

Commission of Conservation

CANADA

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CONSERVATION is published the first of each month. Its object is the dissemination of information relative to the natural resources of Canada, their development and the proper conservation of the same, together with timely articles governing town-planning and public health.

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The autumn hunting season brings its annual record of accidents. Safety in the woods and field should be the sportsman's first consideration.

Gasoline gives off a vapour constantly, and air which has mixed with it about ten per cent of gasoline vapour is more dangerous than gunpowder.

Many parts of Canada have been suffering this year from low water in lakes and rivers. This condition emphasizes the necessity for protecting the forest cover of the watersheds.

Conservation and propagation of bird life go hand in hand, and the forces of destruction, disease and shooting must be limited and regulated until a balance is reached that will show an annual healthful increase.

Stovepipes should be thoroughly cleaned of soot before being used in the autumn, not one as a precaution against fire, but because the soot acts as an insulation, and keeps the pipe cool. Instead of the heat radiating from a warm pipe, it is carried up the chimney and wasted.

The city of Milan, Italy, has undertaken a municipal renting agency, in order to supervise, to a limited extent, the hygienic living conditions among those occupying large workmen's homes. Before undertaking the renting of a property it is first inspected by the city officials and a report made as to its cleanliness and location.

NON-AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Optimistic as we have been in this country, we seem to have been unable to see any value worth caring for in our non-agricultural lands. Our vision was broad enough years ago, when we heard of agricultural lands in the Peace River valley, to recognize that such lands, while unused at the time, would within a decade or two grow crops and support a population. We can look across the future to the time when our far northern mineral deposits, though inaccessible and incapable of development at the present time, will develop centres of industry. But we travel daily across the non-agricultural, logged areas and burned-over lands which surround many of our most densely settled communities and lie across our transcontinent. Always and we see in such lands no asset. This attitude is both dangerous and unfair to the country. We must realize that our present stands of merchantable timber cannot support our growing industries indefinitely. The growing American demand for forest products, to which in a very few decades will be added a much greater market in Europe than now exists, will very rapidly wipe out our eastern merchantable forests. Even now, New Brunswick, speeded up by foreign markets, is cutting each year from Crown lands more than the annual forest growth.—H. R. MacMillan, at 1915 Annual Meeting of Commission of Conservation.

LOSSES BY FOREST FIRES

The total amount of standing timber in the United States is nearly 2,900 billion board feet. At least 76 per cent of this, or 2,200 billion feet, is privately-owned. About 21 per cent, or 600 billion feet, is in the National Forests. About 3 per cent, or 90 billion feet, is in some other form of public ownership—Federal, State, or municipal. The original stand of timber in the United States has been roughly estimated to have been 5,200 billion feet covering approximately 800,000,000 acres. Fire has destroyed at least as much of this as lumbering has utilized. As much again has been wasted.

The amount of merchantable saw-timber in Canada has been roughly estimated at 600 billion board feet, exclusive of a vast amount of pulp wood, the extent of which has not been estimated. Thus, Canada has probably between one-fifth and one-fourth as much timber as the United States. Undoubtedly, the amount of timber in Canada uselessly destroyed by fire is several times as great as the amount that has been utilized. However, the fire loss is being materially reduced by the exercise of greater precautions on the part of governmental agencies and of lumbermen. The outlook for the practice of forestry in Canada is

vastly improved by the fact that the fundamental ownership of a very large percentage of non-agricultural lands has been retained by the Crown, instead of passing into private ownership, as has so largely taken place in the United States. Very seldom can private landowners afford to hold cut-over forest lands for successive crops of timber. This is essentially a governmental function, on account of the long-time element involved.

Fish and the Cost of Living

As a Substitute for Meat, Fish Should be More Generally Used

"Eat fish" should prove a valuable slogan for combatting the high cost of living. Meat has risen in price steadily within recent years, and, strangely enough, the available supply is becoming less competent to meet the demand. It is not surprising, therefore, that fish should be looked to as a substitute. As a food it is excellent, comparing not unfavorably with meat, although the proportions of nutritive elements such as protein, albumen and fat differ considerably.

Heretofore, fish has not been a popular article of diet in Canada. The reasons for this are various and some of them must be removed before fish eating can become a national habit. In the first place, fresh sea fish in prime condition has been almost unobtainable even at points not far removed from the coasts. This has been due frequently, to inefficient handling of the fish by the fishermen and by the distributing agencies. It has also been due to unsatisfactory transportation and retail market conditions. These difficulties are not insurmountable, and some of them are already being overcome. Education of fishermen and others who handle fish is a necessity that cannot be much longer overlooked. Traditional methods of handling must give way to more scientific and efficient practices. Such changes would mean increased profits for the fishermen, and, at the same time, by making available large quantities of food which have hitherto been wasted, would improve the quality and lower the price to the consumer. Transportation is already being improved and, in time, when the inland demands for fish warrant it, fast train services should, and probably will, be established from the fishing ports to the larger inland centres. The present offers splendid opportunities to the fishery industry. A demand for fish is already half created by the high price and comparative scarcity of meat. But if Canadians are to be taught to eat fish, there must be more enlightened methods of producing and handling it.—A.D.

Ashes should not be placed near wooden buildings or fences.

Vacant Lot Gardens

Excellent Results Secured—Precautions Against Weeds Required

Reports from various cities and towns in Canada as to the cultivation of vacant lots indicate that the campaign inaugurated last spring for greater production and more extensive use of vacant land has been a success. Several cities have handled the vacant lot problem in a systematic manner, and have secured results commensurate to the amount of energy expended. Some, by allowing interest to lag, have been only partially successful. In others, also, circumstances militated against success, in that unemployed men took up the cultivation of vacant lots, and upon securing employment, neglected them. On the whole, however, the movement can be regarded as a distinct success. No estimate of the value of the product is available, but, judging from the enthusiasm of some of the vacant lot gardeners, the total value is large.

There is one danger, however, to which attention must be drawn, namely, the growth of noxious weeds in the newly cultivated land. Too often, on the removal of the crop, the ground is given over to the weeds. Organizations handling the vacant lot work should give the matter of weed destruction early attention; otherwise, the lots will not only prove a menace to the land in the vicinity by the spread of weed seeds, but create antagonism to the movement on the part of the occupiers of the neighbouring land.

New Brunswick to Take Action

Survey of Crown Lands to be Proceeded With

The Government of New Brunswick has announced that in the near future, it will appoint a provincial forester and proceed with the survey of Crown timber lands, as provided for in the Act of 1912. The Crown lands comprise an area of over ten thousand square miles, or approximately one-third the total area of the province. The proposed action is entirely logical, in view of the fact that the province derives an annual revenue of over half a million dollars from these lands. A careful stock-taking, together with a thorough and scientific investigation of the questions of reproduction and rate of growth, will be required to determine the means necessary for the perpetuation of the forest and of the revenues resulting from its exploitation.—C.L.

The importance of safety should be impressed upon all employees whether new or old.