

In the early history of Canada the pioneer was very much in evidence, but when the people settled down to sedentary occupations the spirit of adventure seemed to die out so that to-day we know no more, perhaps less, of our unoccupied wilderness than did the voyageur of two hundred years ago.

Exploration in advance of settlement is a necessity. With the knowledge that this would furnish us we would be able to assign such districts to agriculture as would be best suited for that purpose and to leave in forest land not adapted for agriculture, but suited for the growth of timber.

Canada is practically the only country in the northern hemisphere to which the eyes of the world are turned for a timber supply in the time of great scarcity which is fast overtaking us. Let us at once take means to preserve what we have for this contingency. Let us remember not only our present supply, but that we are dealing with that kingdom of nature where the life forces are at work and where reproduction and growth may indefinitely prolong the supply if nature is not prejudicially interfered with.

The attention that has hitherto been given to the forest in this country has been in cutting it down, either for the value of the timber or to get rid of it, in order that the land might be more profitably employed for agriculture; but the day has now arrived when we should cease to regard our productive forests as mines from which only a fixed amount of wealth can be obtained and then abandoned. We should recognize the fact of continuous growth and reproduction of the same varieties, crop succeeding crop for indefinite periods of time. To be sure, it takes about one hundred years for the growth of a mature timber crop, but it requires no labour on our part and it asks only that we allow nature, without interruption, to do its part and generally too on land useless for other purposes.

Owing to the long period required for the production of a mature timber crop the individual cannot be expected to take the same interest in it that he does in agricultural crops that mature in one year, and for this reason forestry belongs more to the state whose life is not measured by years, but by centuries. There is another reason why forestry in this country belongs more exclusively to the state than in perhaps any other country in the world, and it is owing to the fact that most of the land on which our valuable timber grows is still held by the Crown; and considering that the nation is the owner it is most appropriate that this meeting is called in order that the Government may have the views of those competent to give advice on a matter that they are called to administer.

Most of the countries of Europe make the administration of their forests one of their most important departments of