

## Billboard Nuisance Should be Regulated

In Most Cities Billboards Defigure the Streets and Are Not Equitably Taxed

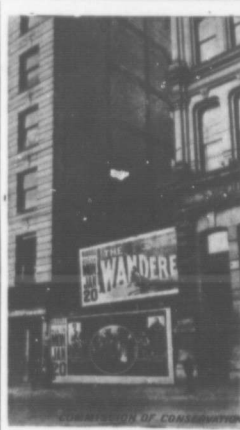
An objectionable feature in our Canadian streets is the rapidly increasing number of billboards. This is evidently a cheap and, therefore, profitable form of advertising for some purposes. It is, however, profitable only to those directly interested, while its drawbacks are many. The more prominent a location the quicker it is seized upon for billboard use. Vacant lots on our business streets are quickly transformed into advertising hoardings. For the use of the frontage the owner of the land in some cases receives a small return, but, for municipal taxation purposes, little is contributed. In one eastern city, a basis has been arrived at for the assessment of these billboards. The property is assessed as vacant land, with the exception of approximately twelve feet of the frontage occupied by the construction and its supports. This portion is assessed as occupied land and the value of the boards is assessed for general taxes and also for business taxes. The low value of the billboards makes the return from these taxes of little importance.

The value for publicity purposes of these prominent locations is regulated by the number of passers-by. In business districts, high rents are paid by tenants for stores with windows in which goods may be displayed for advertising purposes. The cumulative advertising value of these display windows attracts the public, and forms what is termed the business district. This business district consequently becomes the heavy tax-paying area. It is unfair, therefore, that such discrimination should be made for taxation purposes between the value of display windows and billboard advertising for advertising purposes.

Billboards are also to a large extent used to hide from view unsightly masses of debris and rubbish, this being deemed cheaper than cleaning them up. Danger lurks in these places, not only from fire, due to lighted matches or cigar and cigarette stubs being carelessly thrown among the litter, but also from the fact that they are frequently made use of as sanitary conveniences.

Our cities are prepared to encourage the erection of handsome buildings and business blocks, but no provision is made in the city-by-laws for their protection from billboard neighbours. The writer has in mind the erection of a substantial eight-storey business block, with an attractive appearance. The building was hardly completed before a double-deck billboard was erected alongside. Without the latter a neat little open space might have been left.

In the interest of civic pride and beauty these billboard structures should be thoroughly controlled if not eliminated. The cost, from the loss in taxes would be infinitesimal, while the appearance of the city streets, if one may judge by those of Westmont, Que., where they are controlled, would be immeasurably improved.



BILLBOARDS ARE UNSIGHTLY  
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## To Secure British Timber Trade

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timbers of the grade known as 'merchantable', for heavy structural work, or for re-sawing into any special size; and in the case of large timbers scant size does not occur.

"If, however, British Columbia is to enlarge her timber trade with the United Kingdom then a range of all grades and sizes including merchantable (but not including the very lowest grades, such as 'culls' and No. 2 common) must be dealt in. In other words, practically the whole of the log, when manufactured into timbers, boards, dimension stock and so on, must be exported.

"The United Kingdom normally imports something over 2,000,000 standards (4,000,000,000 ft. B.M.) annually. It is thought by competent authorities overseas that Northern Europe will be able to supply nearly all the rest of Europe's softwood lumber requirements for many years except perhaps for the next two or three years of reconstruction.

"Thus, we in Canada are in competition with a source of supply which manufactures lumber in those sizes and forms exactly desired by, and customary with, the trade overseas. The Northern European woods are also in great favour there on account of their close texture and mild working qualities, and excellence of manufacture. For these reasons, I do not think Canada can count on the United Kingdom willingly accepting Canadian standards in sizes, etc. Even if Canada manufactured her lumber exactly to suit this market, we should still have to meet the Northern Europe c.i.f. prices.

"If Canada can deliver timber in the various grades sawn to British standards at Swedish prices, then she can do business in a broad and general way. But can Canada do this? It is quite probable that there will be a good demand, for the next two or three years in Europe, for lumber from any source, which Canada can surely share in, but it will be temporary.

"Price and conformity with the

customary standards will govern the permanent trade. Strengths of various timber are not considered in Europe to the same extent as in Canada or the United States.

"Suppose for a moment that the British timber trade, and the British architects would agree to accept Canadian lumber in its customary 'scant sizes'. It would mean that the British timber merchant would have to carry stocks of two distinct actual sizes (Northern European and North American) though both would be nominally of similar size. It seems to me that, if Canadian lumbermen want a substantial share of the British trade, they must (1) deliver their goods at prices which will compete with Swedish and Russian; and (2) manufacture to the customary sizes demanded.

"Canada's ability to deliver her lumber in Great Britain at Swedish prices is largely dependant on freight charges. Obviously, freights from Canada, whether from Atlantic or Pacific ports, will always be higher than from the Baltic ports or from Archangel, so that the Canadian lumbermen's price at the mill must be lower than the Swedish mill price, but whether the difference in the prices of the commodity will be sufficient to overcome the difference in freights will be duly determined by the amount of tonnage offering freely in the market.

"Personally, I think we shall see in about two years time freight rates low enough for Canada to compete with Sweden and Russia in the British market, provided Canada will manufacture to the requirements of the British market."

## HIGHER STANDARD FOR REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

The land business has been proverbially a business on a low ethical plane. It is being put on a higher plane, and there are many conscientious real estate men who are rendering a social service of a high order in the work; yet there are many dishonest ones still active, and it is necessary that all right-minded people use every effort to put the business of selling land and of colonization on as high a plane as the best mercantile business, which finds a profit in protecting the consumer. Various associations of real estate dealers are engaged in praiseworthy efforts to expose dishonest practices and to encourage a right professional spirit. The writer has recently made addresses before gatherings of real estate men in Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, and has taken for his subject "The real estate business as a profession." Everywhere he has been gratified by the response to his appeals for higher standards. This promises much for the future, because the real estate man must always play a large rôle in the settlement of the land; and, if he is competent and right-minded, he can perform services of a very high order.

In addition to private associated efforts, it is necessary to have public activity. The honest real estate dealers must separate themselves from the dishonest ones and encourage every effort to infuse into the real estate business a true professional spirit.—R. T. Ely.

## Reforestation As a Post-War Policy

Great Britain and France will Undertake to Renew Their Forests. Attractive Long-time Investment

An important item of post-war policy in both France and Great Britain will unquestionably be an extensive programme of reforestation. Without the products of the plantations of France, the prosecution of the war would have been handicapped to an extremely serious extent. It is hardly putting it too strongly to say that, had it not been for the French forests, the war could scarcely have been won—certainly not without an incomparably greater effort and much greater loss of life than has proved necessary. The limited timber supplies of the British Isles have also proved so vital a factor in connection with the home situation that plans are already being laid for a very extensive programme of reforesting waste lands at state expense or by state aid.

The economic importance of Canada of her great forest areas is no less apparent. The value of our primary forest products exported from the country during the past year totalled some \$200,000,000. The pulp and paper industry exports products valued at some \$85,000,000 annually. The importance of perpetuating a resource that assists so largely in redressing our unfavourable trade balance can scarcely be over-emphasized.

The first and most vitally necessary step toward handling our forests as crops, rather than mines, is, of course, the prevention of fires. Great progress has been made in this direction during recent years, though much still remains to be accomplished.

The next step should be the adoption and strict enforcement of improved cutting regulations in connection with all logging operations on Crown lands. The situation in the province is least satisfactory in the province of Ontario and on Dominion licensed timber lands in the west.

Another step, toward which extensive plans should soon be made, is the reforestation of the more accessible areas of non-agricultural lands, of which the forest growth has been so completely destroyed by successive fires that regeneration of valuable species by natural means can not take place for a very long period of time, if at all. Such a policy of reforestation on Crown lands must, as a rule, be carried out by governmental agencies, on account of the long time element involved before returns can be secured. Both Ontario and Quebec have provincial forest nurseries, from which many million young trees have been supplied to farmers and other private interests, including pulp and paper companies and, to a much smaller extent, to lumbermen. The forest revenue from Crown lands in both these provinces is so large that the annual expenditure of a moderate proportion of it on reforestation of denuded Crown lands would appear both feasible and logical. Experience indicates clearly that such a project can be made attractive from the viewpoint of a long-time investment.—C.L.