appropriations for blister rust control, strengthening fire prevention and suppression, bolstering the Division of Forestry staff, pro-



Senator George M. Biggar, who worked closely with Emanuel Fritz to create two California forestry study commissions in the early 1940s. Photo: California State Archives

viding means for disposition of tax-deeded timberland, classifying forestlands, recognizing private tree farms, and establishing a forest products laboratory at the University of California. No particular legislative proposals were offered, but the way was prepared for later action.

The work of the Biggar committee broke the trail for the Division of Forestry to broaden and intensify its scope of programs, and it lost no time in moving forward. Of course, more personnel, especially trained foresters, were vital to carry these added responsibilities. A modest start in that direction was made in 1945. Then in February Preston H. McCanlies, a recently discharged Marine Corps officer, was appointed by State Forester Nelson as the first forest manager to supervise all the technical forestry activities.¹⁹ Eight foresters were assigned to assist at headquarters and in the field in policing private forest practices, in state forest management, and in regulating brushland range improvement burning. These were the first in the division to be employed exclusively for technical forestry work. Prior to that time, C. R. Clar, Fred Dunow, John Callaghan (the successor to Schofield in 1961), future state foresters Francis H. Raymond and Lewis A. Moran, and a few others had held the title of forest technician but had worked primarily in fire protection, engineering, special studies, and administration.

¹⁶ California Forestry Study Committee, *The Forest Situation in California* (California State Legislature, 1945).

¹⁷ William R. Schofield, "Forestry, Lobbying, and Resource Legislation, 1931-1961" (Oral interview with Amelia R. Fry, University of California and Forest History Society, 1968), pp. 48-56. See also T. F. Arvola, *Regulation of Logging in California, 1945-1975* (California Division of Forestry, 1976), pp. 4ff.

¹⁸ T. F. Arvola, *California State Forests—The Formative Years, 1945-1975* (California Department of Forestry, 1983), pp. 5-6.

¹⁹ McCanlies, a 1939 University of California forestry graduate, was a prewar forest engineer in the timber industry. He left state service in 1948 to return to private employment and was succeeded by the author.

The Study Committee Continues

Following the recommendation of the 1943-45 California Forestry Study Committee, the state senate created a new study group in 1945 through Resolution 151, introduced by George Biggar. The expenditure of \$10,000 from senate funds was authorized. In contrast to its predecessor, which included state legislators from both houses and two appointees to state agencies, this new body was composed only of state senators. Biggar and Carter were the only carryovers. Added to the committee were H. E. Dillinger of Placerville, Ed Fletcher of San Diego, and Frank L. Gordon from Suisun. To replace Fritz, George A. Craig, a University of California graduate recently discharged from the Navy, was hired as an investigator. Professor Fritz elected not to serve again because of increasing postwar enrollment at the university. However, having been the shaker and mover of this crusade for better forestry in the state, he naturally continued to play an active role behind the scenes.

The new committee also conducted a number of field trips and open hearings in its pursuit of information on the forestry situation. Investigator Craig methodically sought facts from many sources, including the Division of Forestry, his alma mater, and the U.S. Forest Service. Although the previous committee had already exhausted much of the glamour of the subject, a meaningful report was completed and transmitted by Senator Biggar to the governor and legislature on 19 December 1946.²⁰

The report first proudly recited the accomplishments to date of the forestry legislation sponsored in 1945. A vigorous Board of Forestry was in operation in accordance with the reorganization prescribed by the legislature. The forest prac-

tice regulations authorized by the Forest Practice Act had been developed by the District Forest Practice committees and were in the process of being approved by forest owners and the board. Latour State Forest (9,013 acres), the first sizeable unit, had been acquired, followed closely by Mountain Home State Forest (4,562 acres). Negotiations with Caspar Lumber Company were about to conclude for purchase of 46,878 acres in Mendocino County, later to become Jackson State Forest.

The committee described a large project that the Division of Forestry had conducted in the winter of 1945 to suppress an insect epidemic in Shasta County and the control of five smaller outbreaks of these pests. Credit was also taken for the division having started a \$40,000 study of the brushland range problem, including advising ranchers on controlled burning. Although this program had been authorized by legislation, it was not specifically promoted by the previous Forestry Study Committee. One additional achievement not in the report was that in 1946 the state division strengthened its cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine for the control of blister rust by providing \$75,000 of state funds.

Following the suggestions of its predecessor, the committee continued to investigate most of the problems identified in the 1943-45 study. It pointed to deficiencies in the Forest Practice Act and the poor conditions of the forestland in some small ownerships. The shortage of nursery planting stock was found to be a major difficulty in reforestation. The committee felt that the classification and inventory of the lands and forest types in the state were inadequate. Losses from white pine blister rust and insects were still too high. It admitted that the old subject of brushland clearing was a complex problem from both economic and social standpoints, and one with many unanswered questions. Weaknesses existed in the prevention and control of forest fires.

²⁰ California Forestry Study Committee, *The Forest Situation in California, vol. 2* (California State Legislature, 1947).

Despite severe cutting, burning, and neglect, redwood forests could regenerate themselves naturally. This example is a forty-year-old stand containing 30,000 board feet per acre that was thinned (as shown) to one half that volume.

Photo: California Department of Forestry



Emanuel Fritz has been widely recognized for his important contributions to forestry, and has received awards for national service from the Society of American Foresters (as well as serving as editor of its *Journal of Forestry*), from the American Forest Institute, and from the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. His contribution to California state forestry programs has not been fully appreciated. He provided much of the momentum for advances within the state Division (now Department) of Forestry, especially in resource management. The following quotations represent Fritz's retrospective views of the period covered in this article, at the time of his oral history interview with Amelia Fry and Elwood Maunder ("Emanuel Fritz: Teacher, Editor, and Forestry Consultant," Forest History Society and University of California, 1972).

* * * * *

Fritz strongly criticized shortsighted methods of forest exploitation in California during World War II, but he traced the origins of this problem back to federal land policies in the nineteenth century:

The Homestead Act [in the 1860s] made it possible for a citizen to obtain title to 160 acres of valuable timber. . . One hundred and sixty acres might make a good farm, but it can't support a sawmill. . . Timberland locators took train loads of "homesteaders" west, went through the simple formality of filing each on a 160, paid each one maybe \$150, and sent them all back home. . . Thus large blocks were reassembled. . . What Uncle Sam had fragmented, the timber investors reassembled. Unfortunately, the process of reassembling the quarter sections into manageable blocks stopped too soon. As a result, we suffered the consequences up to and through the 1940s. . . (p. 39).

Came World War II with its tremendous lumber requirements. . . many of the small loggers of Oregon and Washington, finding themselves out of timber and hearing about the large area of "inaccessible" Douglas fir in northern California, looked it over and liked it. Much of it was owned by ranchers who had tried for years to get rid of it by burning. . . Some sold their stumpage for as little as one dollar per [thousand] board feet, at which price even a small logger could afford to build roads into it. . . (p. 39).

[Most] local officials and business people . . . had only the most meager concept of the possibilities of forest management for permanence. . . I'll never forget what a

rancher in Mendocino County said: "You're all wrong; cutover land should be converted into grazing land." . . . Someone asked a pine county tax assessor . . . "Aren't you interested in this land being kept productive?" His answer was, "It'll take about a hundred years before you can get a crop, and I'm not going to live that long, so why should I worry about it?" (pp. 252-53) . . . One small operator told me, "This is a pioneer country and anything goes." He not only made a mess of his logging and gyped the owner of his stumpage payments, but was actually trespassing on neighboring lands (p. 267).

* * * * *

Despite his criticisms of loggers and landowners, Fritz did not see public ownership of the forests as a panacea. He discussed the politics of public and private forestry as the background to the California state legislation on forestry enacted in the mid-1940s:

There was something in the back of my head which doesn't appear in the [1943] bill, but which I often talked about. It was my thought that once the state has these lands reforested and a new crop underway, that they would then be resold to private ownership with suitable safeguards, that they would be handled on the basis of production.

[Question: But you didn't write this into the bill?]

No. The bill wouldn't have got to first base if I had done that. I learned early that if you want to introduce a bill, first of all decide where your opposition will be . . . then face that opposition at once and directly, face to face . . . I learned something else from that as to how the Legislature actually operates. . . It was just like being out in the woods—you can never tell if or when a limb will fall on you (pp. 245-46).

There were . . . those of us in forestry who believed in the private enterprise system. The U.S. Forest Service in those days was very socialistic, at least for forestry. Some were real socialists. . . [but others of us] couldn't see that the Forest Service should own and direct everything. If the Forest Service could dictate how a lumberman is going to cut his lands, when and where and how, then the government could also dictate to a farmer what crop he's going to plant and how he's going to do it and when he's going to harvest it, and so on. And that could lead to how we comb our hair and what kind of clothes we wear, and so on. I was against it. If any kind of cutting laws are needed, they should be state laws . . . (pp. 257-58).

True to the form of the previous committee and the events leading to it, the second study necessarily drew more attention to the acquisition of state forests.

Most surprisingly, the committee criticized some federal forestry activities. In no uncertain terms it deplored continued expansion of the national forests, and most particularly a proposal by Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas of California to establish a vast redwood national forest from Marin County north to the Oregon line. It publicized and vigorously challenged Forest Service plans to begin regulating forest practices on private land.

Among the twelve recommendations submitted by the new committee, seven created or improved technical forestry programs of the Division of Forestry. The other five concerned conservation education in the school systems, establishment of a forest products laboratory at the University of California, and fire protection laws and personnel. Specifically, the committee proposed: (1) to provide, both by statute and budgetary support, a long-term experiment in brushland clearing and the use of fire in rangeland improvement to determine the best method of management; (2) to allow the Division of Forestry to employ "forest advisors" to advise and guide the owners of small timber tracts on how to manage their forests for maximum returns and benefits; (3) to acquire more lands for state forests, and set aside \$5 million as a continuing appropriation for the purchase of lands; (4) to amend the law governing the state nursery to enable the state forester to produce seedlings of commercial timber trees, which could be sold at a nominal fee to be fixed by the state Board of Forestry; (5) to increase the minimum diameter established by a 1943 stopgap law for cutting trees, in order to insure a future supply of timber (at that time

strong demand and high prices were resulting in cutting both young- and old-growth trees down to the eighteen-inch limit specified in the law); (6) to continue the insect and disease control efforts initiated in 1945; and (7) to provide for the state Division of Forestry to cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service in using aerial mapping and other methods necessary to complete a more accurate survey of the state's forest resources.

Because much of the critical need had been satisfied by action instigated by the first Biggar committee, these later recommendations did not produce nearly the range of progress that arose from the earlier work. Technical legislation in 1947 was limited to nursery matters; Chapter 778 was enacted to permit the sale of seed and seedlings in large quantities at less than cost of production. That law set the stage for revitalizing the nursery program.

Although it produced few new forestry laws, the 1945-47 study helped educate legislators, the state administration, and citizens in general about California forestry and its needs. More importantly, it led legislators to appropriate the additional funds needed for the Division of Forestry to follow through administratively on the committee's recommendations. This enabled the division to hire additional staff to handle the expanded programs. The 1947-48 budget allowed twelve new foresters, which more than doubled the technical ranks. The committee's efforts also carried over to enlarge the budget for the 1947-48 year. The legislature allocated \$25,000 to the Division of Forestry for insect control, and \$100,000 for cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service experiment station in Berkeley for a survey of soils and vegetation of the wildlands.

In Retrospect

The progressive developments of the 1943-1947 period certainly built a solid foundation for later major improvements in California forestry. Professor Fritz, figuratively the goad; Senator Biggar, his legislative agent; and Board of Forestry Chairman Rosecrans and State Forester Nelson, the opportunists; all contributed to a brighter future for forestry in the state. Of course, they had a supportive governor and fine cooperation from the legislature and the entire Board of Forestry. This teamwork widened and intensified the charge to the state forestry agency in the years ahead so that it could again become a leader in the country just as it had been in its infancy. □

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Emanuel Fritz, Governor Earl Warren, and Waldron Hyatt, president of the Redwood Region Logging Conference. The occasion was Warren's campaign tour for a fourth term as California's governor. Eureka, California, 27 May 1950.

Photos: FHS photo collection