

# Our Forests

## Tree Planting to Save the Country. An Arbor Day Address by Col. H. P. Davidson.

At the Arbor Day exercises reported last week as an interesting event at the Military Academy, Highland Park, the address of the occasion was as follows:

Members of the class of '08, Cadets, Fellow teachers and Friends:

For the twentieth time, as Superintendent of the Northwestern Military Academy, I am called upon to play a part in this annual exercise of Senior Class Tree Planting. To you seniors, and perhaps to your fellow students, I have no doubt the planting of this tree is largely a matter of sentiment. But to me, and I believe to my fellow workers, it means something more.

more far reaching. It means the development of loyalty to your alma mater, patriotism, to your country, a higher sense of civic obligations, and a more loving reverence for Him who rules all nature both animate and inanimate.

I know how general it is, and perhaps I may add how natural it is, in this life to be intensely interested "in looking out for number one," as we say. Indeed, sometimes we become so interested, so eager in our own selfish gain, that we deprive our posterity of a fair chance to succeed in life.

Probably there are few, if any, natural conditions that have a greater influence upon the economic, social and political development of a country than its forests. Not long ago President Roosevelt in a public address said: "The forest problem is, in many ways, the most vital internal problem in the United States."

Let me quote to you a brief but startling statement which I read recently in some magazine. I refer to the alarming rapidity with which our forests, national, state and private, are rapidly disappearing:

"In fifty years we shall have whole states as bare as China. The Appalachians will be stripped to bedrock. The Rockies will send down vast floods which cannot be controlled. The Canadian forests north of the great lakes will be swept away. Our middle west will be bare. The Yazoo Delta will be ripped apart, because no levee will be able to stand the floods of those days. We shall be living in crowded concrete houses, and at double the rent we now pay. We shall make vehicles of steel, use no wood on our farms. We shall pay ten cents for a newspaper, fifty cents for a magazine, as much for a lead pencil. Cotton will be immensely higher. Beef will be the privilege of the few. Clothing will cost twice what it costs today. Like Chinamen, our children will rake the soil for fuel for forage for food. We shall shiver in a cold, and burn in a heat, never before felt in this temperate zone, meant by God as a comfortable growing place for splendid human beings—unless we wake up."

Do you say this is extravagant language? That the conditions do not justify such startling statements? That they are not verified by the facts?

### CHANGES ON THE NORTH SHORE

When I came to this beautiful city of Highland Park just twenty years ago this week, that campus was covered with a thick growth of trees. Sheridan boulevard, over there, from Linden avenue towards Chicago for miles was but a cart road lined with nature's primeval growth of forest. When our forefathers came to this country they found it almost entirely covered, save the "Great American Desert" with majestic forests. The supply for lumber and fuel seemed to be sufficient to last for all ages. What is becoming of it? What has become of it?

To-day, after years of careful survey by experts in the government employ, we learn that the forests are used up four or five times as fast as they are reproduced, and that the present supply will not last more than from thirty to fifty years, when we must face a general timber famine. We have been wonderfully slow to realize what an amazing draft we are annually making on our remaining forest supply. Take for illustration the demand for rail-

ties up annually 100,000,000 ties at an average of 47 cents each or to the amount of \$47,000,000. Allowing 100 ties to the acre, which is a fair estimate, the annual cut for this alone would be 1,000,000 acres. In round numbers this would be 1,600 square miles of land, or a tract forty miles square, large enough to take a horse and carriage a whole day to cross it either way, allowing a good road. This would be thrice the size of Lake County, or 6,400 farms of 160 acres each cut over annually for ties alone. The amount of timber used for this is about the same as the amount used for shingles, only about one sixteenth the amount used for timber, and a little more than the amount used for wood pulp in the manufacture of paper, while a lesser amount is used respectively in cooperage stock, mine timbers, lath, wood for distillation, veneer, and poles.

### INCREASED COST OF LUMBER.

The lumber which could be bought for \$15.00 or \$16.00 per thousand feet board measure, when I came here, twenty years ago, now costs \$28 to 30.00 a thousand, and lumber which then cost \$20.00 now costs \$38.00 or \$40.00. But high prices and a fast increasing scarcity is by no means the only evil that comes from this extravagant, wasteful, nay reckless destruction of our forests. It is a well known fact that in proportions as the mountain sides and hill slopes are made bare of forests, the rain fall becomes less even, the soil less able to absorb it, and mountain torrents and valley floods are the result. The hills become barren and unfit for cultivation and the river beds choke with sand and silt and are rendered unnavigable, processes destructive alike to agriculture and commerce. At the same time there often results great loss of life and property.

### FLOODS AND TREES.

We are told by good authority that the flood damage in the United States exceeds \$100,000,000 annually. That beautiful river which has its source and which runs most of its course in my native state, a "Rhine of America" is said to support a population of 350,000 with property assessed at \$240,000,000. It drives mills worth \$100,000,000 employing 80,000 people who receive annually \$37,000,000 in wages. But all that industry is menaced by the destruction of the White Mountain forests. Only a short time ago a great flood swept down from the southern Appalachian system and destroyed \$18,000,000 of property. You read of the great sudden floods of the Ohio and other rivers last winter. There are about 1500 streams in France considered dangerous because the country through which they run has been denuded of forests. Last fall there was a terrific flood in some of these streams in the southern parts of France and the damage in the department of Herault was

estimated at \$4,000,000. The waters rose so rapidly in the valleys, that the people working in the vineyards were compelled to seek refuge in the trees and on the tops of the houses and walls. Most of the responsibility for the disastrous nature of the floods was attributed to the unrestricted denuding of the forests. When a few years ago Congress put a tariff of two dollars per thousand on imported lumber, it seemed to me the height of folly. Time I think has conclusively proved it so. If such a tariff was to have any effect at all, it must be to benefit the rich lumber dealers at the expense of the humble citizen who must needs have a house to live in and also to keep out Canadian lumber and cause a more rapid decrease of our own forests. Canada could well chuckle. She had but to wait patiently and abide her time. Now we must have her lumber and her wood pulp and pay greatly increased prices, more, she is even now contemplating the enactment of an export duty law whereby she will make a double profit at our expense.

But what is the remedy for this threatened famine of lumber and fuel and paper pulp? What is our safe guard against all this destruction of life and property? What is to save our agricultural and grazing lands from being impoverished and washed away? What is to keep our navigable rivers from being filled up and rendered useless to commerce? What is to protect the enormous water power of our streams from being destroyed? Reforesting! Reforesting! Planting trees! Planting them everywhere! Planting them on every waste acre of land! Planting them in every unoccupied nook and corner not used for agriculture and grazing. Plant them along every street, and highway and lane. Begin now, keep up the process. When you come to vote, see that your state and national legislators favor the work of reforesting by every reasonable means within the law. Keep at it till we not only have an ample supply for all our own demands, but a handsome surplus to export, it will prove a profitable investment. Some years ago a town in Norway purchased some land, set it out to trees and now the revenue of that forest pays all the town expenses without assessing the property holders a dollar. Prussian forest management has multiplied the rate of timber production threefold in seventy-five years. The net financial returns from her forests in 1850 were 28 cents per acre, in 1865 they were 72 cents, in 1900, \$1.58, in 1904 \$2.50. They are now ten times what they were sixty years ago, while the net yearly revenue from the forests of Saxony is \$5.30 per acre. Young men of the Class of '08, I hope and trust as a few weeks hence you go from here, you will go determined to be true and loyal citizens, devoted heart and soul to every enterprise which shall serve the best interests of our grand country.

### THE DISADVANTAGED CHILD

Dr. Henderson Talks To North Shore Women

Professor Charles R. Henderson of Chicago University, gave a talk on "The Disadvantaged Child" from the view point of an expert sociologist, to a group of seventy-five prominent women of the North Shore suburbs on Monday afternoon, May fourth, at the Evanston Children's Home. The occasion was a monthly luncheon and business meeting of the North Shore Advisory Board of the Children's Home and Aid Society. Dr. Henderson was introduced by Mrs. Wm. A. Locy, President of the Board and spoke of the paramount importance to society of work for children. Dr. Henderson has made a study of systems of caring for homeless children, both at home and abroad, and nowhere does he

find the Illinois system as exemplified by the Illinois Society excelled and rarely equaled. Hungary, France, Germany, even England, good as her system is, does not compare with the Illinois system in efficiency. Dr. Henderson gave much of the credit for the improvement in Illinois in the last ten years in the care for children to Dr. Hastings H. Hart, Superintendent of the Illinois Society, who is a specialist along these lines, of such knowledge and ability that he has been chosen by the Russell Sage Foundation to investigate the placing of children in family homes, as it is practiced in this country. Dr. Hart has recently begun this investigation. At the beginning and the close of the lecture, Mrs. John Sidney Burnett, of Evanston gave two delightful groups of songs. Mrs. Burnett was accompanied by Mrs. A. W. Underwood.

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