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HAVE WE OVER-ESTIMATED? UNTIL recently, we in Canada had been in the habit of applying to our forest domains the poet's rather grandiose description of "an endless contiguity of shade." Words of prosaic warning respecting possible depletion fell unheeded. Perish the thought! Had we not nearly an hundred and fifty acres of wooded lands per head of population—a proportion vastly greater than any other country could boast? According to figures once compiled by a government statistician, Norway—which came next to Canada in this respect—had only a little better than a beggarly nine acres per capita.

But, lately, the warnings of those best qualified to judge of actual conditions and outlook have become more insistent—and perforce we have begun to "sit up and take notice." Our waking would possibly have been even slower, but for the somewhat characteristic hubbub that President Roosevelt and other neighbours to the South have lately been making with regard to conservation of natural resources. And then, too, Great Britain is now considering afforestation on an immense scale.

Sweet are the uses of adversity. It may be that not the least of the disguised blessings from the business break of 1907 will be an arousing of the United States—and of Canada as well—to a realization that rational economy in the employing of Mother Nature's gifts is essential to the permanent weal of the body politic.

A STOCK-TAKING OF NATURAL RESOURCES. SO long as trade and industry continued expanding as in 1906 and the greater part of 1907, there was little disposition to give thought to ills arising from careless exploiting of natural resources. But with temporary checking of business activity, there came some readiness to consider such matters in the perspective of a longer outlook than that of a current year or two. It will be well if some definite action is taken before we again get ever-busy—and correspondingly careless. It

is to be remembered that, "when the devil was sick the devil a saint would be," but that every vestige of virtuous resolution vanished with recovery.

Happily, it now appears that, both the leader of the opposition and the premier agree upon the wisdom of seizing the psychological moment—at any rate to the extent of appointing a select standing committee that shall have authority "to inquire into and consider and report upon all matters appertaining to the conservation and development of the natural resources of Canada including fisheries, forests, mines, minerals, waterways and waterpowers."

ARE THERE "AS GOOD FISH IN THE SEA"? IT will be remembered that last session, Mr. Sinclair, member for Guysboro', moved a resolution in favour of the appointment of a select committee to deal with the subject of the country's fisheries. At that time the leader of the opposition threw out the suggestion that some such committee might very well consider matters relating to forests, minerals and other resources as well; and to this suggestion he now gives definite form in the resolution which he has submitted to the House. The appointment of some such general commission is not, however, to side-track the particular investigation for which Mr. Sinclair calls; for the Minister of Marine and Fisheries has announced that a committee will be appointed to give special attention to the problem of checking the diminution already threatening Canada's wealth of sea-food. The old time adage as to there being as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, has been taken too much for granted hitherto.

The fisheries of the Dominion contributed \$25,000,000 to current wealth during the country's fiscal year 1908—about three-quarters of a million dollars less than in 1907. Exports of fish, fish products and marine animals totalled nearly \$14,000,000. That so important an industry should be kept permanently, and not just immediately profitable, is of prime concern to the country as a whole.