

to. It extends in an east and west direction, from ocean to ocean, a distance of about three thousand miles in length, with an average breadth of probably about five hundred miles, between the arable land on the south and the barren lands of the far north. Is there anything in connection with this great region demanding our attention? To this or almost any question regarding it an answer is difficult to give, for the reason that we know so little about it, but this very ignorance suggests one thing that should be undertaken, and that is exploration and examination in order to ascertain the value of what we there possess. Very little information of a definite character can be obtained at present even concerning its geography, no matter how diligent the enquiry, and much less concerning its resources and capabilities, while to the great majority of our people this region is a veritable "terra incognita" of which no more, perhaps less, is known than of the steppes of Asia, or the deserts of Africa, and yet it is, so to speak, Canada's wood-lot. It occupies the same relation to the arable land to the south that the rough and uncleared portions of the individual farm do to the cultivated parts of it.

I have said elsewhere that we as a people occupy the position of a farmer who has settled, cleared up and erected buildings on the front of his farm, but who has never even visited the portion outside his enclosures. What would be the course of any intelligent farmer on starting to make a home on one of our bush lots? Certainly the very first act would be to explore and thoroughly examine every part of his homestead. He would then clear up those parts best adapted for the growth of crops, and leave the less productive portions for pasture, and the roughest of all to serve his purpose as a wood-lot; and this is precisely what the nation should do with reference to its unoccupied lands. The first thing is to learn what we really possess and its character; second, to invite settlers to locate only on land which will reward them for their labour; and, third, to retain in the hands of the Government such forested land as is unfit for agriculture but is better adapted for the growth of timber than for any other purpose. The policy should be to afford the settler the means by which he may earn his living by granting him good land on which he can grow his crops, whereas to make him a gift of the natural timber outside his own homestead would be virtually giving him possession of a crop which he had no part in producing, but which was the natural product of the soil, and which it had taken a century to produce. This should be regarded as an asset of the whole country. There can be no valid reason whatever adduced to support the theory that the timber on non-agricultural lands should be given away to the individual. In the case of agricultural lands the farmer's intelligent labour is the chief factor in producing his reward, but in the case of the virgin forest he does