

The state of New York has inaugurated such a policy. The state of New York years ago made the mistake—I was going to say committed the folly, and perhaps that word would not be too strong—of alienating part of the watershed of the Adirondack mountains. We know the fatal consequences that have arisen from that policy in the droughts which have more than once been the bane of that beautiful state. And now, I understand, the legislature of the state of New York has passed laws authorizing the administration, as fast as possible, to re-acquire these lands and make them a part of the public domain. If, in any part of Canada, a similar mistake has been made, a policy such as that adopted by the state of New York should be adopted here, and the national or provincial government whose business it is should make it their object to bring back to the public ownership the lands that have been alienated, and make these forests a part of the national domain, as is done in Germany, France and some other countries. On this point, I am sure, we all agree.

The next consideration for which I would invite the deliberation of this convention is the reproduction of the forests. Our system of treating the forests is to lease them to the lumbermen for the purpose of taking off the merchantable timber. I do not know whether this policy is advisable or not. I believe that, on the whole, it is advisable. But no effort is made to replace the timber that is taken away from what we call the limit under that policy. In Germany and France, I understand, it is the accepted policy, a policy that has been followed for generations, when a tree is removed in any way to replace it by the planting of another tree. I am not prepared to say that such drastic conditions should be imposed upon the lumbermen—though I am not prepared to say, on the other hand, that a plan of this kind should not be taken under advice. At all events, I submit to this convention that we ought to do something more than we are doing at the present time. It is not fair to the country—it is not fair to us who are living, and still less is it fair to the generation to come after us—that we should allow the destruction of the forest to go on year by year by the cutting down of the trees and make no effort whatever to replace what is thus taken away. The trees are a crop like any other growth. True, they are a crop of slow growth, but that is the only difference between trees and any other crop. In this, as in every case, when a crop is taken off, steps should be taken to replace it at once with another. I said a moment ago that I was not prepared to say that when the lumberman, in the course of his work, takes away say, 300,000 trees in a year, he should at once plant 300,000 trees. But I do ask this convention to consider what should be done in that matter. One thing might be asked, whether of the lumbermen or of the state; that, where trees are taken away, trees should be seeded, so that we may have a crop coming on all the time. It is a fact which we face with some degree of sadness, even mourning, that Canada, in a few years will be devoid, absolutely devoid, of the beautiful pine forests which at one time were its pride. We can calculate the number of years—and the number is not very great—when there will not be another tree of the original forest to be cut upon the limits of the Canadian lumbermen. But, trees have grown and trees ought to grow again. There is an impression which I have heard expressed on more than one occasion, that it is useless to look for another crop of pine trees—that when you have removed the crop we found