

Ontario and Quebec Strive to Solve Forestry Problems

By Edward Beck.

The disposition to regard the forests as mines to be exploited to the limit and despoiled without restraint, or as a reservoir of wood to be emptied of its contents as quickly as possible, is no longer tolerated anywhere. The tendency now is to look upon them as a crop, capable of being made to yield a continual harvest. The exact means by which this is to be accomplished is a matter for trained foresters. It is, furthermore, a matter in which co-operation between the Government and the private interests is essential and one in which the people, as represented by the Government, have a vital interest, and must be prepared to give it adequate financial support.

The first obligation is, without question, to improve and extend our present methods of fire protection or prevention. When one considers the enormous losses that occur every year from preventable forest fires, it seems almost foolish to talk about cultivating new forests. It is encouraging to know that great improvements have been brought about in recent years. Education is doing its part. Larger appropriations by the provincial governments have resulted in the employment of a more numerous army of fire rangers. Radio communication and the aeroplane are making it easier to detect and stamp out incipient fires. Eventually, fire losses should be reduced to a minimum, if not entirely eliminated.

Tied up with proper fire proper protection is, of course, the question of slash disposal upon which practical foresters are still not all in agreement. Insect pests and parasitic fungi also constitute a forest menace calling for extermination.

These problems, however, are all but part of the all-embracing one of how best to harvest our standing timber, with a view to meeting present necessities and providing for future requirements. This is the problem that should engage everyone concerned with forest administration.

Ontario has recently undertaken a reforestation programme of its own. Its outcome will be watched with keen interest by the other provinces, especially as in some of its aspects it marks an entirely new departure.

In Quebec, the Government is taking active steps to get the large companies to place their holdings under the management of trained foresters, and to work more closely with the authorities in operating them on the basis of obtaining a sustained yield. The proposal there is to take an exact inventory of the provincial forest resources, upon which the Government engineers and those of the limit-holders will co-operate in the preparation of a forestry programme to embrace a term of years. The system proposed aims at preserving the forests, and, by the use of selective cutting, to leave them with an increased value, doing away entirely with indiscriminate cutting, which impairs, when it does not destroy, the forest capital. In other words, an effort will be made to adjust the annual cut to the estimated annual growth. Quebec is also getting ready to establish a school of rangers in connection with its forest nurseries.

From a noted Toronto architect:

To Canadian Forestry Assoc.

"I send you with much pleasure my subscription of two dollars — all too little — to the Canadian Forestry Association, with warmest congratulations on the fine work you are doing. You can count on me for 1921, 1922 and all the succeeding years as long as I am neither dead nor "bust".

"It is difficult to find words to express adequately the value of your efforts towards preventing the terrible annual loss of our forests by fire, and in educating the Community to the necessity of reforestation.

"It is always uphill work opening the eyes of the public to evils to which they have become accustomed, but it really does look as though they had been awakened at last, largely through your work.

"I wish also to congratulate you on the argument put forward at the end of your leaflet on the necessity of keeping the Association free from Government or commercial control. This is essential, for the moment the Government or any commercial interest gets hold of your Association, that moment its value comes to an end and you can count me out."