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WASTE LAND INVESTIGATION

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A Review of Existing Conditions in Durham and Northumberland Counties, where exists a light drifting land that could be exploited successfully for Forestry purposes.

THE rapid depletion of the timber supply in the older parts of Ontario with its attendant evils, makes it necessary to take some intelligent action towards reforesting in the immediate future. With this fact in mind some pioneer work was done during the past summer in the counties of Durham and Northumberland, with a view to ascertaining what amount of land, if any, unsuited to agriculture, existed, and whether by its location and distribution, reforestation would be practicable.

The county of Durham has running through the centre of it a height of land constituting a watershed where numerous streams take their rise. This height of land was originally timbered with pine and oak, and is known locally as the Old Pine and Oak Ridge. The land is hilly and of a light, sandy character, and in some parts where it has been cultivated for some time the soil is inclined to drift; where good land did exist in some of the valleys or flats, the wash from the hillsides has rendered it useless, and the consequence is, that many farms are either deserted altogether or used as runs for cattle. Part of this land has never been cultivated and is at present grown up with second growth pine, scrub oak, poplar and bracken fern.

THE PERCENTAGE OF POOR LAND

While this ridge runs across the county from west to east, it is not all, poor land agriculturally. The poorest land lies in an area beginning about a mile and a half west of Burketon on the C. P. R., and extending east to the end of Rice Lake, and having a width varying from three quarters of a mile to two miles. The whole of this area is by no means unsuited to agriculture, for some good land will be found in isolated areas of small extent. One is safe in saying, however, that seventy-five per cent. is wholly unsuited to successful farming. Having gone over this land at a time when everything was favorable to the growth of vegetation the above estimate is tolerably accurate.

Beginning at the western limit of this area and going east, it lies between the township of Cartwright on the north and Darlington on the south. It extends north into Cartwright about half a mile in the first concession until within a mile and a half of the east boundary, where it broadens and takes in part of the second concession; to the south it takes in the tenth and part of the ninth concessions of Darlington, until near the east boundary where it broadens out taking in the whole of the ninth concession.

Taking the next two townships to the east,



An Abandoned Farm on Blow Sand Land

This photo was taken on the sand plains of Norfolk Co., Ont. Near this farm the Government has purchased 120 acres of similar land, and has commenced reforesting it. Land of this type can be bought at from one to three dollars an acre.

Manvers on the north has the area extending north nearly three concessions on the west side and running east with this width for about a mile and a half where it drops off and for the rest of the way across the township is confined largely to the first concession, with an occasional streak running north, beyond this concession, one at a point south of Pontypool and another at the east boundary next to the township of Cavan.

The township of Clarke, lying south of Manvers, contains the largest amount of poor land lying in any one contiguous area. The sandy land here takes in the whole of the tenth concession and the first twenty lots in the ninth concession. In this last concession there is a block of about 2,000 acres totally unsuited to agriculture.

The next two townships to the east contain less sandy land than the last townships named and it lies in the first mile and a half of the first and second concessions of Cavan, with perhaps the south half of the first concession throughout. Hope township, lying south, has the sandy land in the lots lying west of the G. T. R., in the ninth concession.

LAND RETURNING A SCANTY LIVING

Taking the county as a whole, the area indicated above may contain some farms which are yielding a fairly good living to their occupants, but in the greater number of cases the living is somewhat scanty. Judging from the conditions which prevail on these latter farms, the returns yielded do not commence to compensate the occupants for the labor expended and the result is most discouraging. It might also be noted that there exists outside of this area indicated, considerable sandy land, but it usually occurs in such small areas as to enable the farmers to give special attention to its improvement, something which would be impossible for a man whose farm was largely composed of this light sandy soil.

The ridge continues east, south of Rice Lake across the County of Northumberland, but for the width of the first township on the west, no sandy soil of any extent occurs, except perhaps about 200 acres on the east end of the eighth concession. Continuous with this sandy land in Hamilton township there is in the township of Haldimand a tract of very poor land extending right across the township. On the west side of the township it takes in the whole of the seventh concession and the north end of the sixth and south end of the eighth, and maintains this width for from two to three miles at least, when it narrows and for the rest of the distance across the township is confined largely to the seventh concession.

90 PER CENT UNSUITED TO AGRICULTURE

As in the County of Durham, this area may extend farther north or south at points, but its outline is confined largely to the height of land; and while it, too, may contain isolated patches of arable land yet there is a larger percentage of sandy land. I do not hesitate in saying that the area indicated will contain 90 per cent. of land wholly unsuited to agriculture. This part of the height of land differs to that of Durham in that it was not, from all appearances, so heavily tim-