

Britain Turns to Canada's Forests

An Imperial Call to Stop Deterioration of Canadian Forest Resources and Realize New Profits.

"There appears to be no reason why the Canadian forests should not supply the United Kingdom with coniferous timber and meet its growing needs for many generations.

"Meanwhile the forest capital of Canada is growing less year by year. This we submit, is an Imperial question of the first magnitude which deserves the immediate attention of the Imperial and Dominion Governments."

The foregoing statement sums up a conclusion of the Forestry Sub-Committee of the British Reconstruction Committee which has particular interest for Canadians. Probably few readers of the Forestry Journal have thought in times past that the forests of Canada held such a vital relation to the needs of the Mother Country. Yet the fact cannot be contraverted that Great Britain has been to the extent of 60% of her daily needs at the mercy of the Russian timber exporter. Who shall say in these uncertain times what degree of freedom the Russian exporter will enjoy during the next ten years at the hands of his German master? The radical re-arrangement of the political conditions in Russia has given new weight entirely to the counsels of those Canadians who have striven for a larger share of Britain's timber orders even in face of obviously higher freight rates. At the same time if the Canadian people are to take any profit whatever from the conclusions of the British Reconstruction Committee, they will have to recognize that no permanent trade arrangement in timber supplies can be founded upon a deteriorating source of raw materials. Canada cannot reasonably present any plea for a greater proportion of John Bull's timber trade until some guarantee can be given that

the forestry policies and practices of the country are capable of assuring permanence in production of forest materials.

At Russia's Mercy

The Forestry Sub-Committee was composed of men of unquestioned standing and practical knowledge of world wide conditions, such as Lord Lovat, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Sir William Schlich, Lord Cavendish, Hon. F. D. Acland, and others.

"The United Kingdom," they observe, "is dependent for more than 60 per cent. of its timber on the virgin forests of foreign countries which are being steadily depleted. The proportion derived from sources within the Empire fell from 22 per cent. in 1899 to 10 per cent. in 1913. Every year we become more dependent on Russia, which in 1913 supplied us with nearly half our total imports. We have no means of reckoning how long the virgin forests will last, but unless they are brought under systematic management their exhaustion can only be a question of time. The arguments advanced on this subject by competent students have been supported since 1895 by a steady rise in price.

Canada's Importance

The only large reserves within the British Empire are those of Canada which are rapidly being depleted by fire. The Dominion Government has initiated measures for their protection, but the problem is both large and difficult. It is one in which the United Kingdom has a deep interest since the Canadian reserves are the only source on which the United Kingdom can fall back if supplies from Russia fail. The arrangement prevailing before the war under which the exports from the Canadian forests were absorbed by the United States, while the