

Need of Conservation of Forest Resources

Enforcement of Sensible Cutting Regulations and an Adequate Provision for a Continuity of Wood Supply Necessary.

Canada's forest resources constitute one of the Dominion's chiefest and most valuable assets. They contribute to the trade of Canada upwards of \$200,000,000 a year. They play an important part in our external commerce. They are a source of inestimable national wealth.

Under proper management and control, they can be made to contribute to the national wealth of the country indefinitely. Without such management and control they are doomed to diminish rapidly and, within a comparatively few years, to become entirely extinct.

Proper forest control includes the enforcement of sensible cutting regulations under official superintendence as well as adequate provision for a continuity of wood supply. The last is the more important. These can only be obtained through intelligent action on the part of the legislatures of the several Provinces and through faithful administration by the Governmental authorities.

The means for adequate forest perpetuation must necessarily be supplied at public expense out of the revenues derived from the sale and utilization of the forest resources.

All this is ably set forth in an editorial appearing in the Pulp & Paper Magazine of Canada and reprinted herewith.

The newsprint industry and, in general, the manufacture of pulp in Canada, is of comparatively recent development and the growth in the past ten years has been tremendous. In this brief space of time the easily available pulpwood has been cut out and now the mills are going back to areas from which it requires two or three years to transport the logs to the mill. During a portion of this period there was a sufficient slump in the lumber industry to make it feasible and more profitable to make pulp than lumber from many of the sawlogs that came down the streams. The present demand for building material and the rapidly rising cost of lumber will discourage if not entirely prevent the recurrence of such a condition, in spite of the fact that pulp and paper prices are now at levels that were not even dreamed of two years ago. All indications point to a continuation of present high costs of production and high prices for products for some time to come. It is hardly possible for new capacity to overtake the entire demand for paper products in the next five years and with normal increase in consumption, even if the present abnormal demand subsides, there must be another period of balance before there is very much actual over-production. This means that the next ten years will be a most critical period for our forests and the utmost care must be taken and the most stringent regulations must immediately be put in operation or the destruction of timber in the coming decade will be much more serious than has been the case the past ten years.

What will this mean to the industry in Canada? It seems to us that other countries with some forests and more prudence will take the lesson of the United States and Canada to heart and deliberately plan and prepare for a future supply of timber for their several wood-using industries.

At the present rate of increase in cost of wood production or even at half the present rate of increase in this item the pulp and paper industry is rapidly coming to a point on this continent where the wood is the most expensive factor in the cost of production of both pulp and paper. Leaving out of consideration the effect of inordinate demand, one can readily see that with wood at more than \$20 a cord it will be impossible to make cheap paper in this country. The effect of methods of cutting which cause either the erosion of soil so as to prevent future forest growth, or burns which destroy present stands and tend to encourage the growth of inferior species where future

growth is possible at all, and attacks of forest insects such as the spruce budworm, together with the continual recession of the lumber camp from railway and water, is all to increase the price of wood and the difficulty and uncertainty of mill operation. The end of another ten years, however, is likely to see paper production costs in Canada at the critical point where it may no longer be economical for the public to use the product.

On the other hand in central Europe, there are belts of timber which are accessible to the pulp mills of Germany, Austria and Scandinavia. With the customary European ideas of prudence and economy it is quite safe to predict that these resources will be handled in such a way that they will be a perpetual source of supply to the pulp and paper industry in those countries.

Sweden is a well-known example of the foresight of a Government which has the sense to provide for the future of its industries. With this in mind, the consumption of wood is limited to what is actually known to be the annual growth.

With similar methods applied to the forests of Galicia, Poland and the Baltic provinces there will be established in Europe a pulp and paper industry able to forecast with certainty how much it can produce, and, knowing all the conditions of forest growth and operating methods, to make in advance a close estimate of the cost of production. Furthermore, it will be able, on account of its forest operations being confined to a single area as is done in France, not only to anticipate operating costs but also to keep them uniform from year to year, if not, as a result of such scientific methods and as the improvement of the forest goes on, relatively to reduce them. This is obviously impossible under the forestry methods at present in vogue in Canada. Canada cannot hope to compete in the future in the production of pulp and paper if, as at present, under official sanction, a system of lumbering is carried on, which continually piles up an ever-increasing cost of growing and harvesting its raw material.

Most of the pulp and paper produced in Canada is made from wood cut on Crown lands and the rate of this ground rent and stumpage as well as the price of free-hold wood is bound to increase. This puts the onus of providing for the future of the industry squarely in the hands of the Provincial Governments. Whilst some of our public administrators have shown a capacity for dealing courageously and sensibly with the problem there have been indications that others have preferred to sidestep the issue, either neglecting it entirely or not daring to grasp what they had reason to fear would be a prickly situation.

The argument has been advanced that conditions in Canada are different from those in Europe. They are different from those in the United States. But anyone with half an eye can see that present methods of exploiting our forests, combined with fire and disease, are just as surely devastating our forests land as similar methods have devastated the forests of the United States and put the pulp and paper industry there practically on the rocks. There are too many who see only the geographical distribution of trees without considering the individual areas that are being cut over. There are too many who are willing to figure an annual increment by measuring a small carefully selected area where, under propitious circumstances, there is a good increase in growth, and then to apply that indiscriminately to the thousands of square miles where conditions are so unfavorable as to require hundreds of years to grow a saw log, where only one or two per cent of the seedlings come to maturity and where damage by fire, wind and insects is enormous, but entirely disregarded.

For this reason, namely, that if there is any annual increment it is very slight and mostly confined to the more favorable locations, we hold that any requirement that the annual cut be limited to the annual increment should apply