

**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 proper conservation, and the publication of timely articles on town-planning and public health.

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CONSERVATION AND PATRONAGE

It is doubtful if the people of Canada would have tolerated the patronage system as long as they have, had they fully appreciated the tremendous loss in dollars and cents which it was inflicting on the country. No one not in close touch with the public service can realize how great the loss has been.

Recently, a Canadian weekly, in referring editorially to the millions of dollars' worth of timber destroyed by forest fires, asked why government officials in charge of fire-protection services throughout Canada were not dismissed because of inefficiency in coping with the forest fire problem, pointing out that a private corporation would soon 'fire' the head of a department who could not produce results. This journal, however, overlooked the fact that most heads of fire-protection services in Canada have had to fight the patronage evil as well as forest fires. Hardly a year passes in which instances have not come to the notice of the Commission of Conservation where valuable forest property has been destroyed because a ranger or some other official had received his appointment because he was a politician and not because he was a competent forester. Is it just that the public should hold a fisheries official responsible for the depletion of certain fisheries when the assistants they give him are more interested in catching votes than fish-breakers? The secret of efficiency in public administration as well as in private business lies in securing the best-qualified, highest-salaried heads of departments obtainable, giving them a free hand and holding them strictly accountable for results. So long, however, as incompetent help is foisted upon them, good results cannot be expected.

The patronage evil is one of the most insidious enemies against which the conservation movement has had to contend, and the announcement by the new Union Government that it intends to abolish the last vestige of it from the Do-

minion public service is therefore of the highest importance to conservationists. The United States has found the merit system a good investment. British Columbia has adopted it and it is gradually making its appearance in the forest services of some of the other provinces. The time should soon be at hand when the people of Canada can, with justice, expect, and should, with public spirit, demand, a higher degree of efficiency from government departments.—M.J.P.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING NUMBER

To give our readers in brief, readable form an idea of what has been accomplished in the past year, and also of what is still to be done towards the conservation of our natural resources, we are making this issue of *Conservation* a special Annual Meeting Number and doubling its size. Much of the additional information it contains was laid before the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Commission, held at Ottawa on Nov. 27 and 28. It is presented here in condensed form for the benefit of the busy man who cannot spare the time to read lengthy reports, and also for the use of newspapermen who desire short, pithy paragraphs for use in their columns. Should the latter desire a second copy for reference purposes, it will be gladly sent on request.—M.J.P.

UTILIZING THE WOLF-FISH

The wolf-fish or sea-eat is a fish that Canadians as yet have not utilized. There are two forms of this fish, *Anarhichas lupus* and *A. latifrons*, the latter the more northerly form. The fish run from fifteen to fifty pounds in weight, are long but not exactly eel-like, and are quite big and heavy, with perfectly white flesh, whiter than halibut, and flaky and delicious. Thirty years ago a Scotch fisherman told me that he had eaten it and it was the best fish that swam. No one who has eaten it will deny that it is very superior. Great quantities of it are caught on our coast and thrown away. Once, when at Clark Harbour, Nova Scotia, I saw a number of them lying on the wharf, as they were considered absolutely of no value. They are exceedingly good fish. In the British market—the most particular market in the world—the wolf-fish is now being sold with the head removed, and probably is called a 'very superior cod.'—Dr. E. E. Prince, in 'Fish, Birds and Game.'

The United States Bureau of Fisheries has announced that the meat of whales and porpoises is suitable for human consumption. In texture and appearance it resembles beef, though a darker red, and is devoid of all fishy taste.

**OVER TEN THOUSAND
FORESTIERS OVERSEAS**

Four forestry battalions have been raised in Canada and have proceeded overseas, in addition to one battalion converted on arrival in England, and about 4,500 men supplied from drafts from various parts of Canada. All told, the number of men in Canadian forestry battalions totals more than 10,000, besides a large number of men already overseas who were formed into forestry companies. All the forestry battalions have been combined into a corps, into which reinforcements are drafted from the medically unfit infantry.

While exploitation and not conservation was the object of these organizations, it is interesting to note that a number of Canadian foresters employed their technical knowledge, in Great Britain at least, in constructing volume tables, estimating and appraising timber, measuring materials and even making forest descriptions and growth studies.

In the United States, a forestry regiment has been organized as a result of co-operation between the Forest Service and the War Department. About one-half of the officers are technically-trained foresters, of whom a very large proportion are present or former officials of the Forest Service. This regiment has now proceeded to France, for service behind the British lines in supplying the necessary timbers for military purposes. Other similar regiments are being raised, and will be officered by foresters and lumbermen.

Plans are already being laid, it is said, for a very extensive campaign of forest planting on non-agricultural lands in the British Isles after the war. Unquestionably, a very extensive programme of reforestation will also be necessary in France.—C.L.

How to Economize Bread

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one part cornmeal to two parts wheat flour. Buckwheat flour combines well with wheat flour in any proportion. Soybean meal and cotton-seed meal are both useful in small amounts.

Potato flour, such as has been used abroad, is not generally available in our markets, but boiled mashed potatoes may be substituted for slightly less than half the flour. Boiled rice may also be used with flour in about the same proportion.

Equal measures of cooked bean pulp and flour are satisfactory in muffins.

Commissioner C. J. Yorath, of Saskatoon, suggests that municipalities be compelled to invest their sinking funds in Dominion Government securities yielding not more than 5 per cent interest.

**Making Rural Life
More Attractive**

**Analysis of the Problem of Keeping
Farmers on the Land**

To keep the farmers on the land when they get there has become a greater problem than that of first attracting them to the land. They are said to be leaving the land in thousands at the present time, and we are told that millions of acres of land, which had been occupied at one time, are now deserted, and that the present system of land settlement is productive of much poverty and degradation.* Whether these statements are exaggerated or not, the fact that they are made by responsible people indicates a state of affairs that demands a remedy. Why do men now hesitate to go on the land in the first place, and find it unattractive to stay in the second place? Why do women stay away, with the injurious consequences to rural life which is caused by their absence? The three outstanding reasons are:

First, the numerous ills caused by the holding of large areas of the best and most accessible land by speculators and the want of proper plans for the economic use and development of the land.

Second, the compelling social attractions and the educational facilities of the cities and towns, and,

Third, the lack of ready money and of adequate return for the labour of the farmer, because of want of co-operation, rural credit and of facilities for distribution of his products.

To secure any real improvement in rural life and conditions we must try to bring tracts of land held for speculative purposes into use, prepare development schemes of the land in advance of settlement, try to take care, at least, of the social and educational facilities of the cities into the rural areas, and, simultaneously, provide the co-operative financial and distributive conveniences that are necessary to give the farmer a larger share of the profits of production.

—From *Rural Planning and Development*.

*Millions of acres of land homesteaded in Western Canada have been abandoned by men who failed as farmers.—Farmers' Advocate.

NEW VARIETIES OF APPLES

New varieties of apples are obtained by sowing seeds of cultivated varieties. Seeds from such fruit are more variable than those from wild trees, and, consequently, more likely to give desirable offspring. This operation is one of chance. Frequently, thousands of seedlings are grown without producing one valuable tree. The apple has passed through many changes. The majority of our cultivated varieties originated from seedlings found in America.