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**BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE.**

Although the revenue derived from woods and forests stands second in amount among Ontario's receipts, it is really surprising to note the manner in which so important a subject is treated, when referred to, by both parties in the Legislature. For instance, in the speech delivered from the throne the other day, on the opening of the present session of the Ontario Legislature, we are told that the recent sale of timber limits was effected "in the interest of settlement and revenue," which means, we suppose, that now that the right to cut the timber on the lands in question has been sold to private individuals, the Ontario Government proposes to minimize its value both to the purchaser and to the Province by throwing it open to indiscriminate settlement under the "Free Grant Act," and the only objection which the leader of the Opposition apparently has both to what has been done, and what is proposed to be done, is that the Legislature was not consulted as to the expediency of the sale before it took place.

Now, all this, to our mind, is very much like barking up the wrong tree. In the first place, all past experience proves that those lands, which are chiefly valuable for their timber, as the prices realized for these limits amply prove them to be, are not the best for *bona fide* settlement, while their attempted settlement unavoidably causes the destruction of their valuable timber by fire, and thereby a loss of revenue to the Province, and a loss of employment both directly and indirectly to the people, of infinitely more benefit than any settlers which will ever make a permanent home on these lands—especially at the present time, when the North-West offers so many inducements to the intending agriculturist.

We had hoped that in view of past experience, and in view of the necessity which exists for making the very most of our timber resources, the present Ontario Government would have been prepared to try the experiment of setting apart the district covered by the recent sale for timber production only, and adopted special measures for protecting the timber growing thereon from destruction by fire. The importance of the revenue yet to be derived therefrom by the Province, and the importance of making the very most of the forests which we are so fortunate as to inherit from the past, should forbid any carrying over any reasonable expenditure for such a purpose, or any highfalutin about the rights of the would-be-settler to settle where-soever he pleases. So far as settlement is concerned, the question simply is, Will the Province, as a whole, derive most benefit from protecting the timber, or from the settlers which will go on these lands? Whenever the lands are chiefly valuable for the timber upon them, it cannot be questioned that the timber is worth both directly and indirectly much more to the province than any settlement

which is likely to take place on such lands under existing circumstances, while we do not think it would be difficult to prove that the timber thus protected would add more to the population of the Province in the course of its manufacture than is likely to follow from opening the land itself to settlement under the Free Grant Act.

**PROTECTION FROM FIRE.**

The Ontario Legislature having now met, it should be its urgent duty to pass some measure whereby the provisions of the Hon. T. B. Pardee's Fire Act could be practically enforced. As it is now, the Act is a dead letter. Its 14th clause provides that it shall be the special duty of every Crown Land Agent and Bushranger to enforce this Act, and to prosecute every person guilty of a breach of its provisions and requirements; but as they have no instructions or authority from their Department to that effect, they can do nothing, and as for lumbermen taking up and prosecuting parties guilty of breaches of the fire act, it is simply absurd, as they would do it at the risk of having more of their limits purposely burned another year in retaliation.

It would appear that the greatest fires have occurred since the passing of the Act, and this may be due to the fact that no person is afraid of being prosecuted under its provisions.

Most people are under the impression that it is only the license holder who suffers from fires set out in the limits. They forget that every timber forest destroyed by fire represents so much revenue lost to the Province, let alone the actual loss to the license holder, in his limit and extensive river improvements.

There is another greater loss to be considered, and that is the loss to the country of the money which would be paid out in manufacturing and bringing this timber to market had it remained green.

During the past summer fires overran large parts of the Parry Sound and Muskoka districts, and the country lying between the Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River, and according to an estimate made in the *Globe*, of Nov. 10th, destroyed \$10,000,000 worth of pine in Ontario. This does not nearly cover all the loss, as there were many fires of licensed lands, of which the public knew nothing, the holders of the limits burned keeping the knowledge of it to themselves, not wishing the value of their properties to be depreciated.

If these annual fires continue, they will in a few years make a large hole in the revenue of Ontario.

There were three quarters of a million dollars in bonus alone obtained from the last sale of timber berths, and the duty on the timber growing on them will represent to Ontario, if not burnt, upwards of five millions of dollars, and perhaps more. The parties who have paid such large sums for timber berths have a right to

look to the Government for protection against fires, and that the existing Fire Act be properly enforced.

As these berths are all likely to be operated on within a few years, (buyers being anxious to get returns), and as they are now owned by so many different parties, the risk of fires is very much increased. Before the sale these berths were in their virgin state, and not much exposed to fire, being held by the Government, but as soon as operations commence on them they will stand a poor chance.

There should be a distinction made by the Crown Lands Department between pine lands and hardwood lands fit for settlement. It is well known that in the back districts of Ontario and the Ottawa Valley, the pine lands are generally not fit for settlement, and that where settlement has been made on them the settlers, instead of prospering, yearly grew poorer and poorer, till in many places they were actually driven from their holdings by starvation, as witness the Opeongo Road, the Bonnechere and Mississippi counties, which are now nearly deserts, nothing but dry pines to be seen as far the eye can reach, while on the other hand those who settled on the hardwood lands have done well, and made themselves comfortable.

Now that the country is mostly all surveyed and the quality of the lands known to the Government, through its surveyors and bushrangers, it surely would be easy to make a distinction between lands for settlement and those for lumbering. A large portion of the Opeongo and Bonnechere country was not surveyed until after its settlement, and the Government had not therefore the knowledge they now have about their unoccupied lands.

It surely would not be too much to expect that the source of such a large revenue to this Province as its timber forests should be better guarded against loss than it now is.

If the present staff of woodrangers were increased, and kept in the woods during the months of May, June, July and August, being good, practical bush and canoe men, and well posted in the back country, they could prevent many bush fires being set out, and generally enforce the provisions of the Fire Act if authority were given them to do so. If one fifth of the revenue, which would have been derived from the timber destroyed by fires last year alone, had been expended in watching the Crown domain, it would have paid the salary of a large staff of men for several years, and it is more than probable that very little damage from fires would have occurred.

If persons holding and working limits, and their agents and foremen, were all held responsible for the damage done by fires set out by them or their men, and also the heads of surveying or hunting and faking parties, they would be more careful than they now are. It is not so hard to trace the makers of fires in the woods

as it to trace incendiaries in cities, as every practical bushman knows that almost all fires in the woods can be traced to their starting points, and to the parties who set them out. *Cont.*

**WOODEN BREAD.**

It has lately been discovered that whiskey can be made from saw dust, and while we were yet calculating on the good times when one can "set 'em up" without stint or limit, and as to what is likely to be the increase in the snake product, if science keeps on in this fashion, along comes another scientist, and informs us that we may also have bread made from wood. We clip the following from a recent edition of *Good Health*.—"It is well known to the botanist that many plants besides those commonly used for food, contain nutritive elements. Nearly all plants contain starch. The barks of several aspens and pine trees contain so much of this substance that it can be extracted from them as from potatoes by trituration with water. It exists also in the roots and other parts of perennial plants to such an extent as to have been employed in the preparation of bread in families. In illustration of this we quote the following directions, given by Prof. Autenrieth, for preparing a palatable and nutritious bread from the beech and other woods' taste of turpentine. 'Everything soluble in water is first removed by frequent maceration and boiling; the wood is then to be reduced to a minute state of division, not merely into fine fibres, but actual powder; and after being repeatedly subjected to heat in an oven, is ground in the usual manner of corn.' Wood thus prepared, according to the author, acquires the smell and taste of corn flour. It is, however, never quite white. It agrees with corn flour in not fermenting without the addition of leaven, and in this case some leaven of corn flour is found to answer best. With this it makes a perfectly uniform and spongy bread; and when it is thoroughly baked and has much crust, it has a much better taste of bread than what in time of scarcity is prepared from the bran and husks of corn. Wood flour, when boiled in water, forms a thick, tough jelly, which is very nutritious." *Northwestern Lumberman.*

**Adirondack Preserves.**

Mr. Win. Pickhardt, of New York, has purchased a tract of 6,000 acres of land, on Saranac lake, called the Pharaoh property, which lies in the eastern portion of the Adirondack forest. This large area he proposes to preserve from the profanation of plow or woodman's axe, and devote it entirely to natural wildness, and to be the home of untamed beast and bird. The price paid for the tract was \$10,000. The woods will appear keepers, hunters will be watched, and, if possible, no poaching will be allowed, and violators of the game law will be prosecuted. A section of aristocratic old England has been in the woods of northern New York.