

### Forest Conservation.

The growing recognition of the value of forests in the industrial life of Canada is fully demonstrated by the general interest in the Dominion Forestry Convention which was held in Quebec city during the past week. The meeting, opened by Earl Grey, and called by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who has maintained an active interest in its proceedings, has attracted general attention in the country and the questions it considered have come to be regarded as of vital importance.

Since the first use of spruce and other forms of forest wood in the manufacture of paper the extent of cutting operations in the forest areas of Canada has greatly increased. The demand for paper has grown also with extreme rapidity and thus continuous incentive for a large yearly use of forest trees has been maintained. In the United States large wooded areas have been completely depleted and the available supply diminished to such an extent that conservation measures have been undertaken on a large scale. The American demand for the raw material for the manufacture of paper has advanced so markedly in fact as to have hastened the destruction of Canadian forests beyond normal limits. The result of this has been to awaken public opinion to the fact that the forests of the country are not inexhaustible and are in fact under lax regulations in regard to cutting and the neglect of reasonable efforts at conservation likely to fail as a source of raw material for paper manufacture with a generation.

To the destruction of forests due to extensive cutting operations has been added that due to fires. Every year sees immense areas of valuable forests destroyed by this means. The loss is so great in fact as to be almost beyond exact computation. The cause of these fires has recently become the subject of investigation: and measures to lessen the frequency of their occurrence have been taken by provincial and Dominion governments. It has been proven that railways passing through forest land have been responsible for many fires. Legislation varying in scope in different provinces to check fires through this agency has been enacted. At the same time a system of forest ranging by men employed by the government to take preventive measures against fires when possible has been developed. By these means, legislation affecting railways operating in forest areas, fire ranging systems and measures of conservation through regulation of the amount to be cut annually, the process of devastation of Canadian forests has been somewhat checked. But the problem of forest conservation remains still one of great importance. Locomotives, it has been shown, are still responsible for many fires. Restrictions on cutting are not sufficiently stringent. The fight against destructive insects has not issued in satisfactory results. Conservation measures are inadequate. Reforestation has not been so prosecuted as to produce definite assurance of new growth to replace the annual destruction. Predatory instincts have not been confined. It is to complete the gaps in the line of defense against needless lessening of such an invaluable national asset as Canadian forests constitute that the Dominion convention