

Forest wealth of Canada.

ber of western states for irrigation and colonization. This act commits Congress logically to the conservation of the water supply, since otherwise one would be offering the thirsty but an empty cup. In the light of such a pressing need, how ridiculous and yet how tragic was the action at the last session of certain representatives from western states in obstructing, by parliamentary tactics, the moderate (even too moderate) measure of conservation known as the McRae Bill. This Bill, which is still on the calendar of the House of Representatives, provides for the restriction and regulation of the sale of timber on the forest preserves in such manner as to insure the object and perpetuity of the reservations, sale to the highest bidder being substituted for the present loose system of issuing timber permits and careful provision being made for the needs of the *bond fide* settler. Instead of hesitating for a moment over a measure so manifestly in the general interest of their constituents these representatives would better have united in petitioning the President to extend the reservation system in the states which they represent, and in obtaining much needed legislation to secure for the reserves, already made or to be made, the most efficient and intelligent control, a system of control which shall produce an equal yield of lumber without destroying its source. In the absence of such legislation these reserves will exist only in name. The responsibility of Congress, let it be plainly said, is not longer to be concealed or evaded.

The McRae Bill, admirable as it is, is likely to prove only a temporary expedient, the good features of which may hereafter be embodied in our permanent forest policy. What is needed is a broad, thorough and practical—because imaginative—measure, which shall legislate for posterity and once for all shall run with the best scientific opinion. I believe that this is supplied by the scheme of Prof. Charles S. Sargent, of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, whose census report on the subject of forests and whose "Silva of North America" have given him a unique position as an expert. This is a comprehensive plan by which the control of the reserves is to be transferred to the War Department. The army must defend them (does now theoretically defend them) against encroachment, as requisition is made by the Secretary of the Interior. How much simpler that the military should have initial control. The evil of the dual system now is that the permanent interest of the reserves must always be sacrificed to the temporary exigencies of public order. A strike in Sacramento or a petty quarrel on an Indian reservation would deprive the Yosemite National Park of the efficient military protection which it now enjoys. The Yellowstone National Park is admirably managed by a military detail. These two parks furnish all the precedent for the plan that is needed. I believe the seventeen forest reservations are virtually without patrol. The chief reason for placing them also in the hands of the military is that only thus can we provide for their care and culture on scientific principles. For this West Point offers a well-established system and means of education. It is not proposed that the military academy should be turned into a school of forestry, but that facilities should be provided for systematic instruction in the principles of the science, so that all graduates should know its elements, while certain others should be able intelligently to supervise the reservations incidental to their other duties, and to superintend practical work to be carried on by a body of men locally enlisted as a forest guard.

There is no alternative, except to let the forests remain the prey of destructive agencies, or else to establish a civil school with all its accompaniments of political manipulation. Surely the country is already too tired of the spoils system to wish more fuel to go into that flame. The army is the only hope. Its traditions of thoroughness and integrity may be relied upon for a rigid control in the public interest. Attention would be chiefly needed in the summer, when it is customary to undertake expeditions and establish camps for the good of the troops. To know the elements of forestry, what trees and that kind of trees to cut so as to yield an annual crop of timber without injuring the forest—this is something to be taught and learned, and something as clearly within the province of the military in time of peace as to build docks or bridges. What can be accomplished in the way of mere guard duty is to be seen in the Yosemite National Park, where an efficient troop of cavalry has put an end to the depredations on sheep and lumbermen, so that in four years the tract has resumed its natural appearance and conservative offices, while during the past summer, in defiance of law, 500,000 shee