

THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY AND THE PERPETUITY OF OUR FORESTS

(From The Toronto Saturday Night)

Canada has the largest timber area of any country in the British Empire and the largest in the world, exclusive of Russia and the United States. Her area of pulp-wood forests alone—spruce, balsam, fir, hemlock, jack pine, tamarack, poplar, basswood, birch and maple—is estimated to cover 350,000 square miles and to be capable of yielding 1,033,370,000 cords of pulp-wood. Her forest products add upwards of 8200,000,000 annually to the wealth of the country, and rank second among our wealth-producing resources.

Apart altogether, however, from their value as a wealth-producing agency our forests serve a still more useful purpose. They protect our arable lands from drought and devastation and keep them in a condition of productiveness. They also make possible our unrivalled water-powers, which are playing such an important part in our industrial development and upon which we must depend in greater measure as our fuel supplies become more and more exhausted.

To denude a country absolutely of its forests is to pave the way for its desolation, if not its ultimate destruction. China is pointed to as an example of what may befall a land which allows its forests to be destroyed. Once a country of vast wealth, both in timber and in agricultural lands, the removal of its forests allowed torrential rains to sweep down its unprotected hillsides carrying vast quantities of sand and gravel which covered and destroyed immense tracts of arable land and rendered them unfit for cultivation. To-day China is a desolate, treeless country, and finds great difficulty in wresting a meager sustenance from her impoverished soil. Other countries to a less extent, have suffered heavily through their improvident use of their forest resources. Where they have not utterly destroyed the productibility of their agricultural lands, they have been put to enormous expense to reclaim lands so misused. In some of them it has been possible to replant denuded mountain slopes, at great labor and expense, to cope with drifting sands and torrential rains, which threatened obliteration of their agriculture as well as the destruction of many of their villages.

A bulletin on this subject recently issued by the United States Department of Agriculture says that: "Injudicious clearing of land on which forest cover should always have been maintained has been one of the main causes of unnecessary land erosion in that country. Thousands of acres have been rendered uncultivable