

Dean Adams on Forest Preservation

At a recent meeting of the Montreal Forum, Dean Adams, of McGill University, spoke very strongly about the need of safeguarding our forests. This is a subject which has been brought to the attention of the public so much in the past that doubtless a considerable number are weary of it, but there seems no other way to arouse public opinion than by this process of reiteration. The question is too important to leave to individual effort. A progressive firm or individual here and there becomes so impressed with the national danger that action is taken, but the great mass of those concerned do little or nothing in the matter. It is just for these that Dr. Adams' warning is published.

After showing that our forest areas were being depleted at a rapid rate, he went on to point out that the forests in the Northern belt were not of such value as those in the Southern belt, but in the latter the really good timber was seriously depleted. One-half of the total timber in the Dominion was located in British Columbia. There had been enormous destruction of forests in the past, the lumbermen having cut out the trees in such a way that the latter contributed to the spread of fire, and more timber had been burned down than had been cut by the lumbermen. In some instances the fires had so seriously affected the soil that replenishing was out of the question. Dr. Adams referred to the methods of the St. Maurice Forest

Protective Association, and of the Lower Ottawa Association, to guard against fire, and said their efforts were examples of what could be done to resist fires.

It was supposed by some that the northern forests were inexhaustible; surveys, however, showed that this was a mistake, and it was possible that our forest wealth could be exhausted. How could we conserve our forests? We could protect them from destruction by fire, and he was glad to note that in British Columbia efforts were being made to this end. We must also replant our forests, and follow the example of European countries, where reforestation had proved successful. He suggested in particular a scheme for conserving the forest resources in the northern belt, so that the country would have a permanent source of supply which would bring in a large annual revenue. The reason why such a scheme was not carried out was to be found in the changing character of governments, who preferred to pass it on from time to time rather than incur the great expense. A strong public opinion was needed in order to force a government to take up this question; it was only in this way that any government could be compelled to make the necessary expenditure.

One thing is certain. Our forests are not inexhaustible, and further, there is little or no concerted action on the part of the authorities to safeguard and preserve them. Action is needed.—(Pulp & Paper Magazine.)



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