

VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS

The forests of India are all Government property, and for the past 28 years the greatest care has been exercised to preserve what is considered a most valuable asset. Reforesting is carried on most extensively, and a very large staff is employed to look after these forests. Recently Mr. R. C. Milward of the Indian Imperial Forest Service was getting pointers on forestry, and had long interviews in Toronto with Mr. Southworth and others. Mr. Milward has been granted one year's leave of absence for inquiries into the protection of forestry, and has already visited Japan, the United States and part of Canada. He will visit Germany, Russia, Norway and Sweden before returning to report. Mr. Milward has his headquarters at Derhahdun, where the Indian School of Forestry is located. He has charge of a district about 260 miles square, and has 60 natives under him, but in the dry season, when danger from fires is greatest, he has 100 additional men. They are paid from \$2 to \$4 per month. They can live on a few cents weekly. The Government fixes the minimum price for all classes of timber, and then calls for tenders for, or sells by auction such trees as are marked for sale.

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An experienced agriculturist writing to a Winnipeg paper urges that the Dominion government extend its forestry operations in Manitoba to take in a strip of light sandy soil, about ten miles wide and thirty long, along the Assiniboine river east of Brandon. He then continues to write of the changes he has noticed in Manitoba timber limits as follows: The last thirty years have changed our timbered limits very much in Manitoba. To the east of the Red river, by cutting wood, ties and timber and then allowing fires to burn up small trees that would in thirty-five years be another forest we have driven the forest line back for miles. Again the forest line on the south side of the Riding mountains has gradually receded from ten to twenty miles until a new line of railway is projected through a settled district,

whereas the Manitoba & Northwestern railway when constructed actually skirted the timber belt from Minnedosa to Newdale, Strathclair, Shoal Lake, Birtle on to Russell. It is well known that the fine timber belts along the shores of Pelican lake, Rock lake and the Pembina river have almost disappeared. The Turtle mountains, which at one time, thirty years ago, were covered with timber down to the edge of the prairie, present to-day a strange change to one who has not been that way for a quarter of a century. The forest line has receded from one to six miles and farm houses are dotted all along the edge of the mountain, in many places apparently half way up the mountain. These encroachments on our timber belts have given us land for cultivation, but we have a surplus of prairie land in Manitoba and the territories for cultivation and we are short of forests. Timber reserves are now set apart on the Turtle mountains, as well as on the Riding mountains, and there is to be no more homesteading done. This is right, but as so many acres have been cut down the more reason there is for trying to reclaim our open sandy plains above referred to.

THE SPRUCE SUPPLY.

Hon. E. E. Ring, of Bangor, State Commissioner of Forestry, does not consider that there is any danger of an early extinction of spruce and other pulp woods at the present rate of cutting, giving it as his opinion that there is enough spruce timber in North America to last forever if properly cared for and intelligently cut. He says:

Right here in Maine there are thousands of square miles of virgin spruce forests and if they are properly cared for, and destructive fires kept out, the supply is practically inexhaustible. When I was a very young man people used to stand around, just as they do to-day, and tell, with wise shakes of the head, that the spruce would be all gone in ten or twenty years. To-day we are cutting more spruce in Maine than ever before and there is a great plenty left. But, not stopping there, visit the sorting gaps along the Penobscot and the Kennebec rivers and you will find that the logs are just as big

as they were a dozen years ago. The standard remains the same.

To be sure, a large amount of small spruce is cut in these times, but it is cut for the pulp mills, which can use smaller timber than the saw mills require. Conditions have changed in the harvesting of the log crop. No longer are the land owners willing to have trees cut so as to leave a stump anywhere from four to six feet high. They insist that all trees shall be cut close to the ground. This results in a closer cutting of lots than formerly. Again, the tops of the trees are not left in the woods, as was the case before the day of the pulp mill, but are trimmed and driven down to the pulp mills to be made into paper. How many stop to think what this means? Very few. But it means this: That the amount of timber scaled in the cutting of a certain number of trees to-day is much greater than it was twenty years ago, and we get a far greater yield of timber per acre than formerly.

People, or at least the majority, when they talk about the great increase in the amount of timber cut in Maine do not stop to think that the gain is due in no small way to the discontinuance of the wasteful practices of other days. Yet that is the truth of the matter. To-day the saw is taking the place of the ax and by its use a great saving is effected. Only a man who has owned timber lands and operated upon them can realize what it means to save a foot or two on each tree felled.

In discussing the spruce supply it should be kept in mind that this tree grows much more rapidly than any other timber except, possibly, the pine. Under ordinary conditions a spruce will grow in twenty-five years from a seedling to a good pulpwood size, and five years more will put it in the saw log class. This, with the proper care of the forest, means that, as I have already said, the spruce forests of Maine are practically inexhaustible.

But in order properly to care for these vast timber tracts, so as to preserve them for the future, it is necessary that the State and all interested shall keep a watchful eye upon them. This means that an efficient corps of fire wardens must be maintained for the protection of these lands. These men must be trained in the work of preventing and extinguishing fires; they must be constantly on the watch for the first incipient blaze, in order that it shall be stamped out before making any headway. The land owners must do their part, too. They must see to it that the timber is properly cut and not wasted. They will do this—it is for their interest to do so.

David Clark

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