

FIRST AID FOR FIRST THINGS

The forward march toward forest conservation in Canada is headed by Fire Prevention.

Fire Prevention has no competitor for front rank. All other participants lag miles behind.

Yet in the minds of thousands of Canadian business men, anxious to lend their aid to public forestry policies, the first thought of a sovereign remedy for Canada's timber depletion is the planting of trees.

Tree planting has its rightful place in forest replenishment, but as far as concerns our immediate economic necessities and the advancing of our public forest policies, one fact should dominate, viz:

The annual plague of forest fires represents Wholesale Devastation.

The planting of trees represents Retail Restoration.

This assertion has no critical bearing upon tree planting projects in themselves. It merely establishes the relative importance of the two forces, destruction and constructive, as it should properly appeal to Canadian business men and public administrators.

One ordinary forest fire, a year or two ago, destroyed enough timber

in Manitoba such as could only be replaced by planting 14 million trees at a cost of approximately \$140,000, and a wait of fully 50 years.

Another fire in Quebec this year destroyed 56,000 cords of standing spruce and 23 million board feet of pine. To replace that pulpwood by planting trees would require an immediate cash expenditure for nursery stock and labor alone of \$8,206. with interest compounded for 50 years (the date of cutting) plus cost of fire protection for 50 years, and administration for 50 years.

Is not that a reasonable method of calculating the economic mischief wrought by just one forest fire that was not even reported in the newspapers by a two-line item?

To replace by planting the pine destroyed in the other fire, referred to, would take an immediate investment of 7,500 for nursery stock and labor, with interest compounded for 80 years (maturity) plus cost of fire protection for 80 years and administration for 80 years.

Let tree planting go ahead where conditions warrant—

But let us frankly face the fact that, in the nation-wide aspect of conserving forests, we cannot make headway until the Forest Fire business is "scotched".

Robson Black.

South America, The World's Greatest Reserve

The products of forests are usually divided into two great groups, as follows:

(1) Major forest products, such as wood used for construction purposes and for special uses, as furniture, cabinet work, wood used for small articles of all kinds, etc.; (2) Minor forest products include firewood, tannin extracts, dyes, rubber, gutta percha, rattan, bamboo, wood oils, resins and various forest plants that produce medicinal products, like quinine, cocaine, sarsaparilla, epicac, camphor, etc. As a matter of fact, the value of these minor products of tropical forests consumed in the world's markets greatly exceed the value of the major products. Indeed, so great is the demand for some of the minor forest products that many of

them have almost entirely become cultivated ones. Ten or 15 years ago while most of the rubber of commerce came from a wild forest tree of the Amazon valley, approximately 80 per cent of the rubber used to-day is from cultivated plantations of this tree in the Eastern tropics.

Kapoc is the commercial name for the cotton from the so-called cotton tree, and is a native of tropical America, but the chief source of this valuable product, used principally in stuffing mattresses, is from plantations in Java. Formerly the chief source of the Peruvian bark, quinine, was from the wild forests of Ecuador, Columbia and Peru. To-day most of the quinine comes from cultivated plantations in India and Java. The lack of cheap labor in the American tropics is the chief reason

why these valuable products are cultivated in the Eastern tropics.

Because the climate conditions of temperate regions are not favorable for the production of many tropical minor forest products, the temperate markets must always depend on the tropics for most of them unless synthetic products can be substituted. While efforts made to produce synthetic rubber have not proved successful, yet the manufacture of synthetic dyes has greatly reduced the demands for the dye woods of the tropics, hence until the war greatly, but temporarily, stimulated the use of the tropical dye woods, the amount of these woods used in the markets it not likely to be greatly increased.

On the other hand tropical woods for