

to be found. But in estimating the quantities which may be yet available for commercial purposes in the regions still untouched by man, various circumstances require to be considered, such as the favourable or unfavourable conditions of soil, etc., as well as the proportion which has been destroyed by fire, and other causes. The amount of timber which has been lost through forest fires in Canada is almost incredible, and can only be appreciated by those who have travelled much in our northern districts. The proportion of white and red pine which has been thus swept away in the Ottawa Valley and in the St. Maurice and Georgian Bay regions, is estimated by the lumbermen as many times greater than all that has been cut by the axe. Yet all this is insignificant in quantity compared with the pine, spruce, cedar, larch, balsam, etc., which has been destroyed by this means in the more northern latitudes all the way from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Nelson River, and thence north-westward. It is true that the commercial value of this timber was not so great as that of the more southern pine regions which have also been partially ruined. The total quantities which have disappeared are almost incalculable, but even a rough estimate of the amount for each hundred or thousand square miles shows it to have been enormous, and of serious national consequence. The writer had traversed these great regions in many directions, and could testify to the widespread devastation which had taken place. Nearly every district was more or less burnt, the portions which had been overrun by fire usually exceeding those which remained green. These northern coniferous forests were more liable than others to be thus destroyed. In the summer weather, when their gummy tops and the mossy ground are alike dry, they burn with almost explosive rapidity. Small trees are thickly mingled with the larger ones, and they all stand so closely together that their compact branches touch each other, thus forming a sufficiently dense fuel to support a continuous sheet of flame on a grand scale. Before a high wind the fire sweeps on with a roaring noise, and at a rate which prevents the birds and beasts from escaping. Thus, in one day, the appearance which a large