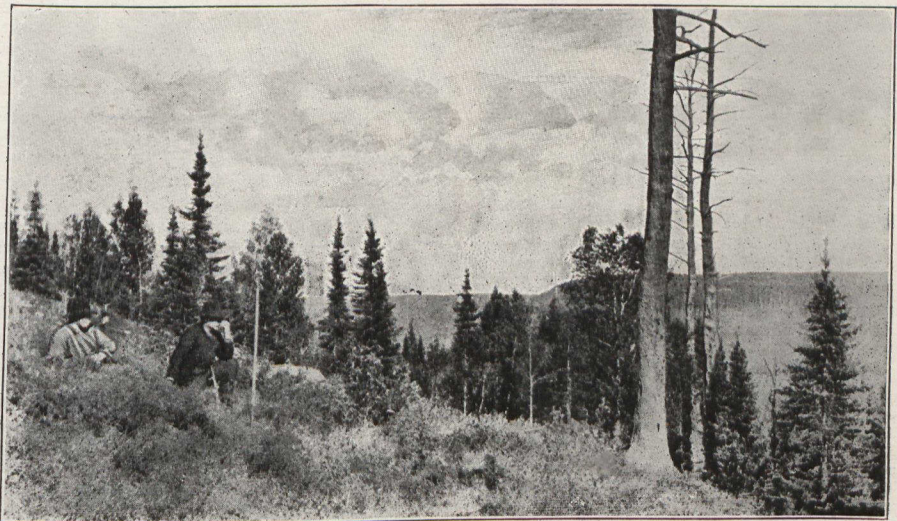


nothing better than quote Salter's own words: 'Almost the whole of this district appears to have been devastated by fires at different times and at periods more or less remote, which swept away the original forest, some remains of which are still to be seen in the shape of huge trunks of pine, blackened and charred by the fire. The country to the north of my line, along the height of land, has been swept over by fire, and now is, for an area of 2,000 square miles, a desolate wilderness. Judging from remains still standing it was formerly covered with pine and other timber.'

Vast areas west of Lake Superior, along the southern boundary of the province as far as Rainy Lake, which at one time contained large quantities of pine, were destroyed prior to 1857, probably about the year 1845. These fires burned over thousands of square miles, both in Ontario and Minnesota. From the top of a high mountain on Hunters' Island no less than 1,000 square miles of just such country can be seen, extending as far as the eye can carry in almost every direction.

Coming down to more recent dates, I might mention the fires of 1877, which burned over extensive areas in Parry Sound; the fire of 1891, which swept along the Canadian Pacific Railway for nearly sixty miles from Pogamasing Station to near Woman river, and a more recent one which in 1896 burned over the same territory and the entire shores of Biscotasing and Ramsay Lakes, and from the headwaters of the Spanish and Mississagi rivers to near Flying Post, north of the height of land, a distance of over seventy miles. These two fires alone devastated over a million and a quarter acres. Being an eye-witness of this fire, I am able to form some idea of what a forest fire in a pinery in a dry season is, and how utterly impossible it is to check it.

I might also mention the fires of 1894, which swept over Northern Minnesota destroying over 140 lives; this fire crossed Rainy River into the Rainy River Valley, burning over several of the newly scattered townships, and destroying the lives of six members of a family named Gamsby.



[Photo R. B. Miller.

Looking for Old Lines, part of the Field Work included in a Forest School Course.