

THE PROVINCIAL FORESTRY ASSOCIATION.

QUEBEC, April 11.—To-day the annual meeting of the Provincial Forestry Association was held in the Parliament buildings. There was a very large attendance of members of the house and others taking an interest in the important subject. Hon. H. G. Joly, president of the association, occupied the chair and amongst others present were, Hon. Premier Ross, Hon. W. W. Lynch, Minister of Crown Lands; Hon. B. de la Bruyere, Speaker of Legislative Council; Hon. Louis Beaubien, Hon. J. S. C. Wurtelo, Speaker of Assembly; Messrs. Chas. Gibb, Abbotsford; S. O. Stevenson, Montreal; W. Little, Montreal; S. Lesage, Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture; E. A. Barnard, Director of Agriculture; O. Dunn and E. I. Roxford, Secretaries Department of Public Instruction; W. J. Poupore, M. P. P.; W. Owens, M. P. P.; E. E. Spencer, M. P. P.; G. Carbray, M. P. P.; Demers, M. P. P.; Lavalee, M. P. P.; Richard, M. P. P.; Beauchamp, M. P. P.; Duhamel, M. P. P.; Martel, M. P. P.; Faucher de St. Maurice, M. P. P.; Desjardins, M. P. P.; Asselin, M. P. P.; Marion, M. P. P.; Deschenes, M. P. P.; Gagnon, M. P. P.; Gauthier, M. P. P.; Picard, M. P. P.; Poulin, M. P. P.; St. Hilaire, M. P. P.

Hon. Mr. Joly, in opening the Congress, said that the object and purpose of the Forestry Association of the Province of Quebec was two fold; to protect standing timber and to destroy new forests old ones had become destroyed. As to the cultivation of orchards, he would leave that to Mr. Charles Gibb, of Abbotsford, who was better qualified than anyone else in the country to deal with the subject. He referred to the great sacrifices made by that gentleman in travelling at his own expense to Russia to find out the kind of fruit trees which might be introduced here with the greatest prospect of success. He hoped his devotion would be appreciated, and thought the best reward the public could give him was to assist him in carrying on the good work which he had begun. The hon. gentleman spoke of the difficulty which existed here in protecting timber on private lands, but timber upon crown lands can and must be protected, and he was sure that under such a Commissioner of Crown Lands as Hon. Mr. Lynch the country can depend upon this being done. His devotion to the cause of forestry was well known throughout the Province. Mr. Joly also spoke of the importance of the preservation of forests from many different points of view, such as the supply of fire wood, of timber for building purposes, of lumber for trade purposes, of the great climatic influence exercised by forests and their importance in securing a regular supply of water, ensuring the success of agriculture. He also referred to the great good which had been accomplished in England by re-afforesting, and instanced again the case of Landes in the South of France, where hundreds of miles of barren sand have been planted with pine forests which yield an enormous revenue. The same policy was being adopted in nearly every civilized country in the world. Our people must be taught in early childhood the value of our forests. The cultivation of trees should be part of the education of our children. Such a training develops all the best qualities of mankind, prudence, foresight and perseverance, and teaches that no details should be neglected, and that success is only to be attained by continued exertion. The hon. gentleman referred to the institution of Arbor Day, which after two years' trial had now become one of our provincial institutions. He entered upon details as to the best mode of spreading a knowledge of the culture of trees among the people, and closed with an earnest appeal to all men of good will, who were ready to work not only for themselves, but for those who were to come after them, to lend a helping hand to the Forestry Association in the extension of its labors, and dissemination of the facts and teachings which it sought to have prevail on a subject fraught with so much importance to both the present and the future of the Province of Quebec. The hon. gentleman resumed his seat amid loud applause.

The Hon. Mr. LYNCH said that the hon. president had so fully discussed the object of the association that little remained for him to do but to second his remarks. The association had its origin in the idea that the time had arrived in the history of this province when it was necessary that something should be done in the direction of preserving what was really to-day the most valuable asset in the revenue of the province. A great deal has been said about the preservation of the autonomy of the province and yet he feared that little or no consideration had been given of the means by which this desirable end was to be attained. The people seemed disposed to regard this desired end without consideration of the means by which it is to be reached. If reference were made to the receipts of the provincial treasury for the past year it would be seen that the revenue derivable from the crown lands of the province or rather from the timber growing upon those lands constituted a very considerable portion of the total. It therefore became a matter of the highest necessity that we should give our attention to the means by which this source of revenue was to be continued and if possible to augment it. The tendency unfortunately was to open up for settlement a much greater extent of our crown lands than should be the case and in doing this a double injury was done, owing to the fact that perhaps an honest settler was induced to buy for settlement purposes, land utterly unfit for cultivation. (Hear.) The settler cut the timber which gave him a temporary reward and when it disappeared he too often found that nothing but unproductive land remained. In the meantime the treasury was deprived of the revenue which under other circumstances would have reverted to it. (Hear, hear.) This association should do all in its power to strengthen the hands of the government in their endeavor to make a more effective division than had hitherto been made of the public lands of the province, both those which were to be opened for settlement and those to be allotted for timber purposes. These observations applied only to the unsettled portions of the province, but there remained another and an equally important work to be done which was to educate public sentiment in the direction of re-afforesting in localities where a wanton waste has unfortunately made a woful want. (Applause.) Much could be done in this direction and was shown by the facts that the older countries of Europe as well as the states of the American Republic have awakened to the fact that climatic as well as other reasons demanded that consideration must be given to this subject. There could be no doubt that the absence of forest trees had a tendency to produce an absorption of the moisture in the ground and the result was that there was too much damp, floods were helped and the country suffered from disastrous freshets. The policy of the Government had been in leasing the fishing rights pertaining to rivers and lakes to reserve from sale a portion of the lands adjoining those rivers and lakes, not alone for the preservation of its fishing rights, but for the more important purpose of preserving the climatic influence which forests exercised in the vicinity of waters. As for as the hon. gentleman was personally concerned, he would give the question of tree culture and re-afforesting his earnest attention, and whenever a suggestion was made to him by gentlemen who took an interest in this matter, the suggestion would meet his earnest attention, and he would only be too glad to recommend it to his colleagues in the Government. (Applause.)

Mr. Wm. LITTLE, Montreal, moved: "That this association respectfully recommend the Government to take early action to arrive at an appropriate idea of the quantity and quality of the pine and spruce timber still remaining on the crown lands in this Province." He said: In moving this resolution I would remark that the income derived by the province from woods and forests has in the past been one of its main sources of revenues, the total as returned in the Report of the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands for 1884, amounting to the handsome sum of \$860,767, nearly the whole of which was derived from pine and spruce timber. These figures show how deserving of attention this question is, and that, therefore, it is of the

greatest importance to know how the country stands for the future.

In connection with the business of lumbering in which I am engaged, I have had occasion to observe how rapidly the quality of the pine was deteriorating, even when the quantity showed little signs of reduction. To-day, however, there are evidences that the quantity in some sections with which we are acquainted is seriously falling off. Few, I am sure, who have not given close attention to the subject will be prepared to learn that within the short period of twelve years the amount of pine lumber sawn on the St. Lawrence, below Montreal, has fallen from 250,000,000 feet to less than 25,000,000 feet last year, an amount barely sufficient to furnish a factory on the other side of the river with a full supply of pine stock for making match splints. Now, while this shows that a section of country, but recently having a large amount of pine, must now be getting short of pine stock and that there was every reason for the Government to be careful of its spruce timber, which must take the place of the pine when it is gone. A sale of timber limits held in this city in December last, and the price which the Government was pleased to accept for them would indicate at least that it had no fear for the future. I quote from the *Chronicle* of December 18th, 1884. For the first lot put up, 60 square miles, the sum of \$103 per square mile was accepted as bonus, the purchaser having of course to pay the dues fixed by the government on any timber cut therefrom. It was but 17 cents an acre.

The friends of the Forestry Association can see that our association has not lived in vain. In all seriousness I must say that this trifling with the property of the country, and members of parliament who permit such sacrifices with out protest fail in their duty as guardians of the country's wealth. In connection with this subject and here I beg leave to remark, as the foregoing would seem to imply, some sort of censure of the hon. gentleman, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, that is not so intended. No one who has the pleasure of the acquaintance of this honorable gentleman and takes any interest in the subject of forestry can do otherwise than feel the heavy obligations the cause is under to him, and it is the intelligent interest he has always shown and is now taking in the subject in connection with our honored and honorable president that leaves reason to hope that something may yet be done in the direction of forest preservation and its attendant advantages, and the names of Joly and Lynch always side by side when anything connected with this interest is opposed, will stand out prominent as the first friends of forestry in the Province of Quebec. (Applause.) It is not the commissioner that is to blame, but the pernicious system, only less bad than that which previously prevailed of selling off large blocks of timber lands in advance of any real demand, for comparatively nothing as regards price, that has caused lumbermen and others to look upon such property as of little value, to sacrifice it without getting satisfactory returns, and to nearly rid the country of the most valuable property it possessed. It is now fully time in my humble opinion that more intelligent methods should prevail, that we should take stock of our forests and see how we stand, and, while blaming nobody for the past, all join hands to make the most out of what is left. And if we could only prevail on honorable gentlemen to give some of their time to the investigation of the important subject of forest supplies in which the whole country is most deeply interested, much good would no doubt result from it. "Agriculture and the lumber trade," says *Bystander*, "are commercial Canada. Vain is advertising, vain all policies of development if the substantial wealth of the country is allowed to perish. But trees have no votes and the general carelessness of elective governments in this respect presents an immense contrast to the carefulness of administrative monarchies." Let the Province of Quebec show the world that there is one elective government at least that has some regard for the public interest, and in no way can this be better done than by sacredly guarding the forest wealth of the country, which, though badly mismanaged hitherto, is yet of enormous value. To show how important it is that we should

husband our timber resources and not cut them off in the reckless manner we have been doing, permit me to add there are evidences existing to show that, apart from what we send our friends and others across the sea, our great and wealthy neighbor to the south of us, the largest consumer of forest products in the world, may require before long to draw more heavily on our resources than she has hitherto done, and since she has kept us from sacrificing a large portion of our timber by an almost prohibitive duty, it would be only fair to allow us a handsome profit for keeping it till she requires it. The great northern pine producing states, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, which, notwithstanding the serious depression in all other industries, increased the output of sawn lumber from 3,600,000,000 in 1878, to about 8,000,000,000 in 1884, every year showing an increase on the previous one, and as you may observe, more than doubling the quantity in six years, with an almost similar increase in the output of shingles, the amount for 1878 being 2,600,000,000, as compared with 4,600,000,000 in 1884, now begin to show unmistakable signs of exhaustion. Adding the timber made into shingles to that sawn, and including also squared or flatted timber, would make a grand total of more than 9,000,000,000 of feet last year, of which the single state of Michigan produced fully 5,000,000,000. This latter state being the one entering more immediately into competition with us in the eastern markets will this year barely turn out 60 per cent. of last years product, or 3,000,000,000 of feet, and that this occurs from a scarcity of stock of a suitable quality for profitable conversion is evident from the fact that many mills will have no stock whatever of their own to saw, and are offering to contract to saw for others as low as \$1.25 per thousand feet, while the great states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and most of the New England States, those states that consume the whole of the product of Eastern Michigan, besides what is sent from Canada, have been, if anything, more prodigal in their waste of timber than ourselves, so that Ohio having, in 1883, 55 per cent. of her land in forest had reduced the forest area to 25 per cent. in 1870 and to 20 per cent. in 1881.

"In Pennsylvania," says Professor Hough, one of the most intelligent writers on forestry subjects, and late chief of forestry in Washington, "the forest area is now 25 per cent. It is the same in Ohio and New York and in most of all the older states of the north, while in the prairie states of the west it is very much less. We are already on the borders of the dangerous limit and were our supplies from Canada and from Michigan stopped, we would speedily begin to feel the burden of prices, which would not long precede the pressure of absolute want."

So that by husbanding our timber and prudently conducting our lumbering operations till our wealthy neighbors require what we have to spare, which all indications point to an early date, we may expect a profitable future not only for the province, but for the lumbermen as well. (Applause.)

Hon. Mr. LYNCH, in reply to the remarks of Mr. Little, said that were it not that he knew the deep interest this gentleman took in the question he might be induced to regard as personally offensive the remarks which he had offered in support of the resolution. He was disposed, however, to forget for the moment his official relations, and to regard the subject matter of the resolution rather in the nature of a desire on the part of the association to strengthen the position which the hon. commissioner had taken in connection with the administration of the public lands of the province. It was true that during the past year a considerable extent of ungranted lands had been sold at public auction for timber purposes. This has been done at the request of various persons and because the government felt that in the public interest it was desirable that these lands should be in the hands of individuals who having a personal interest in them would be induced to give them a protection which could not be expected if they remained in the crown domain. As regards those in the eastern portion of the province, they were known to be of comparative little value and it was hoped that their pur-