

senting as I did a constituency that was then more directly interested in the timber trade than any other part of Ontario. Ottawa at that time was the centre of the great traffic in timber between Canada and Great Britain. The trade in sawn lumber had not in the early fifties arisen—the trade with the United States. At that time no sort of provision existed under the regulations for the protection of timber. Limits were given indiscriminately to persons who made surveys, without any practical regulations for the prevention of fires, and these remarks, I may say, apply not alone to Upper and Lower Canada of that day, but also to the maritime provinces. The system in the maritime provinces was even worse than that in vogue in Upper and Lower Canada; particularly in New Brunswick. The practice prevailing at that day was to yearly auction off the right to cut the timber. The person who bought at the auction had the right for one year only and very naturally he took the best of the timber. He had no expectation of retaining a permanent interest in the limit. Somebody else would come along and buy up the following year, and so no care whatever was exercised in the preservation of the timber. I can myself remember the terrible fire which took place, known as the Miramichi fire, the smoke from which extended up the St. Lawrence river. It covered a vast extent of country, I understand over one hundred miles in one direction, and the amount of timber destroyed would have enriched New Brunswick for all time to come. No one can calculate the vast wealth in white pine and red pine which has been lost in this way from time to time by the older provinces of Canada. It was said that for years a vastly larger amount was annually destroyed by fire than was converted into timber. The wealth of California would not compare with the value of the timber of this country had it been judiciously and prudently economized in its management. Having had something to do with the change of policy which took place at the time of confederation, representing as I did, the lumber interests, I found very great difficulty in educating the public mind to the importance of preserving the timber. The argument in those days was that an im-

migrant was worth \$1,000. We built our colonization roads through the forests in Upper Canada such as the Opeongo road, the Frontenac road, and various other roads leading back from the settled parts of the country. The surveyors ran them through the most valuable pineries without paying any regard whatever to the character of the land, instead of limiting settlement to the lands suitable for agriculture. The lines were run by the surveyor's instrument so as to locate the shortest possible route from one point to another. The difficulty, in the early sixties, to induce the population of the provinces to preserve their timber and set apart the sections which were chiefly valuable for the red and white pine was extremely great. The practice was to give any settler who chose to locate a farm all the timber he wanted. It was only by making use of object lessons showing that men who had worked in the timber limits made a practice of taking up lots, cutting the timber on them, occupying them for three or four years—the ashes furnishing nutriment for the crops, and then abandoning the location and passing on to some other portion of virgin forest, that the public mind was educated up to the absurdity of indiscriminate location by settlers in the pine timber country.

My hon. friend made some observations as to the object the government might have in putting this paragraph in the speech. It was more particularly for the purpose of emphasizing the importance to the provinces of taking some better means of preventing the spread of forest fires. No doubt both in Quebec and Ontario, and I presume in the maritime provinces also, there are now fire rangers, and efforts are being made to prevent the destruction of timber by fire, but these efforts might be redoubled. In the month of January last, we had a forestry convention in the city of Ottawa at which some very valuable suggestions were adopted, and one can only hope that the sentiments which there prevailed will be taken up by the various provinces and an effort will be made to preserve the timber which remains by adopting reforestation as is being done in the older countries of the world, in Germany for instance. Wherever a tree is cut down it ought to be incumbent on the man who cuts it to plant another in its