



Above Cameron Lake looking East, Waterton Lakes Park, Alberta.

Dominion Forest Reserves are The People's Forests

The National Forests Protect Stream-flow and Provide Timber, Fuel, Hay, Pasturage, and Recreation for the Prairie Residents.

By James Lawler, Dominion Forestry Branch.

“**E**VERY acre of land put to its best use.” This is the motto of the forest engineer in deciding what areas should be devoted to agriculture and what reserved in forest for the production of timber and other forest products. This is the basis on which the Dominion forest reserves in Western Canada have been set aside. No large area of land in any part of the world is suited throughout its length and breadth for growing one crop. If land unsuited to production of, say, barley is devoted to barley, then the returns will be less than if it were sown to wheat, corn, or some other crop. In the same way, a very large proportion of Canada is better suited to the growing of trees than to any other form of vegetation. There is so much land in Canada that there is no need to ask farmers to attempt to grow ordinary agricultural crops on what is commonly called poor soil. In the past, both in Eastern Canada and the eastern part of the United States, settlers were allowed to go into forested districts, where an experienced farmer or forester could have told them that, while the soil grew magnificent trees it would grow nothing else. The result was that in many cases, after a settler had spent twenty or thirty years in clearing his farm he found the soil so bad that he was forced to abandon his homestead and start out to begin life over again. In all parts of this continent the aim now is to direct settlers into good farming areas and to reserve for the production of timber the broken, rocky and sandy land. This is the character of the lands which in Western Canada have been set aside for timber production and called Dominion forest reserves. It is possible that it might be better to call these areas National forests,

as the word “reserve” is not altogether a good one to use in this connection, unless it is remembered that these forest reserves are reserved for use and not from use. The fact is, the forest reserves are an extremely useful part of the Prairie Provinces and are increasingly being made use of by and for the settlers as indicated below. The subject is a most important one from every standpoint. There are now 39 forest reserves in the three Prairie Provinces and the Railway Belt of British Columbia, covering an area of 34,640 square miles, which is equivalent to a strip of land $41\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide stretching

across the 833 miles between Winnipeg and Calgary.

Storage of Flood Waters.

One of the great benefits which the forest reserves confer upon Western Canada is the storage capacity which they provide for the flood waters at the heads of the great rivers which flow through the prairies. The whole eastern slope of the Rocky mountains may be considered as one vast reservoir to hold back streams and rivulets which flow down the mountain sides in springtime, caused by the melting of the winter's snow. Eminent



A slough on a prairie province forest reserve, the resort of game. This picture shows two important purposes of a forest reserve. First it assists in water conservation at the heads of streams, and, second, it affords protection to game. Both these things are matters of consequence to dwellers on the prairie.