

United Kingdom, drew its supplies from Russia, no doubt found much justification in economy of transport, but unless the Canadian forests can be adequately protected and made available in case of necessity for the United Kingdom, it is certain that the area of timber within the British Isles must be increased far beyond that recommended in the proposals made in the following pages. We commend this Imperial question

to the attention of the Conference meeting in London.

"It is urgent because preparations made now cannot mature for many years, and unless provision is made now either in Canada, Russia or the British Isles, it is practically certain that the United Kingdom will find timber difficult to procure in sufficient quantities before such preparations can mature."

Russia's Grip on Britain

"Russia, as will be evident from the facts already given," continues the Forestry Sub-Committee, "is now the crux of the whole question. She is, and has been for several years, the only source on which we could, under present conditions, rely to make good the decline in our imports of coniferous timber from other countries and meet our ever-expanding demand. She has accomplished this by increasing her supplies to us from 2,241,000 loads in 1889 to 5,401,000 loads in the year preceding the war. We have now reached the point when any check in the Russian supply would inevitably cause a timber famine in the United Kingdom."

The Russian forests are something of a mystery, and the reports which reach us are conflicting. The area of land classed as forest in Russia and Siberia is enormous, amounting to 1,260,000 square miles, of which by far the greater part belongs to the State. Much of the so-called forest is without commercial value. Of the million square miles belonging to the State, less than two-thirds are true forest land. Applying this proportion to the whole area the total extent of true forest land in Russia and Siberia is estimated at 814,000 square miles. To this must be added 82,000 square miles of forest in Finland, making a total of 896,000 square miles for the Russian Empire. These forests spread over a very wide area and in climates ranging from temperate to arctic,

vary greatly in the amount of timber they carry and in the rate of growth. The forests of Central Russia appear to be generally of poor quality, and with regard to Siberia railway construction on a large scale would be necessary to make its timber available for export. Devastation by the inhabitants and fires have also deprived a great part of the Siberian forests of their value. The timber imported into the United Kingdom has hitherto come from the virgin provinces and from Archangel. While the information at our disposal indicates that the timber produced by these northern forests could be very considerably increased without exceeding the annual growth, it is evident that permanency of the supply must depend on the introduction of systematic management. The growth in the northern forests is extremely slow and it will take a long time to replace the pine, spruce and larch now being felled. It must also be remembered that the development of the Russian Empire is certain to be accompanied by an increased home consumption, which may, as in the United States, gradually curtail or even extinguish the reserves available for export. We have already indicated what this would mean for the United Kingdom.

Planting Programme

The Sub-Committee recommends the immediate institution of a planting programme to cover 1,770,000