

vague generalities as to our "inexhaustible timber" and "boundless forests." If they had consented they would have been compelled to be less reckless, to draw less present income at the expense of the future, and they could not well have made the quarter of a million of dollars that they secured last year by the sale of timber limits. So the people remain ignorant of the extent of their forest wealth, of its probable duration, or the seriousness of the inroads made upon it.

There are, however, some data on which to form an approximate idea of the state of affairs. To take our hardwood forests over the greater part of Ontario:—the walnut, cherry, white-wood, and cotton wood have virtually gone, the white ash, white oak, and chestnut have nearly gone, and the elm, bass, red oak and black ash are fast going. These woods are (or were) all of commercial importance, and their extinction or growing scarcity is well known to those in the industries concerned.

But it is our so-called "inexhaustible pineries" that form our main forest wealth and are of the greatest importance. In this respect the evidences of destruction are manifold. Old mills are deserted or removed into closer proximity to the receding forests, while in the case of those maintaining their ground, the logs do not reach the saws till the second year after they are cut, if even then, so great is the distance now to be traversed. And the end is within an appreciable distance. A very conservative estimate of the output of our sawmills amounts to a thousand million feet of lumber each year, which would exhaust the pine on three well timbered townships of the size of those now commonly surveyed in Ontario. Thus if there are still thirty such townships ten years would be their duration, while if there are sixty such townships, which can hardly be hoped, the term would be extended to twenty years. Our pine forests under the methods in

vogue are little likely to last for this generation.

Not only is this reckless extirpation permitted but it is even promoted by the authorities. Many of the lumbermen, while thus stripping the country, are strong believers in forest conservation, and regret the necessity which is forced upon them. By the combined payments of ground rents and stumpage dues it is made the interest of the lumberman to strip a limit and give it up to save his rents as soon as he can, to cut all that is marketable and to take no pains to save from injury the young growing trees. When agricultural settlers are coming in, he has a further inducement to speed, in their claims to the timber and in the danger of fires spreading from their clearings.

There is another more recent and serious evil in the treatment of our pine forests. Formerly if there was reckless destruction our own people got the benefit of the wages for the manufacture. But now while Canadian mills are being closed for want of saw logs, enormous rafts of logs are being conveyed across the lakes for manufacture in a foreign country. The millmen of Michigan having run through their "inexhaustible forests" are now supplying their mills by denuding our country of its fast vanishing pine timber. Such recklessness on the part of our authorities is unaccountable, for they could easily suppress this mischievous practice. The Dominion government can only act by imposing an export duty on the logs, an expedient which has the disadvantage of inviting a retaliatory import duty on our lumber shipped to the United States. But the Ontario government has the remedy in its own hands, having only to include in the conditions of sale of limits that the timber must be manufactured in this country. Sir Oliver Mowat is well aware of the feasibility of such a stipulation, for he made this condition in the last but one of his public sales of timber berths, but since then he has turned his back on this right pro-