

and the effect on the public mind will be to deepen the impression that capitalists are purely selfish. This would be most unfortunate.



#### WITH MIXED FEELINGS

THERE was a curious mixture of feelings in evidence at the Forestry Convention held last week in Toronto. The number in attendance was not large, nor was the enthusiasm of a decided character. Some of the speakers felt proud of the progress Canada was making in the preservation of her forests. Others were doubtful and inclined to pessimism.

It seems too bad that the various provincial governments and the Dominion Parliament seem to view this question so carelessly that millions of timber are annually wasted by decay, by forest fires and by aimless destruction. Our "unlimited timber supply" has dwindled to a thirty years' supply. Instead of having what might be required during the coming centuries, we are within sight of the woodless age.

Had the policy, now being slowly and almost reluctantly adopted by our administrations, been put into force twenty-five years ago, Canada would have saved enough timber to pay off the national debt. While we have been listening to fervid speeches about the greatness of our heritage, that heritage has been slowly vanishing. Nor has the waste been stayed. It may be confidently asserted that during 1909 another five million dollars' worth of timber will be destroyed because of inadequate fire-rangings, uncouth and wasteless methods of lumbering and reckless cutting by selfish and short-sighted lumbermen.

However, the work of the Forestry Association has done much to awaken public opinion and it may console itself with the reflection that had it not been for its unselfish and persistent agitation, lumbering would have been even more wasteful, our great forest reserves would have been frittered away, and reforestation would have been almost an unknown science. The history of almost every nation teaches that the public domain is not appreciated until it has practically all passed into oblivion or private ownership. Canada had been a wise country, had she been better than her neighbours. That she has not done better proves that the public conscience and public brain in this land is not much clearer than in other countries.



#### A CHOIR TO CONJURE WITH

THE Mendelssohn Choir, originally established in Toronto in 1894, has become in the year 1909, the greatest organisation of its class on the continent. It is easy to advertise an article or an association as the best of its kind, when proof is not demanded. But, in this case, one has only to point to the most exacting critical estimate in America, that of the New York press, to prove the surpassing merits of the chorus which Dr. Vogt has trained. That such an interpretative force should have its being in a city which is often regarded as one of trade and traffic, which was described by Mr. Kipling as "consumingly commercial," is one of those incongruities more interesting than explicable. The supreme excellence of the choir is a fact, which now has continental recognition. It is a significant circumstance that Mr. Byron E. Walker and Mr. J. W. Flavelle, two of the best-known figures in the financial world of the city, have always given the Mendelssohn Choir their heartiest personal support, while to the public spirit of a great manufacturer, the late Hart Massey, Toronto owes the music hall which makes such events as the cycle of Mendelssohn concerts a possibility.

That the community recognises the quality of this choral training is proved by the attendance of nearly four thousand people for five nights of a busy week. The choral selections are of the best, for Dr. Vogt keeps his faith sternly with his art and allows none but compositions of the masters to appear on his programmes, while the public, discover, to adapt a Tennyson phrase, that "they needs must love the Highest when they hear it." The conductor of such a choir does a unique work, and, although Dr. Vogt can never be paid in full for the individual genius he expends upon the splendid organisation which has accomplished such a choral wonder as Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, he is assured of appreciation as wide as the continent. Next month, these Canadian singers, more than two hundred strong, go to Chicago to give three concerts with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra. That they will be warmly received and appreciated in the second city of the Republic we have no doubt. The time has come, however, for an European tour, for, since Canada possesses such a rare product of choral interpretation, it is high time for London and Liverpool to know that the Dominion has more than cheese and

wheat to her credit. We shall not be happy until Dr. Vogt cables from Queenstown that the Mendelssohn Choir has reached the British Isles. Meanwhile, let us hope that the attendance of Earl Grey at two of last week's concerts has more than a social significance. His Excellency made a success of the National Park and the Tercentenary pageant, and he may arouse the Canadian Government to the international importance of a Champion Choir.

#### TEACHING THE PUBLIC

IT is so easy to denounce or to forbid; it is so much easier to be constructive than destructive. The preacher goes to the theatre, sees the plays presented there, and says they are bad. He warns his congregation of the dangers they run in frequenting these places of amusement—and yet they go whenever they can afford it. The temperance reformers vote for local option so as to stop the drink traffic. Or perhaps they vote to cut down the number of licensed bar-rooms. The preacher warns his congregation against strong drink. Yet license or local option, plenty of drinking places or only a few, it does not matter much—the people go on consuming as much liquor as they ever did. We teach hygiene in the schools and much about the value of physical exercise and fresh air. Yet the schools and churches are ill-ventilated; the teachers and preachers are too often physically weak, and decidedly anaemic. The young man is told not to spend his evenings in the pool-room or the bar-room, but to get exercise for his body and training for his mind. Yet the young man plays pool just as before and the public-library reading-room is empty.

Destructive criticism is not upbuilding; only constructive work will accomplish real reforms. A father, who takes an occasional glass of liquor, was telling how he got his boys past the danger stage, how he kept them from acquiring a taste for liquor and pool-rooms until they had arrived at years of discretion and realised that excessive drinking was a danger. He took them to see what was going on at the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium and got them interested. He suggested later that if they wanted to join, he would try to spare the money for the fees. He got them tickets and they began to find the right kind of amusement and the best sort of companionship. He did not preach temperance. He filled their minds and their time with other interests. He was constructive, not destructive.

If the preachers and teachers and moral reformers would but learn this lesson what they might accomplish! They are banishing the bar, they are tabooing the theatre, they are preaching against cards, but what are they providing to take the place of these? Where may a young man go who wants a pleasant evening and male companionship? Prayer meetings in church parlours will not give it. Christian Endeavor Societies will not give it. The public library reading-room with its signs "No Smoking" and "Silence" will not give it. The parks and pleasure resorts are a help in summer time; the skating rink helps in winter; but here the mixed society is not so congenial as purely male companionship, and hence the skating rink gives it only to a few. The Y. M. C. A. buildings come nearest to supplying it; they are frequented by men only and are controlled and managed usually by men's men. The large railway corporations recognise the Y. M. C. A.'s and are always ready to help, if they are sure that the preachers will not be in control.

If preachers and teachers would but get down to practical work! When the child cries, the mother does not tell it to stop; she gets a toy which will bring back the smile and make normal the disturbed young mind. When the child at school gets restless and is inclined to get into mischief, the observant schoolmaster finds a pleasant task which will occupy the mind and hands of the active youngster. This is constructive work in its simplest form. When the problem gets larger and more difficult, when it deals with young men and young women who have many evenings to spare and who are continually seeking companionship and amusement, the solution is not so easy. It is difficult to find a substitute for the moving-picture show, the cheap and tawdry theatre, the pool-room or the spacious, well-lighted, and freedom-giving bar-room. Snow-shoeing, tobogganing and sleigh-driving are splendid when the weather permits, but it is not always of an inviting character. Rowing, canoeing, sailing and bicycling are good in the summer season if one can afford them.

The problem is complex. The preacher solves it to his own satisfaction by telling the people, old and young, to refrain from wrongdoing, from idleness, from debasing sports and amusements. Yet the observer with a judicial mind will still deny that it has been solved. The records of the gamblers, the receipts of the debasing amusement palaces and much other evidence deny the supposed solution. The spare hour is still the danger. How to employ it in an amusing, exhilarating and profitable manner is a question which is always in the foreground.

A nation which finds a large percentage of its population wasteful, profligate, intemperate, and debased in its tastes, with a small percentage even criminal, should set about trying to find the cause of the disease in the body social. This cause must lie largely in the improper use of the spare hour. Socialism will not change it. The Single Tax will not bring about a reformation. Writing long editorials, giving long talks and delivering long sermons on the evil itself will not eradicate it. The only genuine method is to create an opposing force, to take this spare hour and fill it with influences which will make for a nobler and better life.