

FOREST PRESERVATION.

THE protection of our forests is a question of vast importance both to the national government and to the citizen, and a question which demands the consideration of the well-meaning citizen and the thinking men of the country. Our forests have been and still are a great source of wealth, but the rapid rate at which they are being denuded by the woodman's axe, to say nothing of their destruction by immense fires, is sufficient to cause alarm. More care should be taken in the preservation of existing forests, and the sooner the people are educated to the importance and necessity of preserving them and the replanting of new ones the better. It is a matter of vital importance to the well-being of the nation. At the recent meeting of the American Science Association, Mr. R. W. Phipps, read a paper on "Our Forest Protection," which contains many valuable suggestions. The arousing of public opinion by the gleaming of information and the distribution of the same by means of pamphlets among proper persons, and the delivery of addresses by Forestry officials, are set down as being among the prominent aids. A large Government nursery, where trees might be obtained free of cost, would be one of the greatest inducements for landowners to plant. It would not do to say that he who wants trees should buy them. There is an inducement needed here, or the work will not be done. The work is national; it is the nation desires the farmer to plant the trees; it was the fault of the nation that he was ever allowed to obtain public land at first without an agreement to retain a certain portion in trees. Few should be in a better position to say than I, for I have now for seven years been examining this subject, and I am strongly of opinion that, under a system of free saplings, twenty times as much planting would be done as at present. Instead of free nurseries Governments sometimes grant orders on nurserymen. With careful and earnest supervision, either plan would answer. The great point is—free distribution of young trees. On the settling of fresh woodland he says: "The great error of the original settlers was taking hill and hollow, mountain and valley, indiscriminately for settlement. The result is that many mountain tops were cleared, farmed and ruined, for the soil washes away and in a few years nothing is possible but to desert it and go elsewhere. That the mountain should be wooded and the sloping valley cropped is the very alphabet of forestry. If there is one lesson more than another which overclearing has taught America it is that people should not be allowed to enter the woodland and hack and hew as they please. There are now millions of acres of deserted and wornout farms in the Eastern States and Canada, which were simply the elevated ridges, fit, with care, to bear timber forever, but not fit for farms, as the earth washes off. It is hard for the settler in a forest to know the elevation, but the survey should have regulated matters. I wish it to be understood that here I speak from my own experience. When, over thirty years ago, with no one to guide us, many of us entered the forest, we cleared much which never should have felt the axe and is now worthless, or very near it. This is not proposed in the case of the ordinary rolling land of the country, nor where there are merely a number of small hills, but where thousands of acres form the watershed of a mountain range, they should remain in wood." The remission of taxes on woodland would greatly assist in preserving a considerable amount of forest throughout the country if taxes on woodlands, where the country is sufficiently cleared, were in all cases remitted; and, if in the same connection some stipulation was made that cattle should, to a proper extent, be excluded, very great benefit would follow. For a wood dried up and hardened, its undergrowth destroyed by cattle, is of very little value climatically compared with one where the forest bed is preserved. Neither will it remain a store of fuel, for, there being no young trees, the forest must ultimately die. There is, no doubt, however, that many of these wood-lots are allowed to decay, because it is intended to clear them up, and that, if the remission of taxes induced the owners—as it in most cases would—to keep them as permanent forests, much

better care would be taken of them. The prairie lands, both of Canada and the United States, urgently need tree planting and will give good returns. Plantations of miles square have been given for eight years in Kansas by railway companies and with good paying results. Yet, even with this successful example before their eyes, settlers plant little. When I saw these plantations they were four and six years old, yet still the prairie for hundreds of miles was comparatively treeless, though all admitted the benefit of trees. I should recommend, in prairie countries, while the soil is yet in Government hands, that many millions of young trees be planted and cared for under Government appropriations, cultivated to keep down weeds for a couple of years, and the prairies, close by, ploughed to prevent fire running to the trees. In this we should not wait long for experiments. It is necessary to plant four times as many trees as needed, to allow for thinning, and by planting different varieties it would be easy to arrange them that, even if three-fourths failed, we should still have a forest. This would cost millions of dollars, it is true, and it is equally true that it is a matter in which, above all others, it should be spent. If, when I first saw the Prairie States, between thirty and forty years ago, an appropriation of ten millions of dollars had been given to plant trees and care for the ground then existing, these States would, I am well assured, be more valuable by a thousand million of dollars now. Can nations not afford such sums? Let us think of the sums they are, without exception, ready to spend in war and then answer. But that, it may be said, is to preserve national life. So is the other. Every well-informed student of history is aware that in all the past as the forests of a country were destroyed beyond a proportion national life weakened, and by the time, when, as examples show us, the treeless desert had overspread the ground the nation was dead. The preservation of timber forests has been little thought of in America, and the lumberman, on condition of paying the authorities a certain amount, has been allowed to cut at his pleasure. No care has been taken to replant forests. This generation, say for thirty years, will have timber enough, though they will have to use much wood hitherto thought unfit. After that there will be little good pine and not much hardwood in our forests; what is obtained will be brought from British Columbia and the forests of the Southern States, while the generation following will exhaust these. Considering the well-known benefits of keeping a large section of the country in forest, I would earnestly urge the people of America to consider how much more advantageous it would be at once and decidedly to say of certain large portions now in forest:—"These shall not be cleared for settlement; these shall be sacred to the tree." Once this determination is arrived at, the rest is easy. Nothing is more simple than to introduce and maintain a method of forest preservation, if populations demand it and Governments fulfil their desires. It is often said, "We have a large proportion of forest land." But most of this is not good forest. Much has been overrun by fire, much culled of every good stick by lumbermen. But nearly all of this might be renewed, and made good, permanent forest, if the means were used.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

[From our Regular Correspondent.

VANCOUVER, B. C., Sept. 21st, 1889.

The lumber trade continues brisk along the Pacific coast. Five ships arrived at Burrard Inlet during August, and during the month six ships cleared with lumber for different ports. The old Chemainus saw mill is at present shut down, and it is not likely that it will again re-open, unless to turn out the building material required for the new mill. There is a rumor that instead of rebuilding on the old site, the saw mill company intend erecting their new premises either at Victoria or Esquimalt.

The largest real estate and manufacturing transaction which has yet been consummated in this city was finally closed in Victoria recently. I refer to the transfer of the ownership of the Hastings Saw mill, the real estate attached thereto, and the timber limits connected therewith, all of which constitute the most valuable property outside of that of the Canadian Pacific Railway, in the city of Vancouver. Mr. John

Hendry, President of the Royal City Planning Mills becomes the sole manager of the property, which will continue to be operated and known as the Hastings saw mill. The purchase consideration, it is understood, being somewhere in the neighborhood of \$290,000. The capacity of the mill is to be largely increased, and new machinery and motive power of the most approved pattern are to be introduced.

A company is being formed at San Francisco, California, to build rafts of from 8 to 12 million feet, at Puget Sound, after the Joggins' plan, to be towed to San Francisco. The advantage of rafting is in freights. The present rate on lumber from Puget Sound to San Francisco is \$6 per thousand, while it is claimed the rafts of logs can be rafted at a cost of \$2 per thousand.

The lumber trade is brisk at Westminster. The Royal City Mills are running full time. The bark C. C. Fink is loading 700,000 feet of rough lumber at the mills. The Brunette saw mills are having gas put in in prospect of a heavy run of night work.

The following are the ruling prices at present for lumber at Vancouver.

Common rough, \$9, \$11 yard; common sized, \$11; common S. I. S., do; on board cars, \$13; 1x4 flooring, No. 1, \$19; No. 2, \$17; 1x6 flooring, No. 1, \$18; do., No. 2, \$16; ceiling, No. 1, \$18; do., No. 2, \$16; No. 1 S, 4 S, \$19; No. 2, do, \$17; common rough plank for sidewalks, delivered, \$9, 1x4 per M, \$2; rough cedar, \$10 to \$12 per M; double dressed cedar, \$35 per M; single dressed, do., \$30 per M; shingles \$2 per M; maple, \$20 per M; curly do., \$75; pickets, rough, \$19 per M; dressed do., \$20.

The bush fires which so extensively prevailed during July and August have entirely disappeared. They have been worse this season than any other during the last fifteen years.

The country settling up gradually, will increase the danger of these fires yearly, but it is said the Government is contemplating some scheme for protecting the limits more effectually than heretofore from the ravishes of fire.

Fader Bros.'s mill at Vancouver is being bought up by a joint stock company, and rumor has it that the C. P. R. is largely interested.

The Vancouver Lumber Co., at same place, have been bought up by a syndicate, of which Mr. W. H. Higgins, lately in connection with the McLaren, Ross Lumber Co., is managing director.

The Moodyville mill is talking of making large additions this winter, but the negotiations to this effect were temporarily suspended owing to the demise of Mr. Walch, of San Francisco, one of the largest stockholders.

The new machinery for the Victoria Lumber Co. is on the way, and expected at Chemainus daily from Peterborough.

A great many eastern capitalists have paid the coast a visit the last two months, and there are rumors of some large investments having been made.

The other mills at Vancouver are all very busy, and every week a ship sails out of Burrard Inlet loaded with Douglas fir for every part of the world.

In New Westminster the Brunette Saw Mill and Royal City Mills are working night and day, and still cannot keep up to the orders continually coming in.

The McLaren-Ross new mill has been all roofed with corrugated iron roofing, and the foundations for boilers, burner and engines are nearly finished; the fire bricks and Portland cement arriving last week. They expect to be running by February. A car load of iron working tools arrived last week from Bertram, Dundas, and they ordered an engine and boiler of the Ballmake from E. Leonard & Sons, London, to run the above, and an electric plant. This mill will revolutionize mill building in this country, and will tend to economise the use of manual labor.

From a recent visit to Revelstoke, American capitalists are talking of building a mill on the Columbia as soon as the duties are better arranged between Canada and the United States.

The Valentine shingle mill is running to its full capacity, and the price of shingles there, 75c. run, f.o.b., is very cheap, and lots of money in it to the manufacturer.

Benjamin Franklin, of Chiticutimi, is talking of building a saw mill in that part of the country, having ordered power and carriage, and, if successful, will put in more machinery next year.

The Alberni mill is getting under way; the parties are now negotiating about the machinery, and will order as soon as the grants are allowed.

Hon. G. Dewdney is now out here, and is making some stir with those mill owners who control more limits than the law allows, but they expect to pull through all right.

At the forthcoming Provincial Exhibition, to be held in New Westminster, on the 23rd and 24th of October, the mill men are going to make a special exhibit of the lumber industries, and qualities of all the woods in British Columbia.