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**Ferdie J. Deering**

## Area of State Facing Change

**FROM KIAMICHI MOUNTAINS—**  
In the 1920s, main sources of income for Southeastern Oklahoma residents were timber, crop farming and moonshining. This has changed dramatically.

Nowadays, main sources of income are the lumber industry, cattle ranching and recreation. Each transition is extensive.

The early-day timber cutters went out of business after they had cut off the better trees, leaving less desirable trees to grow into the crowded, stunted forests that prevail today.

Crop farming went out with sharecropping, as cotton and corn acreages were shifted to the prairies and plains where they could be farmed more efficiently with machinery.

Moonshining ended with repeal of prohibition. Cattle now compete with deer for forage in a valley that old timers say once boasted of 21 whiskey stills in a five-mile stretch.

Forests are being geared to timber management, in which new trees are planted to replace those taken out.

Ranching took hold as individuals consolidated former fields and mountainsides into tracts big enough for pastures. Opening of a network of improved highways has made virtually the entire area accessible and it is no longer reserved for hunters and fishermen.

One other major development is changing this country. It is the dam-

ming of streams to build lakes large and small to conserve water for local needs and distant places, and to improve facilities for recreation, fishing and wildlife. With half a dozen major reservoirs built and as many more authorized or planned, some 32 million acre feet of water still run out of state each year.

These developments have not taken place without controversy. The lumber industry is involved in a dispute over "clear cutting," in which scrubby mixed forests are converted to useful products and the land replanted to trees for harvest 25 years hence.

Certain interests object to the building of lakes, and the proposed dam on Glover River is a focal point of debate now, with others to come. Under constitutional law, local water needs must be supplied before water may be transported to other areas, but the Kiamichi area figures large in the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's recommendation for a "Comprehensive Water Plan."

Recreation means various things to different people. Sportsmen tend to want other people kept out of areas where they like to fish and hunt, while many natives would prefer that nobody from outside trespass on their poaching grounds. At the same time, other natives would like to see the entire area thrown open to recreational development and some have ideas for doing so.

Oklahomans must look toward the Kiamichi region for much of our water supplies, for outdoor recreation, for livestock production, and for our forest industry. The future is bright, if the right decisions are made to develop the best without spoiling the rest.