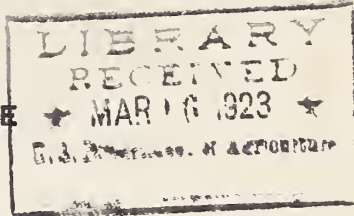


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY
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DESTRUCTION OF SPRUCE AND HEMLOCK BY THE WESTERN HEMLOCK LOOPER.

In about 1890 there was an invasion of caterpillars in southern Clatsop and northern Tillamook Counties, Oregon, which defoliated the hemlock and spruce over a very extensive area and resulted in the death and almost total loss of a vast amount of the best timber.

This area was visited by the writer in May, 1899, and information, gathered at that time and later, together with the published reports by Canadian entomologists of similar damage to the western hemlock on Vancouver Island, B. C., indicates that the insect responsible for the death of the trees was a measuring worm or looper caterpillar of undetermined species but apparently closely related to the oak looper (Therina somnaria Hulst).

During the past season reports have come from Alaska that the foliage of the spruce and hemlock was seriously affected by a defoliating caterpillar but the specimens sent in with the reports were not sufficient for the identification of the insect. It is probable, or at least possible, that this is the work of the hemlock looper and, if so, it may extend its depredations southward into the tideland areas of Washington and Oregon. Should it do so and add its destructive work to that occasioned by the green spruce aphid, it would be a very serious matter.

It is planned to send specialists into Alaska next spring to study the problem there with the view of determining facts that will be of value to owners of spruce timber in Washington and Oregon in case the insect should extend its depredations into these States.

In the meantime it is important to have as much information as possible regarding the location of places in Alaska, Washington, or Oregon where there is evidence of the defoliation of hemlock or spruce by caterpillars or by the occurrence of great numbers of grayish or buff butterfly-like moths on the wing during October.

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