

A NATURAL GAME PRESERVE.

Mr C. K. Grigg, then a member of the Park staff, in the autumn of 1897, contributed two short articles to the "Ottawa Evening Journal," which contained some very interesting information about the inhabitants of this great game and fish preserve. He also proved conclusively the necessity for such an asylum for our game, and showed how successful the experiment had been. He said that prior to the inception of the Park, scarcely a beaver could be found outside its present limits anywhere in this province south of Lake Nipissing, and that in what is now the Park, only a few straggling and decimated colonies existed. It is estimated that there are now hundreds of colonies of these interesting animals within its boundaries. In many cases, they have not only erected new dams, but have also built upon the ruins of old ones. The beaver houses which dot the edges of the streams and marshes are, like the dams, marvels of engineering and architectural skill. The menu of this industrious little denizen of the forest consists principally of the tender bark of the saplings, and he afterwards utilizes the denuded trunks for his dams. The following extracts from the "Report of the Royal Commission on Forest Reservation and National Park," may be of interest :

"Of the fur-bearing animals, the beaver is by far the most valuable. On the shore of every lake in this district are to be found old beaver houses, and there is scarcely a brook in the whole territory on which at short intervals their abandoned dams may not be seen. Now one may travel for days there without seeing a single fresh beaver sign.

"There are two reasons why this industrious and harmless animal should be preserved from destruction. First, because its skin furnishes us with one of our richest and most valuable furs ; and, second, because from its habits it is perhaps the greatest natural conservator of water. It is probably within the mark to say that were this region again stocked with beaver as it once was, there would be in every township at least a hundred dams and beaver ponds, each with its family or families of beaver, exclusive of the large numbers in the lakes and rivers where no dam building is necessary. In this way the water area would be increased by perhaps a fifth, a very important circumstance from the lumberman's point of view.