

Why Close the Timber Industries?

By Roland D. Craig

The effect of progressive forest exploitation, without provision for succeeding crops, is being felt in parts of the United States. At a bearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in Washington, W. E. Haskell, of the International Paper Company, made the statement that "the Underwood Resolution, which provides for a commission to negotiate for the removal of existing export restrictions on pulpwood cut on the Crown lands of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, is the only measure yet presented to Congress which contains any assurance of a sufficient quantity of pulpwood to perpetuate the present production of our paper mills, to justify the installation of new machines, and to save the great pulp and paper industry of the United States."

This is not an accurate statement of the situation. The facts are: (1) The labour and manufacturing cost of converting pulpwood into pulp is very much less than the cost of converting pulp into paper. (2) The amount of water-power required to manufacture pulp is relatively high and, from an economic point of view, the benefit to the community would be increased if such power were used for other purposes. Further, it is notorious that, in the Northeastern states, this power is required for more important industries and its release would ameliorate the present coal shortage. (3) The paper mills of the Northeastern states can purchase pulp from Eastern Canada, the Pacific states, British Columbia or Alaska and with anything like present prices, can conduct their operations at a profit. Col. Haskell's statement, however, affords further evidence of the serious extent to which the forests of the Eastern states have been depleted.

A recent report of the Louisiana Department of Conservation shows that similar conditions exist in that state in regard to lumber, and points out that Louisiana should and must practise forestry, in order that she may not be obliged to pay \$15 or \$20 per thousand

feet for freight on lumber brought from the Pacific coast twenty years from now, and because her vast unproductive areas of cut-over lands are a heavy drag upon her prosperity.

With these examples of the disastrous effects of such methods in the United States, Canadians should not wait until an actual shortage overtakes us before we learn the lesson so plainly demonstrated.

Re-creating a forest is slow and expensive, but its productivity can be maintained by comparatively inexpensive means. These consist of, first, protection from fire and, second, proper methods of cutting.

No single system of cutting is applicable to all conditions, any more than the growing of all kinds of farm crops, and technical knowledge of the requirements of the different species is necessary. Under some circumstances, more complete utilization of the mature timber will result in satisfactory reproduction. In others, seed trees must be left in order to secure the kind of forest desired.

The increasing quantities of British Columbia lumber being sold in Eastern Canada is evidence of the already growing scarcity of available timber in the East, and, if the immense pulp and paper industry which has grown up in the last decade is to be permanent, steps must be taken at once to make provision for future crops instead of leaving cut-over lands as barren wastes.

FROM A WESTERN PHYSICIAN, OYEN
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Canadian Forestry Association, Ottawa.

A word of appreciation for the good services of Mr. Arch. Mitchell, now connected with the tree planting car touring the province of Alberta.

I sincerely hope this work will continue; it's filling a long felt want in these prairie districts.

Dr. H. C. Schwartzlander.