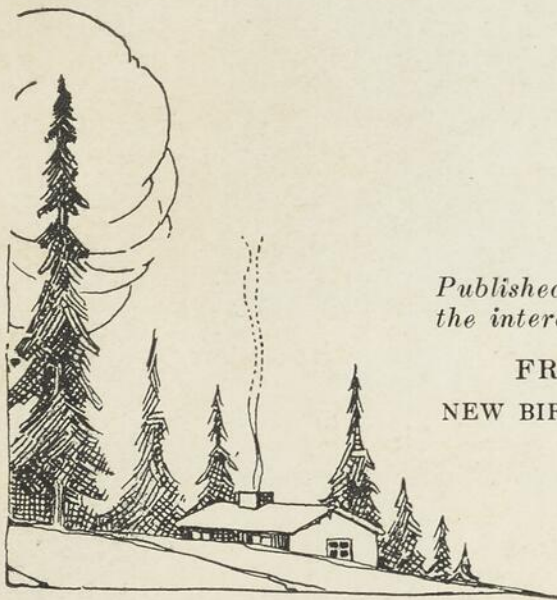


Precarious Situation in

WORLD'S SPRUCE
WOOD SUPPLY

By

C. A. SCHENCK, Ph.D.



*Published for free distribution in
the interest of forest conservation by*

FRANK J. D. BARNJUM
NEW BIRKS BUILDING MONTREAL

*Additional copies
will be mailed
free on request.*

157

BNP

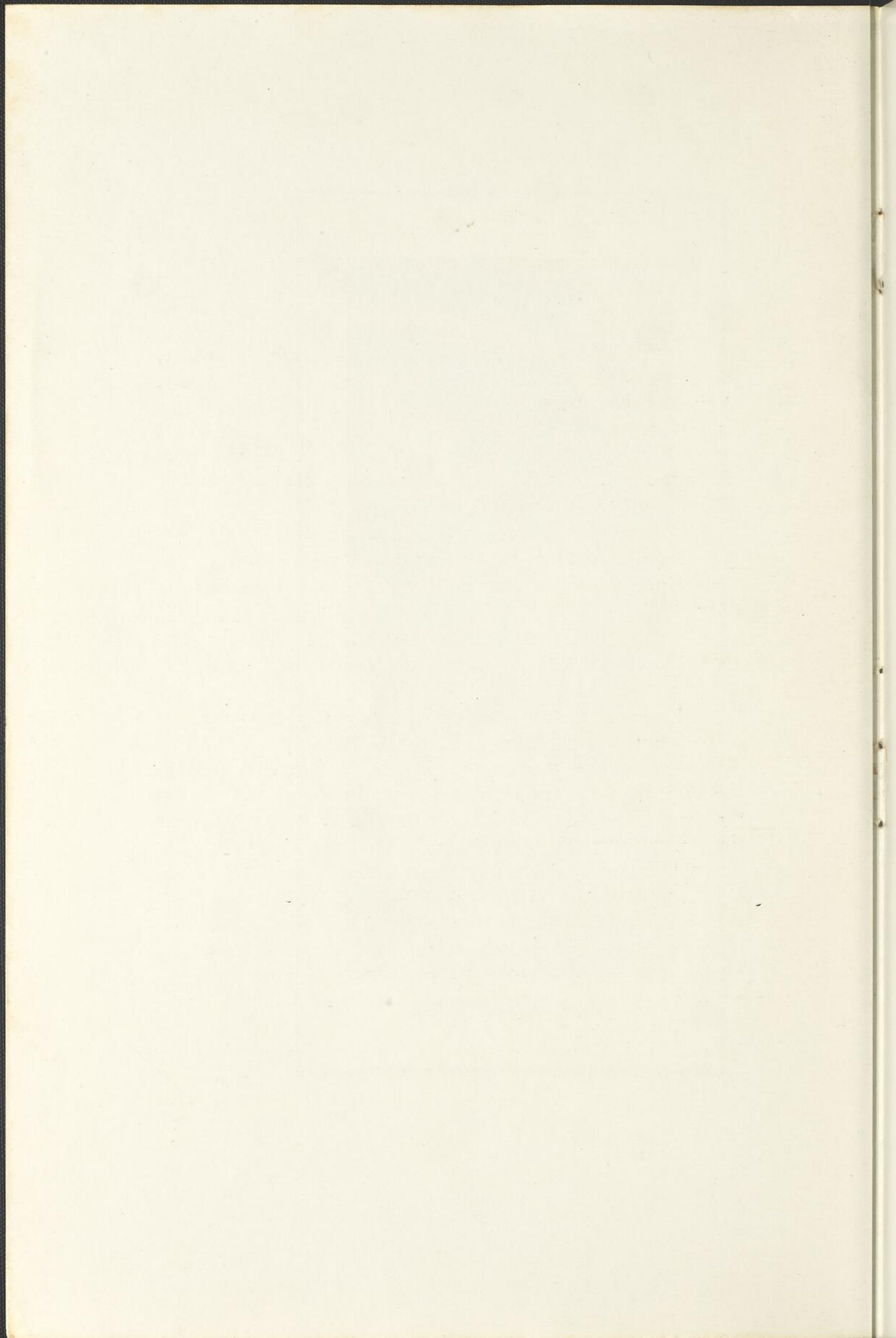
345

vic

W



DR. C. A. SCHENCK



Precarious Situation in World's Spruce Wood Supply

Having just returned from a second visit to Germany this season where I had the great privilege of the company of that eminent forester, Dr. C. A. Schenck during my forest investigations and studies of world forest conditions, I cannot do better than give to the Canadian people the benefit of the result of these studies, in the following specially prepared article in Dr. Schenck's own words.

"The reader may ask, 'What is forestry?'

"An old problem for philanthropist and economist, and a problem, which, in spite of its age, is nowhere fully solved!

"In the last analysis forestry must be common sense applied to woodlands; common sense applied by the owners; common sense applied by the people.

"Unfortunately, what is common sense for the owner is frequently antagonistic to the demands of the people. The owner desires to make money out of the woods regardless of the consequences resulting for the people. The people desire to use the woods for their benefit regardless of the owner's vested rights.

"There is no productive forest policy, practically speaking, in Canada, and if there is no such forestry being practised in Canada, so far, in spite of the prevalence of common sense, what are the reasons? And why is it that Germany, France and Sweden are strongly entrenched in forestry, while England is just beginning to practise it?

"Let us go back to France and Germany in the year 1650! At that time their primeval woods had been utterly despoiled, and a fuel famine was imminent in all their centres of population. Coal was unknown, and, had it been

known, it could not have been utilised for lack of rail or river transportation. Fuel-wood was needed, and, without fuel-wood, the centres of population were in fear of death from cold and hunger. At that time, forestry was born, not by monarchic foresight, but born by actual fear of death. When that fear had subsided 180 years later, systematic forestry was so strongly established in Germany and France that the people would not now consent to any change.

“In England and in Holland the case was different. By the help of their merchant marine they were able to obtain what wood was needed from the Baltic regions. There was never any fear of a fuel famine in England and Holland, and for that reason there was never any forestry. Today, if Russia were to cease exporting raw wood, the paper mills in Germany would be badly affected, and those in England, France and Holland would be ruined.

“The German stands are so little that the entire Black Forest, for instance, does not produce spruce enough to supply one single concern, viz. the Zellstoffabrik Waldhof, situated at the foot of the Black Forest, and all the wood now standing in Germany would only last the United States, if used for all purposes, about eighteen months.

“The case of Sweden is interesting. Sweden was described by English travellers in 1830 as utterly devastated. By that time the bulk of its primeval woods had been despoiled. In the meantime, by 1930, a second growth has, through a wise forest policy, established itself; and this second growth has a commercial value for the reason that there is no coal in Sweden whatsoever, so that its railroads, its factories and its households cannot be run without fuel-wood. The lack of coal is, from the forester's point of view, for Sweden a blessing in disguise.

“Nevertheless, traversing the Southern third of Sweden where woodlands are privately owned, one will look in vain for trees of a size sufficient to make a telephone pole. In that section Swedish forestry is not timber forestry, all efforts of the people to the contrary notwithstanding. It is brush forestry privately practised.

In Canada there is one very important industry, in fact, Canada's most important manufacturing industry, which actually faces death when the woods are despoiled, and that is the paper industry. The best tree for the manufacture of paper is the spruce tree of which there are in Canada six species. Canada has been and is to-day the real home of the spruce. No country on earth could boast of a larger area stocked with spruce than could Canada. Alas! Canada is losing its lead and will lose it for ever if the devastation and reckless exploitation now going on is permitted to continue unchecked.

"There is sure to be a world famine in spruce wood. There is no substitute comparable with this rapidly disappearing wood for the manufacture of paper and rayon silk as no other raw material is so uniform or so cheaply handled as spruce; and none is so close to good water and to water power, both essential to paper making.

"The world is short of spruce. The best paper mills in England, Germany, France and Holland obtain their supply to-day from Finland and from European Russia. Finland, however, is a small patch on the map, and what spruce there is in European Russia, is inaccessible unless it be situated in close proximity to floatable streams such as the Dvina and the Pechora. The area capable of producing spruce in that section is about as large as the province of Ontario (360,000 sq. miles). It is badly exhausted, and were it *not* exhausted, it is unable to supply the needs of Europe.

"Siberia has been described by some travellers as a real ocean of spruce (*Picea obovata* Ledeb). The Soviet republics have started, however, specific investigations with the result that spruce in Siberia, while it happens to occur scatteringly and sparingly, cannot be exploited for technical reasons. The rivers draining Siberia are frozen when the harbors at their mouth are free of ice, and the harbors are covered with ice when driving on the rivers is possible.

"In the extreme East, in Japan, there are five kinds of spruce, but all are rare; and Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido, while containing more spruce than the rest, does not supply enough material for the Japanese market. As a

consequence, the Japs are compelled to obtain what additional spruce they need from the so-called maritime provinces of the Soviet republic. The species native to these provinces is known as *Picea jezoensis Carr, and Maxim.*

"In the Western sections of China, in inaccessible altitudes, there are some species of spruce. They are, however isolated and inaccessible for all intents and purposes. The same remark applies to Schrenk's spruce (*Picea Schrenkiana Fisch. and Mey*), the typical tree of the high ranges of Tibet and the Altai mountains. In the Himalayas there is Webb's spruce (*Picea spinulosa Henry*) and Smith's spruce (*Picea Smithiana Boiss*) at very high elevations, scarcely accessible, and yet the only spruce on which the future supply of India depends.

"It might well be asserted that the spruce woods of Asia, as far as the world's supply is concerned, might just as well be situated on the moon. It is impossible, whatever the developments of transportation might be, to bring these spruce supplies to the markets of America and of Europe.

"As for the United States, spruce is practically gone, and, without the help of Canada, the newspapers of the United States, are lost.

"Canada is, in the face of these facts, in an unusual position. She has in the spruce game all the trumps in her hand.

"Alas! She is playing a poor game, she is wasting her trump cards; and she must lose the game in the end—unless the newly elected incoming government takes immediate steps to conserve her small remaining supply through every means in its power."

The above brief but carefully considered and startling summary of the world's spruce wood supply, prepared by Dr. Schenck, an authority who is conceded to be the world's best informed living forester, should arrest the attention of every thinking Canadian, and result in the formation of a national forest conservation policy for Canada before all is lost.

FRANK J. D. BARNJUM.

London, England, Aug. 7, 1930.

[8]

BNQ



C 000 353 629