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Canada's Forestry Conditions and Problems

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manage our forests; that is a very significant thing, capable, if sustained, of far-reaching consequences to the advantage of the forests and consequently to Canadian industries.

The characteristics of the present period developed gradually, however. The war had an accelerating effect and linked Canada up with the Imperial forestry needs. The beginnings of the present period were indicated some years ago in the management of extensive forest areas in the West by the Dominion Forestry Branch, in the employment of foresters by lumbermen and pulpwood companies, and in the development of reforestation programmes. The Province of Quebec took the lead in the two latter. The first private companies to employ foresters are in Quebec. The first companies to begin planting operations on a commercial scale are in Quebec. The Provincial Forester was perfecting his plans for co-operative planting on pulpwood limits before the Imperial Conference took place. I am informed that certain pulpwood companies are making the necessary investigation of reproduction and rate of growth preliminary to restricting the annual cut to the amount accumulated by the annual growth. Similar studies are being made in New Brunswick. Within the past few months, the Prime Minister of Ontario has announced his adherence

to a reforestation programme that calls for the planting of 10,000 acres a year for the next sixty years.

Now, why is it that private companies are going into the business of forest planting on a large scale? Why is it that Ontario is planning to reforest over a half million acres of waste lands? Why did the British Reconstruction Committee say that forest conditions in Canada presented an Imperial question of first magnitude which deserves the immediate attention of the Imperial and Dominion Governments? Let us hastily examine into our forest conditions to see if we can find a satisfactory answer to these questions. Before we proceed, however, let me point out a mistaken conception quite generally held by the public. People think that, if an area is covered with a forest of some kind all is well. In our climate, they say, nature will always give us trees of a sort. Let us take what nature gives and not worry about the future. This assumes that all trees are so alike in their physical and mechanical properties that they can all be used, if necessity requires, for the same purpose. Any farmer or wood-user knows this isn't so, yet I have often heard the idea expressed by otherwise intelligent people who ought to know better. Quite likely they talk that way because of the emollient properties of the idea. As a matter of fact, there are forests and forests; there are trees and trees. It does not follow that an area covered with forests is commercially valuable

because of their presence, or that one tree is as good as another for the various purposes of the market. In the neighborhood of 70 different kinds of trees have been used in this country in the wood and timber trade, but a very few species contribute the greater portion of the output. About four billion feet of lumber are cut in Canada every year. Their value as rough lumber is approximately \$122,000,000. When time, labor and thought have been expended upon them they become worth around \$250,000,000. Thus our forests in terms of the manufactured lumber products increase our national wealth a quarter of a billion dollars each year. Over two-thirds of the above are contributed by six different kinds of trees. The comparatively few kinds of trees in our forests that are utilized in large quantities are still more strikingly shown in the case of the pulpwood. Of this material around four million cords are cut each year, valued in the rough at \$45,000,000, and from which pulp and paper products are produced to the value of over \$200,000,000. More than 90 per cent of these values is furnished by the wood of four kinds of trees.

These few trees enter so largely into the products of the forest not because they are plentiful and accessible, but because they meet the market requirements better than any others. Because of certain inherent mechanical and physical properties, no Canadian wood, for example, is so well adapted to such a variety of uses as that of the white pine. The commercial supply of this species is fast disappearing. Owing to this fact we are already using poorer woods as substitutes—with little or no difference in price. And again, no wood fibre is so well adapted for paper making as that of spruce. Notwithstanding all that has been said and done with regard to employing various vegetable fibres as substitutes for woodpulp, little has been accomplished or probably ever will be accomplished because of the quality, adaptability and cheapness of production of wood fibre and among wood fibres those of spruce stand supreme as the result of certain inherent characteristics. When the supply of spruce is gone we shall be compelled to use poorer—but not cheaper—grades of paper.

Canada's Forest Areas

Now we will turn to our forested areas from the standpoint of the commercially valuable trees. In the first place, of the 3.5 million square miles of land area in Canada, 1.6 million square miles, over 40 per