

FELLOW MEMBERS! THIS CALLS FOR YOUR PERSONAL DECISION!

A Plan to Enlist Young Canada in Tree Planting

A Nation-wide Essay Competition to Rouse the School Children to Action in a Practical Form of Timber Conservation.

The modern Canadian farm is land plus—

Good land plus a good farmer plus a good working plant.

The working plant includes a wooden house, wooden furniture, wooden barn, wooden fence posts, wood fuel, wood for implements, wood for annual repair.

Every Canadian farm whether on the southern prairies or in northern Ontario should possess one of nature's automatic wood factories, which the farmer calls a bush lot, or a wood lot. It grows on soil or in locations otherwise unproductive. It requires a minimum of care and gives abundant returns for the time and labor investment. But the farm wood lot does need some care, some intelligent programme applied to it.

The average farm wood lot in Eastern Canada is loafing on its job. Wheat and oats are giving higher and higher yields per acre. The wood lot is giving less. Should this be so? A lean wood lot means only that the owner's wood requirements must be satisfied at a distant lumberyard by cash payment. His farm profits, his farm conveniences, not to mention the beautifying amenities of bodies of trees, are needlessly sacrificed.

Farm Forestry is Due for a Revival.

The Canadian Forestry Association wants the views of its members on a project for enlisting the school children of Canada in a farm forestry competition. The first stage will be a competitive essay for prizes. It will be operated through the schools and will stir up general inquiry and investigation and open the way for the spread of helpful information.

We Want your Personal Opinion About the Plan.

Is this plan valid? Is it practical? Will it give results of positive benefit to Canada?

Many an elaborate plan gets launched on waves of effervescence and the impulse dies right there. This is not the way of the Canadian Forestry Association. If the plan is adopted—and that is for you to say—it will be given effect immediately. The Provincial Governments and their Departments of Education, their Forest Services will be asked to join hands, for we will need a clear path to the school-room and the home of every senior school boy and girl in the Dominion.

Each Province a Unit.

The first stage will be the organizing of an essay competition, Dominion wide in its application. The subject cannot be identically phrased for all provinces, because of the fundamentally different forestry conditions. The preservation of existing trees as a source of wood supply, and the planting of new trees will, in general, represent the topic with which Young Canada will wrestle.

On the basis of "first things first," the competition will confine itself largely to economic considerations, namely the preservation and improvement (or re-establishment) of the farmer's wood lot from the point of view of commercial utility. In the case of the majority of school children on the southern prairies, most prairie tree planting has been done to beautify home surroundings and to protect stock, and crops against wind damage. So, the essay, as concerns the prairie provinces, will assume a special form, emphasizing the planting of trees for shelter belts purposes.

This does not sound as simple as the usual child essay on some topic of patriotic sentiment, such as love of flag, or military sacrifice. Nevertheless it is so identified with local interest and local need, so close to the human fondness for things that grow, that none need apprehend other than an enthusiastic response from Canadian boys and girls.

The Prize Money.

Then the sporting instinct for a competition! We all share it. To compete and perhaps to win! The distinction of winning will be great enough and the prizes substantial enough to give the movement the proper impetus. Each of the nine provinces will be allotted five prizes of \$25, \$20, \$15, \$10, and \$5.

Comprehensiveness of treatment, and intelligence shown concerning the local forestry situation will govern the award. The length of essays will be limited to 1,000 words, less than a newspaper column.

The whole scheme narrows down to a question of stimulating a nation-wide spirit of enquiry concerning the forest resources, a nation-wide recognition that to burn down and cut down millions of trees year after year, without replacement, invites an ultimate disaster. When the timber supply of Canada fails, agriculture, mining, all branches of manufactur-

ing and transportation will cease to operate. Canada's present peril has been similarly disregarded by other great nations. Spending from the "bottomless purse" of forest resources, they have reaped consequences from which our Dominion must be safeguarded at any cost.

The Children Hold the Future.

What will be the probable effect of the proposed competition upon the cause of forest conservation, upon reforestation of waste lands, upon farm forestry, upon tree planting on the northern prairies?

Tomorrow's public policies are being formulated today by the children in our schools. What forestry will amount to in 1930, whether timber conservation will be realized in action, whether living and crop conditions on the bare prairies will be enhanced by the presence of hundreds of millions of planted trees—the answers to such questions are being written in terms of finality this year, this hour, by the army of Canadian boys and girls.

A boy's first world is his home, his school, his few miles of land and woods and water within vision. Let him start his forestry right there. He has a problem at his back door. His father's wood lot (or "bush lot") is all too commonly the out-at-elbows member of the farm family. The best trees have been cut down; the crooked and diseased specimens left. Cattle or sheep graze under the branches and few young trees get a chance to live through a summer. This subject of the farm wood lot will provide the chief subject of discussion for Eastern Canada and British Columbia, for the farm is a voracious consumer of wood materials, three quarters of the entire production of our sawmills throughout America being used for farm buildings and repairs, fence posts, fuel, implements, etc.

After the essay competition has been completed, what? Will the newly-aroused interest in Forestry be permitted to die?

The Second Step.

By no means. The essay competition is a first and essential step, leading to a second national competition in which the boys and girls translate into action their special instruction and newly-acquired interest.

However, the second stage is not our immediate concern. It will follow naturally, probably in 1922.