

and the rush of water in the spring. The village was in danger, and it became urgent to take means of saving it from the threatening invasion.

M. l'abbé J. D. Lefebvre, curé of Oka, took the matter in hand. He is nothing of a professional forester; however, under the circumstances he proved himself to be one, and a good one too. With the permission of his superiors, he undertook to plant trees on these moving sands. I cite here the words in which he explained to me what he did :—

“The trees planted are pines, white spruces, cedars and hemlocks. The majority are pines and spruces. The reason for this is that the saplings of these trees are more common. Out of the 66,000 trees planted, about 8,000 have perished. I replaced them later on. The trees which are the most exposed to the wind do not grow so well as the others; and, in order to shelter them from the winds I have planted them in groups; the others were planted in rows.

To fix the sand, I had sown about 100 bags of poor grain which the farmers gave me after the sifting; then I had spread chaff of oats, barley, buckwheat, etc., to cover the ground. The success of the plants appeared to me to be assured after one year. The little trees were planted at a distance of only three feet apart, to prevent the sand from piling up. It seems to me that the distance ought to be from ten to twelve feet in a soil where there would not be the inconvenience of sand. Later, it will be necessary to space them by removing one of every three. The size of the plants was on the average about three feet. Their present dimension is from twelve to twenty feet. The planting was done in October and November of 1886, 1887 and 1888, and a few thousand more in 1895 to replace those which had perished. This time of the year was chosen in order that the young plants might have more moisture; the autumn rains and afterwards the melting of the snow. I thought that these little trees would be already strong enough and better protected against the great heat of the summer and the effect of the sun on the burning sand.

The total cost of these plantations was about two thousand dollars. I did not buy the plants as we could get them a few acres from the place of planting. Later, I had some trimming done, the work costing about four hundred and fifty dollars. Forty-eight acres were covered by these plantations.”

This is what the Sulpicians did at Oka. Perhaps the official foresters will find in these notes some details to criticise from a technical point of view. But this would not make the result any way different. The sand dunes of Oka are fixed, and the now growing forest, perhaps still a little crowded, will be worth much more in a few years than was laid out upon it.

While listening last fall to the account which my excellent friend was giving me of his experience in planting, I asked him if it would not be *à propos* to try the same experiment on some of our arid farms, which give no crops whatever and upon which one can see the sand drifting in summer like the snow in winter. Such a work is not beyond the means of an enterprising government. And at the end of fifty or eighty years, these lands would represent a value much greater than the initial expense, even if we take into account a reasonable interest on the capital.