

which could also be transformed into forests. There are laws in France in connection with this national improvement, but they have been loosely applied. The war has now brought out the strict and urgent necessity of rebuilding the forests. "It is impossible to neglect our mutilated forests; it would be a crime to not take up now steps in order to ensure, in a comparatively near future, their reconstruction."

Mr. Marin then enumerates the wooded regions that have been subjected to the military operations of this conflict. He finds that, in general, the forests at the front have been laid waste; the soil as well as the forests themselves has been destroyed. At those places where the struggle has been most acute, the land will have to be completely razed. With regard to the trees injured by bullets, it has been found that their wounds, unlike those of man, do not heal. After a few years the trees die, and can then only be used as firewood. As they are liable to rot, it is better to fell them soon so as to obtain the best possible use of them. Here, Mr. George is quoted in his scientific explanations of the causes whereby an injured tree is sure to wither away.

A Few Mutilated Trunks.

With reference to the damages done to the soil, Mr. Marin quotes the following *communiqué* of April, 1915: "From the woods of Ailly, there remain but a few mutilated trunks. It is a field of desolation, levelled by shells. There no longer exists an inch of ground that has not been overturned by explosives."

The writer then discusses a bill he has prepared with a view to obviate the disaster caused by this war, and in which he suggests a thorough reconstruction of the ruined forests of his country. We give here a brief summary of the chief parts of the bill referred to; it deals with "the gravity of the damages caused to our woods and forests; the calculation and the estimates of these damages, the

means and methods to be adopted in the reconstruction of the said forests; the necessity of special legislation in connection with these improvements; the difficulties of all kinds to be confronted in the application of the present law; the solution of the problem in the purchase by the State of all forests affected." He lays stress on a clause of the present law which to his mind should be amended, and which he would have substituted by a more acceptable proposition. According to the existing legislation, all sums paid to a proprietor, in the purchase of damaged and unused land by the State, must be employed by the proprietor in the improvement or reforestation of the said property. If, after the said improvements, he has money left, he must spend it in rebuilding adjacent properties. Instead of this, Mr. Marin suggests that, after the proprietor has spent sufficient to completely rebuild his destroyed property, he be permitted to keep the balance; in all cases, the State would pay for the said lands amounts corresponding with their full value, prior to the war. This measure would have the advantages of indemnifying the settler for his loss and of turning over to the State valuable tracts of wooded lands which would constitute a splendid addition to the national resources and which it would be bound to protect. — In explaining his bill, he admits that it will be difficult to ascertain the whole extent of the damages; a committee of experts would be entrusted with this task. Mr. de la Roussière, general secretary to the Forest Committee, is here quoted: "About 515,000 hectares of our forests are damaged. It is not completely devastated, but in estimating the loss at two-thirds, we should not be far from the truth. It will take at least a century before our forests are restored to their original conditions."

What of the Future?

The task will be enormous, but it will have to be attempted. The country will ever need wood for fuel and