

CANADA'S FOREST AREA.

There are some who think substitutes may be found for wood. Perhaps so, but it would indeed be a hardship to have to use substitutes for a material which is used in such enormous quantities, especially as there is no need for it, if now a vigorous policy of restoration and proper management is begun. For the forest area of Europe and North America, comprising, say one thousand five hundred million acres, can readily produce annually the six to seven million cubic feet, which would make the five hundred million people comfortable, and indeed double that quantity, under fair forestry management.

I may now only briefly point out that the bulk of the eastern forest area of Canada is located on the old Archæan rocks, which do not as a rule make good farm soils. The farm country of the Eastern Provinces, as is well known, lies on the glacial and lake deposits along the Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, with the valleys and lower slopes of the smaller rivers added.

For Ontario I have satisfied myself that two-thirds of the Province is destined to remain for ever timber country, if not waste. Applying the same proportions to the other Provinces, which probably have really less farm soils, the permanent woodland area, unfit for farm use, south of the Height of Land, may be set down as one hundred and fifty million acres. The question, what the fate of two-thirds of your territory in the Eastern Provinces is to be, would appear important enough to inquire, whether a change of present policies may not be advantageous, even if there were no concern as regards wood supplies calling for it. It is true that this area is only fit for timber growing, and should therefore be systematically devoted to it. This area, located mainly on Archæan rock formation, is overlaid mostly by thin soils, which are liable to rapid erosion and washing of the soil, wherever the vegetation or soil cover is destroyed, creating waste lands.

Under present methods, with wasteful lumbering and no one concerned in the future conditions, allowing fires to run and destroy any attempt of nature to recuperate, the waste land area is continuously increasing, and by and by you will find out the consequence not only in a timber famine but in disturbed water flow, for as is well known now, even to Americans, water powers and forest cover are in close relationship. The mountainous condition of British Columbia, even more than the thin rocky soils of the East, rules out most of the territory from farm use, and predicts even greater liability to destruction as a result of mismanagement of the soil cover. In short, all the arguments for the adoption of conservative measures such as other nations have practised for some time, or begun, can be shown to exist, and find illustrations in Canada.