

Facing The Truth of Forest Exhaustion

United States Lumbermen Invite Scientific Guidance in Cutting and Logging.

In any "alarmist" statement regarding depletion of the Canadian forest resources are several patent dangers to the cause of conservation. At the same time, the great millstone on the conservation cause in Canada undoubtedly is to be found in the public belief that the forest supply is practically illimitable. A deep rooted conviction that we are drawing our wood supplies from an inexhaustible bank account is the real factor behind public indifference and administrative slothfulness.

To demonstrate that Canadian white pine for example is being cut and burned without provision for reproduction may suggest to some persons that they should ask their dealer for wood substitutes, to replace boards with cement and shingles with asbestos. The very contrary is the conservationist's purpose, for he is an advocate of the most thorough utilization of forest products, and has no brief for the wood substitutor. Obviously the greater the public demand for wood products, the higher the value placed by private and public administrators on the raw materials and consequently the more efficient will be methods of fire protection and cutting operations.

Truth is truth and sooner or later will out. As concerns the forest resources of Canada the earlier the truth is known and published broadcast, the lighter will be the handicap placed on the people of Canada in days to come. In the spreading of facts relating to the forest conditions of the Dominion, incidental disadvantages to private investments must be borne with what patience is possible.

Across the American border, the forestry problem at the present time is inviting the frankest discussion. The old-time inclination to hush any and all references to fire damage on private timber tracts has apparently

gone with a lot of other hobgoblins of pre-war days.

Who would have said five years ago that the Western United States timber owners would ask the government to introduce scientific control of cutting on their limits. And yet, here is what the "Timberman" of Portland, Ore., says in its most recent editorial:

"The lumbermen and the Forest Service should get together and work out some definite plan for perpetuation of the timber supply on some scientific and workable basis. The Government is interested primarily in the available supply of timber for the nation's use. Herein lies the marked distinction between governmental and private interests. The time for the lumberman to consider this question is now. There never was a more opportune time than the present for the lumbermen of the country to initiate a broad national movement looking to the assurance of the future timber supply."

And again:

National Business

"The growing of timber is a national function. It is not the business of an individual.

"Another step in formulating a national forest policy would be the purchase of all timber lands belonging to private interests lying within the National Forests in the West.

"Then should follow the purchase of areas of timber land lying within a zone ten to twenty miles around the National Forests.

"With this as a basis there might be evolved a co-operative plan between the national Government and the private holders of timber lands whereby exchanges could be made of cut-over timber lands for cutting rights within the National Forests. The basis of exchange could be determined, in a measure, by the size of the tract, its location and adaptability for