

Commission of Conservation

CANADA

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CONSERVATION is published about 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 same, together with timely articles covering town-planning and public health.

CONSERVATION is printed on one side of the paper only, for convenience of newspapers in clipping for reproduction.

CONSERVATION is mailed free to those interested in the subjects covered by the work of the Commission.

OTTAWA, OCTOBER, 1914

The care and protection of his tools and implements is one of the most important of the farmer's autumn duties.

The removal of forests is largely the cause of floods and freshets and soil erosion; the latter produces one of the great wastes of agriculture.

The bright days of autumn may be profitably employed in the raking of lawns, the burning of dead leaves and in a general clean-up of yards and gardens.

The laying out of streets, squares and parks, and their embellishment by landscape or architectural treatment, though important, are only the commencement of city planning. The installation of the necessary utilities and their effective operation and maintenance are of fundamental importance.

Carelessness is often the cause not only of injury to the workman himself but also of danger to his fellow-workmen. By neglecting to look about him, or possibly by thinking that it is the other's business to be on his guard or to keep out of the way, the careless workman is apt to cause serious injuries to his fellow workers.

The annual migration of birds to the south will soon be taking place. If they are to reach their winter home and return to us in the spring, protection must be afforded them on their way. The United States has "The Federal Migratory Bird Law" for the protection of migratory birds. Canada has excellent provincial laws but the safe exodus of the birds depends largely on the attitude of individual Canadians.

Development of Natural Resources

National prosperity depends on more than the mere possession of natural wealth. Conservative methods of administering and developing those resources are equally essential. The Canadian people have a splendid national heritage but, unfortunately, they have also an excess of commercial optimism—if that is possible—which manifests itself most frequently and most clearly in a tendency to over-exploit and, consequently, to injure new undertakings of a profitable nature. Recent examples of precipitate development are not wanting. During the present year, the European war has upset the entire commercial and financial world, but, prior to this occurrence, two sections of the Dominion, the extreme east and the far west, had been favoured (?) with a diversion from the prevailing business depression. Prince Edward Island, as the centre of the fur-farming industry, continued to attract much attention, while the discoverers of oil brought Alberta into prominence.

Both of these circumstances are worthy of note in so far as one may gauge their ultimate effect on the resources and productive efficiency of the nation. Prince Edward Island has taken up with enthusiasm an enterprise which is comparatively new but of undoubted worth. It is admirably adapted to the climate of the province and should develop into a sound and permanent addition to industrial Canada. Alberta's fortunes lie in a different direction—in the discovery of a natural resource of primary importance. The geology of the province indicates the possible existence of an oil field which, if realized, will mean much in the economic development of western Canada. To date, however, both fur-farming in the east and oil at the Rockies have created a far greater stir in the financial than in the commercial world. If fox-ranching and the rearing of fur-bearing animals in general is to become a stable industry, it must be by the route of slow, steady expansion. Countless company promotions based on inflated values of breeding stock, can only constitute a hindrance. Similarly, with regard to Alberta's oil, fictitious or real. Investors will lose nothing and may gain much if they abandon wild speculation for the more prudent course of awaiting the result of careful investigation by men of experience and technical training.

In October, 1913, the Calgary Petroleum Products Company discovered oil in the Dingman well, near Okotoks, Alberta. Drilling operations were continued and in May of the present year, oil was again struck at a depth of about 2,800 feet. Shortly afterwards, a strike was claimed by the owners of Monarch well at

Olds, forty miles north of Calgary. On the strength of these successes and especially owing to the rosy reports from the Dingman well, the oil fever spread rapidly over Alberta and scores of development companies were launched.

Few ventures are more speculative than the investigation and development of oil fields, and for that reason, the most conservative methods should rule. But in Alberta, as elsewhere, they have been very little in evidence. Promoters and brokers have had great success. The ripples and waves of their operations have extended over the financial west as far as the Pacific coast; on the east, they have broken only on the rock of Manitoba's paternal company laws. Solely on the strength of one well's concerns were organized in a few months with a combined authorized capital of over \$170,000,000—a sum far in excess of the total paid-up capital of all the chartered banks of the Dominion. For a time western Canada's newspapers resembled oil-trade journals; to-day oil finds little mention in their columns. The excitement has almost subsided, frenzy of speculation has come and gone, and its cause has, as yet, attained no commercial importance.

Canada is not an important contributor to the world's oil production. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Alberta will yet prove to possess valuable oil fields. The realization of this hope would add a most important item to the inventors of our national resources and, after a regrettable experience, a saner if more staid development of the regions which geologists have stated to be of oil-bearing structure may now be anticipated.

*Producing a "white" oil that indicated a reservoir at a great depth below the surface—possibly so great as to be unprofitable.

The Home Garden

The British Board of Agriculture has advised the householders of Great Britain to utilize every foot of spare land in the planting of gardens for next year, to supply as far as possible their own garden produce. In this way they can assist in relieving any shortage which may develop on account of war conditions.

This suggestion is of equal importance to Canadians. Attached to nearly every home are pieces of ground which at present are merely waste land. With little effort these may be converted into productive gardens. It requires very little space for a garden that, with ordinary care, will supply an average household with vegetables. By cultivating the available ground many Canadian families can reduce their living expenses, and, at the same time, secure vegetables which are absolutely fresh.

To obtain the best results, the ground should be dug up this fall and left loose. Sod should be turned under to a depth of about four inches to permit of its rotting.

If the land has been partially exhausted, the addition of manure is advisable and this should be well dug in. The ground should not be raked after digging, but any growth appearing this autumn should be cut down. Vegetable refuse, in the nature of vines, weeds or dead leaves, should be burned and the ashes spread. This burning also helps to destroy weed seeds.

In the spring, after the wet season is past and the ground has become warm and fairly dry, the garden should be raked over carefully until the soil is broken up fine, when it may be planted as desired.—D.

Condition of Trade Expansion

In a "Plain Talk on Opportunities for Trade Expansion in South America," Dr. David Kinley, University of Illinois, gives his fellow countrymen some good advice that is equally applicable to Canadians. He says:

"There is too much talk of Government initiative in this matter. We cannot build up trade by writing about it or talking about it, or by determining that 'this country' must do business with some other country. Countries do not trade. Business firms and individuals trade. If, therefore, any manufacturer or group of manufacturers is in earnest about developing trade with South America he must proceed on his own initiative. He should send sensible, responsible agents at once to report upon the conditions under which business can be done. He should find the usual terms of credit, for the conditions and methods of doing business, particularly in granting credit, are not the same in all these countries in all lines of business. These agents should report exactly what articles the people have been accustomed to buy, and what they want in style, quantity, colours, prices, and other details. The manufacturer should then endeavor to meet the wishes of his prospective customers in all respects. All this implies what a recent manufacturer has called a 'network of intelligent agencies.'"

The province of Quebec has a total of 111,400,900 acres of land set aside as forest reserves. This total includes the National and Gaspé parks, in addition to twenty township forest reserves aggregating 267,000 acres. In Ontario, the area of forest reserves totals 11,690,240 acres, with an additional 2,757,120 acres included in the Algonquin, Quetico and Rondeau parks, a total reserved area of 14,447,360 acres.