

Prize Essay in Barnjum Contest

By P. Swanson.

(Concluded from October Issue)

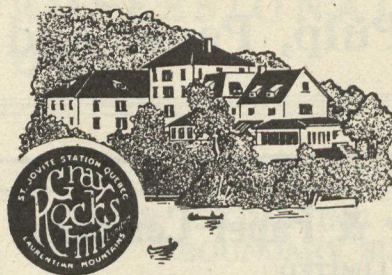
It may be advanced that this would work a hardship on the settlers, inasmuch as the price offered by United States owners competing with our own pulp-mills, gives the settler a fair chance of obtaining a fair return for his wood when cut and hauled to the rail. It must be remembered, however, that competition is very keen in this country itself, and every pulp district has at least two or three mills. Even if the companies agree on a fixed price, the settler can refuse the proffered price, and ultimately will benefit by greatly improved prices. If there is one thing that can be prophesied with certainty, it is this: that standing timber is increasing in wealth by leaps and bounds with the passing of time. An export duty on all pulp wood will prove no drawback to the settler. Legislation should be passed imposing such a duty immediately.

In passing, it might be added that in large virgin timbered areas the killing of beaver should be strictly limited. Beaver dams and meadows form a natural barrier to fire and their value can hardly be overestimated. In addition, the beaver cannot be regarded as an animal destroyer of forest-life such as the porcupine, which in some districts is a menace. Right here let us say that if such animal destroyers of forest-life become too numerous, the remedy is simple: a government bounty for the death of each such destroyer would quickly reduce their number.

It is a sad commentary on the public intelligence of Canada that the question of forest protection has aroused the interest of very few. Only when some great disaster, involving the loss of life, such as took place in the Cochrane and Matheson fires, visits a section of our country, is interest gained, and then only for a few weeks. An awakened public conscience can force any government to take strong and immediate action to protect the greatest national asset this Dominion possesses. It is the bounden duty of the great newspapers of Canada to see that the public conscience is awakened to the importance of this question. It should hardly be necessary for forestry branches to pay for inserted advertisements. Ringing editorials should be hurled broadside upon a lethargic and sleeping public. A newspaper exists for more than profit. It plays more than the mere part of transmitting news. Surely, surely, they exist to mould and fashion public opinion, to lead the public, not to follow, and in no sphere is there such a fertile field to exercise their talents as in that of forest protection.

Schools and universities, especially the public schools, should impress upon the youth of this country the value of our timber and our forests. In ancient Greece, during the age of Pericles, it was said that every free male was capable of holding any public office. We have not yet reached that ideal state, but surely we can educate the youth of our country so that, when they become citizens in the full sense of the word, they will have an intelligent conception of the value of our natural resources. Sweden has done so. What Sweden has done, Canada can likewise do.

Above all, there must be thorough co-operation



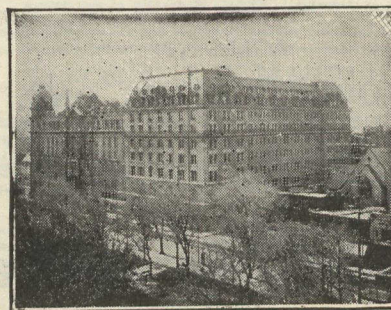
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