

whether our land is to remain for ever rich in forest wealth or is soon to lament its vanished woodlands, and at the same time deplore the evils that always follow the 'denudation of a country. Unhappily the Provincial authorities represent that not yet extinct phase of popular sentiment which, from the acquired habit or directly inherited feeling of early settlers in a thickly timbered country, looks upon a tree almost with an instinct of destruction, as though the farm still had to be hewed out from the forest. At best they do not rise above that succeeding stage of public opinion leading the mass of our population to look upon our forests as practically inexhaustible, or carelessly to rest content with the idea that our timber is at least so abundant as to leave little cause for the present generation to feel anxiety. If better informed and more far-seeing individuals raise a note of alarm it falls upon unwilling ears, for the Provincial authorities have, or think they have, an interest in not heeding; and proverbially "none are so deaf as those who won't hear." The stripping of our forests affords an income all the more welcome because our Provinces have limited sources of revenue, while there is a tendency to ever increasing expenditure. Though the system is improvident, it produces large sums of ready money, whereas conservative forestry would mean a less immediate, if steadier and more lasting, income, besides the initiative expenditure and trouble. Even popular representative government, with all its advantages, has its disadvantages, like all else that is human, and the authorities, with an eye to the public balance sheet, consider merely the present, and leave posterity, as indeed has been cynically admitted, to look out for itself.

It must however, in fairness, be admitted that the Provinces have taken some sensible and more provident steps: arbor-day planting, legislation to check forest fires, the maintenance of forest guards, are steps in the right

direction. But after all they are but palliatives, small in proportion to the evil. Ontario, indeed, has a forestry official, and Mr. Phipps gives good advice which is published only to be utterly neglected, like that of the Hon. H. G. Joly de Lotbiniere in Quebec. Sir Oliver Mowat has acted wisely in his recent establishment of a considerable forest reserve or park in this province. It will be for the benefit of the country if he continues this policy and makes other important reserves of woodland. There are large tracts in Ontario which are well fitted for the growth of timber and quite unsuitable for arable land. In fact it is cruelty to tempt agricultural settlers to take up land in localities where, though they may find a few fertile acres for a farm, there cannot be a thickly settled farming community, and where there must consequently be a difficulty in keeping up schools, churches, roads and markets. Such districts should be set apart for perpetual forest, and Sir Oliver should make other reserves with no sparing hand. The mere postponement of the work of denudation would be a great gain and there would be an opportunity afforded for the adoption of a scientific forestry when its advantages are recognized.

The period for which our forests would last under the present wasteful system, without conservation or reproduction, cannot be calculated with very nice accuracy. One great difficulty is to ascertain the extent of our forests containing valuable timber. The Provincial Governments, which own the great bulk of our remaining woodlands, are very chary of giving such information. Several years ago Mr. Meredith in the Ontario Legislature strongly urged the administration to appoint a commission to "take stock" of the assets of the province in the shape of timbered lands, but after a prolonged and animated debate Sir Oliver Mowat and his colleagues flatly refused to publish, or even to acquire, the desired statistics. They preferred to deal in