

## Commission of Conservation

CANADA

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CONSERVATION is published about the first of each month. Its object is the dissemination of information relative to the natural resources of Canada, their development and the proper conservation of same, together with timely articles covering town-planning and public health.

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The future well-being of Canada depends on the loyal acceptance by the people of the principles which aim at the profitable and scientific development and conservation of her natural resources.—*Earl Grey.*

Safety on the farm is as important as anywhere else. Many accidents are caused by the careless handling of machinery or by lack of proper inspection before machines are put into commission.

If an employer shows his interest in the supplying of safety appliances and in the education of his employees in the taking of precautions to prevent accidents, it will not be long before definite results will be apparent all along the line of help from superintendent to apprentice.

To be consistent, the man who sits back and expects that nature will replace the burned forest might also expect the supply men and the mechanics to replace, free of cost, that which they had supplied or produced and which, through carelessness, had been destroyed by fire.

Midsummer represents, to most lines of industry, the period of quiet times. Good use may be made of this season in the thorough clean up of the premises, the installing of safety appliances and the education of the staff in their use. Surprising results will thus be attained in the way of fire and accident prevention during the busy season following.

Let us remember that the conservation of our natural resources, though the greatest problem of today, is yet but part of another and greater problem—the problem of national efficiency.—*Ex. President Roosevelt.*

## Conservation and Rural Depopulation

Disregard of the Principles of the Farmer produces the Latter Result;

The exodus of population from our agriculture's communities constitutes one of the most important phases of that composite subject so frequently referred to under the vague but convenient term, "the rural problem." The admirable analysis of this question of rural depopulation, given by Rev. John MacDougall in his book entitled, "Rural Life in Canada," is of particular interest to the advocate of conservation, in that it emphasizes the close connection between the proper use of national resources and the maintenance of a large and prosperous rural population. Nations have, hitherto, failed to realize the full importance of this relation and their failure to do so has been a costly and irreparable error.

"Conservation," referring to the wise use of a country's natural resources, is a word of no narrow meaning. It stands, first and foremost, for the elimination of waste and extravagance in respect to those resources which are limited in supply, and for the propagation of those which, although limited, are reproducible. But it means more than that. It stands for economy in the entire field of production, as well as in consumption, for the utilization of all portions of the national domain in such a manner as to secure the maximum return therefrom. These are the cardinal principles which former generations disregarded and which the present has not yet learnt to appreciate thoroughly. They become fully realized only when the results of disregard are manifested in such tangible forms as the present wholesale abandonment of once-thriving agricultural communities. For this movement of population, the failure to observe the principles of conservation has not been wholly responsible, but it has contributed in two ways.

Primarily, there has been the reckless exploitation of wooded areas which were never of a nature to justify agricultural settlement. Lands, with soil adapted only for forestry purposes, have been stripped of timber, exhausted by a few crops and abandoned in such condition as to be almost useless even for reforestation. From start to finish the policy pursued has been ruinous to national welfare.

Secondly—lands which were originally of real agricultural value have been farmed with utter disregard of the possibility of the exhaustion of soil fertility. Under scientific methods of cultivation, they would have been permanently available for profitable agri-

culture, but when literally "mined" of their fertility, have been deserted for newer and more fertile areas. Such methods may enrich the individual, but never the nation.

Failure to practice conservation methods in by-gone years is not the sole cause of rural depopulation to-day, but it is, probably, the only one of the several causes, to which that movement is due, which need occasion regret to the present generation and reproach to our ancestors. Most of the other economic causes have increased the productive efficiency of the nation, this has immeasurably lowered it.—*O. M.*

## Hill Selecting of Potatoes For Seed

Hills showing vigorous growth should be marked—Seed of Strong Vitality thus secured

Good seed is worth all of its cost of production; poor, weak seed is dear at any price. Seed of great vitality is of the utmost importance to the grower, and the losses due to poor seed would be staggering if fully realized. There is a widespread practice, among farmers, of planting several size potatoes, regardless of whether they come from vigorous hills or not. This is a serious mistake which can have only one result, i.e., the early running out of the variety. The practice of hill selection should be carried out, for, although it involves some extra labour, it is worth many times its cost.

If the seed has been planted one seed piece in a place, uniformity of selection can be secured by confining the choice to the one-stalk hills in the field. This method can be varied, however, by setting a standard in the ratio of not less than four good, marketable potatoes to a one-stalk hill, seven to a two-stalk hill, and ten to a three-stalk hill. When the crop is half or two-thirds ripened, the grower, with a bundle of twigs or sticks, goes over the field and marks a number of the hills showing exceptional vigour, for next year's seed. When the crop is ready for digging, these marked hills can be dug by hand. All of the marked plants have shown vigour but all may not produce desirable tubers. Any marked hill which produces fewer tubers than we have set for the standard, or is undesirable in other respects, should be discarded. Selection in this manner secures vigour, which is of prime importance in enabling the crop to withstand insects and diseases. Moreover, the grower is obtaining all of his seed stock from hills that have produced a fair number of marketable tubers, thus insuring an increased yield.—*F. C. N.*

## Safety First on the Farm

At this Season Special Precautions should be taken to Avoid Accidents

In the Province of Ontario, during the year 1912, there were 1,831 deaths due to external violence. Many of these occurred on the farms. No less than 25 were caused by injuries received from animals. Many others were due to carelessness around farm machinery, unsafe harness causing horses to run away, falling through open trap-doors or down feed chutes, ladders breaking, etc. In some cities, and over some railway lines, a "safety first" campaign is under way. "Stop, look, listen," is a splendid warning sign for a railway crossing, but its equivalent should be sounded in many other places. The risks to life and limb on the farm are so numerous and so plain that one would expect to see them largely removed, but they are not. Children on the farm should be taught the dangers inseparable from association with live stock, and to be careful *always*.

The bull may be thought to be safe and gentle, but he can never be trusted. Three deaths, in one week, by goring are among the casualties in the press reports during June, 1914. Farmers are repeatedly taking chances by getting in front of the knife of the mower or binder, to make some adjustment or repairs, while the horses are hitched and liable to start, and thereby cause a serious accident. When threshing and silo-filling time comes, every precaution should be taken to guard against accidents. Prevention is a thousand times better than neglect and carelessness, which latter often lead to accidents and loss of life. Human life is held far too cheaply and if the parents fail to teach the children to be careful, and to avoid unnecessary risk and danger, they can scarcely escape responsibility when preventable accidents, causing disfigurement or loss of life, occur.—*F. C. N.*

## Carelessness Causes Forest Fires

A Large Percentage of Forest Destruction Caused by Campers and Sportsmen

An investigation by the New York Conservation Commission as to the origin of forest fires in the Adirondacks shows that fully 85 per cent of the fires which occurred during 1913 were preventable. If smokers had not carelessly thrown burning cigars or tobacco upon the dry vegetation, one-third of these fires would not have occurred. If fishermen had been more careful with their fires and tobacco, nearly one-fifth of these fires would not have occurred. Of the 688 fires reported, only 78, or 11.3 per cent, were caused by locomotives, while nearly 10 per cent were reported as being due to the carelessness of campers.—*C. L.*