

Relieved of Burden.

Washington, D. C.,
October 3, 1911.

Settlers on National Forests under the Act of June 11, 1906, will no longer have to pay for a survey, as they have had to in the past on unsurveyed lands, when the claim goes to patent. This relieves many settlers under the act, commonly known as the Forest Homestead Law, from a burdensome expense. Relief from this burden has been brought about by an agreement between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, whereby surveys made by employes of the Forest Service will be under the supervision of the Surveyor General so that they can be accepted by the General Land Office as final.

Hitherto it has been necessary to make two surveys. Under the terms of the Forest Homestead Law, National Forest Land can not be opened to settlement unless the Secretary of Agriculture has recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that it be listed for settlement; and listing is not possible until a survey has been made. The Secretary of Agriculture has no authority to list any land unless an examination has shown that the land is more suitable for agriculture than for forest purposes. So when land is applied for, employes of the Department of Agriculture are sent to ascertain its character, and at the same time make a survey of it by meets and bounds if a survey is necessary.

This survey, however, could not be accepted by the Land De-

partment as a basis for patent, because only surveys under the supervision of the Surveyor General can, under the law, be accepted as a basis for passing title. In consequence, under the procedure provided for when patent is sought to unsurveyed lands, the settler on land within a National Forest has had to pay for a second survey. This has been felt to be especially hard because it has subjected settlers on National Forests to an expense which settlers on surveyed public lands do not have to bear. Since it merely duplicated the work of the first survey, there seemed no reason why this first survey might not answer both for listing the land and for patenting it.

The survey for listing, made by Forest Officers, has always been without expense to the prospective homesteader. Under the new arrangement the field expenses of the survey will continue to be paid by the Department of Agriculture, so that the applicant will merely be called on to meet the cost of checking up and platting the surveys by the Surveyor General. This will move one of the greatest objections to the working of the Forest Homestead Law. The officials of both the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior are pleased that the way has been found, through cooperation in the surveys, to simplify the procedure, cut out a duplication of work, and lessen the cost of settling upon agricultural lands within National Forests.