

welcome to all classes who are present and who are ready to contribute of their time and of their money to the great object we have in view and which is an object of primary national importance. The large attendance which I see before me, I am most gratified to say, exceeds all the expectations that we had and this attendance, large as it is, is a manifest evidence that the Canadian people at last,—at long last realize the great importance of all problems connected with forestry.

A great deal of harm has already been done, harm, which, I am afraid, in many respects cannot be recalled, but it is not yet too late and the harm which we know has taken place is and ought to be an incentive to us to do our best in the endeavor to check it, and to give more attention to forestry problems. Our ancestors, when they came to this continent, found it an unbroken forest from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi Valley. It was the home of a race of hunters who derived their existence chiefly from the chase and for whom therefore the forest was a natural element. It was the object of our ancestors to turn this land into a fit habitat for a race of agriculturists, for the white man whose civilization is based primarily upon agriculture. They had to clear their homes from the forest with care and tenderness, they looked upon it as an enemy to be got rid of with the axe, with fire, and with every mode of destruction. History tells us and our own experience tells us that they went at it most mercilessly. The forest had no friends whatever, because, to clear off a few acres of land they would set fire to miles upon miles of the noblest trees that ever lifted their lofty heads towards the heavens. This, at one time or other went on in every part of the continent and even at this very day it is going on in some part of the continent. These pioneers of former days, as the pioneers of these modern days, did not realize, did not appreciate that in the economy of nature forests are just as indispensable to the civilization of man as tilled fields. They did not appreciate that even from the point of view of agriculture unless tilled fields are furnished by forests with moisture and rainfall they decrease in their productiveness accordingly, and that the efforts of the agriculturist will suffer in proportion. We have assembled here in order to devise ways and means, if possible, first of all to check this evil and to make every class in the community realize the great importance of maintaining, preserving and protecting our forests. What I would like to call the attention of this Convention to, in the first place, would be the necessity of establishing, if it has not been done, and it has not yet been done, a preserve, a large forest domain. We must know now the experience of those nations to which His Excellency, in his address, has just alluded, teaches us that there are certain portions, certain sections of the earth's surface, which, in the wise economy of nature, must always