

Conservation

A monthly bulletin published by the
Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, Canada.

VOL. IX

SEPTEMBER, 1920

NO. 8

Wasteful Making of Railway Ties

Much Valuable Timber Wasted or Rendered Unprofitable in Getting out Hewn Ties

In our timbered districts, the waste in making hewn or "axed" ties is causing much interest. This is a very wasteful practice, and is one to which government agents have been repeatedly calling attention.

The awakened interest in the subject is due, no doubt, to the growing market for jackpine lumber and the consequent operations of the small mills, which are sawing ties along some of the northern railway lines and also shipping lumber to the cities. The appearance of a woods where logs have been taken out for this purpose presents a contrast to an area where the ties have been hewn in the bush. On the former areas, all trees large enough to produce ties are cut and logs are taken down to a minimum top diameter of probably six inches. When the tree is down and bucked, all the wood material goes to the mill. For ties hewn in the woods, the tie-maker is paid at a rate per tie. Naturally, he will use only the most easily converted trees, consequently, the trees which would entail much work in removing limbs are left standing. If a tree is a little larger than is necessary to make a good tie, he discards several feet of the butt (the very best wood material). To make the tie he scores it on two faces, and the chips left in the woods represent much lumber which would be taken from the sides of the ties if sawn at the mill. Finally, he leaves on the top of the tree a lid that will not make a No. 2 tie, and this often means that an eight- or nine-inch top is left in the woods.

This actual waste, however, is not the only consideration. Operators taking out hewn ties necessarily skin over large areas, using only the choice material and leaving much good timber, but, in all probability, not enough to make a second operation over the same area a paying undertaking. These slashings also form a serious hazard, and when fire once gets in, nothing can save the remaining timber.

The waste in hewing ties will be admitted by all operators without question, but they contend that expediency demands it in

The Commission of Conservation

The Commission of Conservation was created by an Act of Parliament to consider all questions relating to the better utilization of the natural resources of Canada, to make such inventories, collect and disseminate such information, and to frame such recommendations as seem conducive to that end.



SLASH RESULTING FROM A RAILWAY TIE OPERATION
A fire under these circumstances would mean the practically complete destruction of the forest.

some parts, due to the difficulty of driving the logs by water to the mills. The fact remains that there is much absolutely needless waste at present. In view of our rapidly disappearing timber supplies as few ties as possible should be hewn in the woods, and operators should take out both tie timber and pulpwood when logging areas where it is not commercially possible to take out after the area has been operated for the other.—A. V. Gilbert.

Another Fishery Threatened

To afford the declining scallop fishery of Nova Scotia reasonable protection, an order in council has been passed, whereby no one shall fish for, take or catch scallops in the province of Nova Scotia, for use outside the said province.

The scallop is a bivalve mollusk, found along the Atlantic coast. The fishery has become severely depleted and in Lunenburg county, where the industry is mainly centred, the decline in the taking of scallops is having a serious effect. Scallops may still be taken, but only to supply the demand within the province of Nova Scotia.

Genuine Conservation is Statesmanship

When any such undertaking as the development of a natural resource is proposed, if that development is to be made under government control and regulation, it at once appears to arouse the fear that it is to be somehow the beginning of a malevolent policy called "conservation," and conservation has had a mean meaning to many ears. It connoted stinginess and a provincial thrift, spies in the guise of Government inspectors, hateful interferences with individual enterprise and initiative, governmental haltings and cowardices, and all the constrictions of an arrogant, narrow, and academically-minded bureaucracy which cannot think largely and feels no responsibility for national progress. The word should mean helpfulness, not hindrance—helpfulness to all who wish to use a resource and think in large terms than that of the greatest immediate profit; hindrance only to those who are spendthrift. A conservation which results in a stalemate as between the forces of progress and governmental inertia is criminal, while a

Utilization of Canadian Coals

Review of Different Problems Involved in Their More Widespread Distribution

It is a considerable strain upon public patience to be subjected to severe shortages of fuel from time to time, and, on the other hand, to read frequent statements to the effect that about one-sixth of the total coal resources of the world is possessed by Canada.

To promote a more general understanding of the nature of the numerous problems involved in making greater use of our own fuel resources, the Commission of Conservation carried out a thorough survey of the whole situation, and, in 1913, published the results in a volume entitled *Conservation of Coal in Canada*, compiled by W. J. Dick. Mr. Dick made a very exhaustive study, covering the following problems:—

- (1) Improvement of Canadian mining methods;
- (2) Cheap power problem in the Prairie Provinces;
- (3) Domestic fuel problem of the Prairie Provinces;
- (4) Utilization of low grade fuels;
- (5) The coking of coal.

Perhaps the most illuminating feature of the report is the examination of the extent to which the use of Canadian coal is controlled by freight rates.

Conservation of Coal in Canada is one of a series of publications issued by the Commission of Conservation to afford the best possible understanding of Canada's fuel and power resources and problems. Copies are freely available on application to the Commission.

conservation which is based on the fuller, the more essential use of a resource is statesmanship.—*Former U.S. Secretary of Interior, Franklin K. Lane.*

In all future vessels for the Canadian Government merchant marine, Douglas fir will replace the Southern pine heretofore used in the laying of decks.

Fish ladders are to be placed in the Bow river, which will enable the trout, grayling and other food fishes to ascend the river. This will give fifty miles of additional fishing ground.