



∴ EDITORIAL ∴

MOVING THE FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORIES.

There has been a rumor about for some time, that the Department of the Interior has been contemplating the removal of the Forest Products Laboratories of Canada from their present quarters in Montreal, to a new location at Ottawa. Correspondence with the Department confirms the rumor that this matter has been contemplated but no definite step has been taken as yet. The reason for, or the advantage in, making such a move was asked for but no information on that point has been forthcoming. We assume that there is neither.

From an occasional visit to the laboratories and a review of the work accomplished and that in progress, together with the problems pressing for solution, it seems perfectly clear that what is needed at the present time is a little more generous appropriation for staff in order to cope with the present situation rather than to spend money in moving to other quarters whose preparation for the work of the laboratories would be even more expensive.

Moving the Laboratories to Ottawa would be, in our mind, advantageous under only one circumstance; that is, the establishment of a Central Research Bureau which would include facilities for the investigation of the basic problems affecting Canada's important industries, particularly those founded on our unexcelled natural resources. Until such a central bureau is established and can supply facilities for investigations and immediate expert advice in pure science to those investigating industrial problems, it will be far better to leave the Laboratories in their present location where cooperation with one of Canada's leading Universities is not only possible but practicable.

There will come a time when certain departments of the Laboratories will require safe housing. The present structure, while attractive from the outside to one whose eye does not notice the considerable deviation of the walls from the vertical, and not inconveniently arranged inside, is becoming inadequate to the possibilities for service if better quarters were available. The building has been gradually sinking until it has really become unsafe and should be replaced. This building houses the Departments of Timber Physics and the general offices of the Laboratories but not the Pulp and Paper Division, which is accommodated in a separate building which is at present quite adequate to the needs of this department,

there having been erected a few years ago, an addition designed to accommodate digesters and other pulp making equipment. The property belongs to McGill University and it will not be unreasonable to expect that the advantages of association with the Laboratories might induce the University faculty to provide out of their new building fund for better housing of their tenants.

The advantages of association with the University go far beyond the mere question of shelter. There are at the University a number of timber testing machines which are in very frequent use by the Laboratories staff and also used for instructional work by the University staff. Part of this equipment belongs to the Laboratories and is installed at the University for convenience and other parts belong to the University and are at the disposal of the Laboratories staff. This makes it possible to have practically double the equipment that either institution could afford by itself. Further than this, the personnel of both institutions are at hand for consultation and mutual assistance. This cooperation between the University and the Laboratories has apparently been more extensively developed with regard to the mechanical and physical properties of timbers than has been the case with regard to the utilization of wood in the manufacture of pulp and paper. It is in this direction that we are most interested although we fully appreciate the value of the work done by the other departments, such for instance, as measuring of fibres, the examination into the causes of and remedies for the growth of fungus and the preservation of timber for mill roofs.

We have felt that the Dominion of Canada as a whole, and those interested in the Pulp and Paper Industry in particular, have seriously suffered from the lack of co-ordination between the faculty of Applied Science at McGill and the pulp and paper division of the Laboratories. We fully appreciate the valuable work that has been done with the equipment and funds at the disposal of the limited staff of this branch for several years but we are certain that it would mean dollars to the people of Canada and more efficient operation of mills and more complete utilization of pulpwood if a director of exceptional ability could have been afforded by the Laboratories. Opportunities in investigations in pulp and paper making and cellulose chemistry, together with the problem of the disposal or utilization of mill wastes, are almost unlimited. Many of these problems are not very urgent but there