Graves Describes Work of Forest Regiments

NINE thousand American lumbermen are now operating in the forests of France, producing every article of wood that the American soldier needs. (Mr. and Mrs. F. M. O'Neill, for instance, produce the line, for railroads and highway building on the lines of communication, for trench supports and military operations. No Man's Land, for hospitals, for telephone lines, for building construction in the bases of supply, and in other lines in which the lumbermen are engaged has been turned over in toto by the United States, and even for the piling which will carry the wharves where the hundreds of thousands of tons of supplies will be landed.

Lientenant Colonel E. H. Graves, who directed the institution of American lumber manufacture in France, returned to the United States some time ago, is writing to the work which he directed in France. He is now an officer of the 10th Engineers (Forest) regiment.

"I don't believe I'd better tell how much timber we're cutting in France," Lieutenant Colonel Graves. "It was at first intended to go to the production of timber for the British forces. Then the United States adopted an immensely increased military program and the 2nd Engineer. I was one, however, of the industrial engineering and military organization and the regiment was expanded to 10 battalions of 750 men each, five times as large as the 10th Engineers. We are engaged in one of the very simple one of cutting down the overhead expenses. It was a thing for every man to be in charge of his own reflektion, and as a result it has been done.

"The operations are in parts of France where there have been placed along lines of communication, especially in the higher and better parts, which American troops and supplies are landed and the roads which are or will be necessary in embellishing the country. We have used from the United States, used to work for the Government, set up its mills, builds roads, and saws wood; it is a complete unit.

30,000 feet, 10,000 and 5000 feet miles are the three sizes used.

Young Growth Conserved.

"The very best forest methods are used. Young growth, and all growth, is being taken to see that they are not damaged. The French foresters mark the trees that are to be cut; they are marked with a sign and we want them to do that.

"The matter of fact, this part of the work is applying French forestry methods, which are finer and better than many of our own. We don't use anything on the lines of cutting down the overhead expenses. We are working for every man to be in charge of his own reflektion, and as a result it has been done.

"If the war keeps on long enough the forests of France will be depleted. The rate at which the young wood is growing on these farms depends, of course, on the amount being cut for American, British, and French use, and that is one of the matters that we are doing for here it is better to tell.

"The maritime pine, fir, spruce, pine, oak, beech, and ash are the woods. The fir is the biggest tree. It is much like the white pine of the Pacific Coast of the United States and the wood is about as good as our larch. The trees have a diameter of 20 or 30 inches, some times more—and usually cut to 1200 feet, and many times seen trees that would cut as high as 2500 feet.

"The spruce is like the eastern red spruce of the United States. It is not so good for air plane construction as the Sitka spruce of the American Pacific Coast, although some of it is used by the French, and, I suppose, it is all the Germans have for their aircraft building.

"The maritime pine is mostly planted and grows in central France. It is being used chiefly for telephone poles. The poles are good size—the longest one about 25 feet. It isn't any little telephone line that the American expediency force is building in France; it's a two or three lines clear across the country and the poles have to carry a minimum of 10 or 12 wires. These are the true lines. The smaller lines do not require so heavy poles.

"The maritime pine is a turpentine tree but it is not made out of the turpentine pine of southeastern United States. Most of it is being cut for railroad ties. White oak, beech and ash are cut mostly into planks which are used for supporting military roads.

"The 10th Engineer Corps paused to consider whether he was committing an indiscretion, and then asked in connection with the matter of crossing the line of military safety. "These are the roads for hauling close to the front line," he said.

The reports based on the numbers cut of 4564555556, each of which cut five million feet or more lumber, are now in the hands of the Government. The reports of these mills indicate that in some cases the output has increased many times, and that as a result the lumber is being used in the construction of the roads which the French have to build.

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"Fires in National Forests.

Fires first burned over 65,000 acres of Na tional Forest lands in 1917 and caused a loss of $1,268,000. In 1918, 1,268,000 acres were burned and young growth, according to figures from Washington. While the loss was larger than for any previous year, this is not as serious as the loss from the winds. Considering the unusually dangerous conditions it is a matter of some help that the growth in new trees was affected by the high winds made the conditions, the declare, virtually the same as in 1916, when many people were burned to death and a million dollars' worth of timber on the National Forests was destroyed.

In addition to the actual loss in timber and forage, the fires of last year entailed extra expenditures by the Government of $1,121,451.