

# The Forest as Recruiting Sergeant for New Canadians

Eighty Acres out of Every Hundred in the Dominion are Barred to the Farmer  
—The Forest a powerful Builder of Population.

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**T**HERE IS only one thing wrong with immigration talk. It takes for granted that the only lure to new population is a quarter section of plow land. This has brought about such a distortion of perspective in the public mind that "immigration," "national development," "booming business," "lighter taxation," "more railway traffic" and such like desiderata are nearly always spoken of as dependent wholly upon a procession of new farmers. Let us consider another angle of national development.

If you came into possession of an estate of a thousand acres, even as all of us come into the common inheritance of Canada's resources, you unquestionably would call for plans of your land, its layout, its drainage, present use and potentialities. Presumably you would apportion your soil for wheat, rye, corn, vegetable garden, orchard, and so forth. Such procedure would agree with business principles.

Suppose your estate foreman asked you to keep your eyes on the corn field, insisted on speaking of corn crops, showed you only the corn cutter as the chief piece of farm machinery, and waved aside the wheat and oats and alfalfa as mere incidentals of annual production, you would either fire the foreman or succumb to his specialized talk and become a corn fan.

## The Farm and Forest as Partners

As far as concerns the making of great and costly plans of action, the organizing of public and private effort Canada has made arrangements to coax American and British emigrants into the unworked vineyards of Western or Eastern Canada. There can be no protest against such worthy and imperative effort. One may only interpose an earnest wish that the magnetising power of *all* the natural resources of Canada could enjoy the same advertising and organized exploitation. It is no criticism of immigration policies to say that home-keeping Canadians are very apt to be falsely persuaded that agricultural lands are the only generator of increased population and national wealth; they may very easily commit

themselves to large outlays on new farmers while treating with flippant unconcern corollary policies of forest conservation absolutely vital to the business success of the new farmer. Canada's emergence from war debts, railway debts, and other handicaps is not a matter of immigration policies alone, but of the prompt correction of gross mismanagement of such other natural resources as the Forest, the ruin of which through public neglect will not only strangle immigration but drive from the country the farming population that we now boast. For, be it known, where the forest withereth, the farm fadeth. That is the stalest, and least heeded lesson of Old World history.

Eighty per cent of the habitable area of Canada is of non agricultural type. Note that please! The percentage looks higher than the Empire Day spell-binder used to mention when he painted this Dominion a Utopian chromo for the gaping attention of a schoolchild audience. Eighty per cent of the habitable area is of no account for present or future farmer. Only five percent of the whole area of British Columbia is of agricultural worth. And to quote that plain fact does not in the least depreciate the greatness of British Columbia's natural wealth, unless one's mind runs in the narrow groove where "wealth" never looks itself unless decorated with wisps of hay.

Not more than one third of Saskatchewan is of a type fit for farming. Ontario's area is probably seventy per cent non agricultural. And so the story runs.

The development of Canada, therefore, is scarcely compassed by one dominant public policy restricted to the promotion of farm settlement. Indeed there never can be any such thing as an immigration and colonization policy without a four-square forestry policy. And the start of any adequate forestry policy is a satisfying answer as to why four thousand forest fires were burning in Canada this year, and why the greater part of the country's natural forest inheritance is today a wilderness of blackened wreckage.

Were it possible to prepare a review of the enormous service done by the

farmless Empire of this Dominion that the map makers designate as "forest area" what surprises would evolve therefrom? How wonderingly we would trace the influence of the lumber industry on development of new population, new towns, new railways. There is scarcely a community outside the prairies which has not part of its foundations in somebody's sawmill. But much of the story of the lumber industry and its influence on population would be retrospective—pathetically so. There is more to be gained by climbing to a newer altitude where the huge bulk of pulp and paper plants gleams white against the spruce woods.

The pulp and paper industry is the prodigy of Canada's industrial history. Twenty-five years ago it was straggling far to the rear of home activities. The newsprint mills of the United States foresaw the eventual embarrassment from declining wood supplies and the trek began to the "happy, happy land" of Canada where abundant spruce forests and first rate water powers promised a cut in production costs. Yesterday's sleepy village became the young city of Grand Mere; the Canadian 'Soo' pulled to itself thousands of new citizens; Three Rivers was suddenly filled with processions of home seekers; Iroquois Falls and La Tuque broke the wilderness with a chain of chimneys and orderly lines of workmen's homes. And year after year these pulp and paper communities add to their numbers with no thought of suspending growth for a dozen years to come.

This is pioneering on the wholesale plan. This is colonization, this is settlement, although we commonly leave those terms for the immigration agent. Yet the pulp and paper companies have carried out the national development idea. They have given Canada scores of prosperous towns, they have contributed enormously to railroad traffic, they have given steady jobs to 30,000 good class workmen at generous wages in their mills and another 25,000 in bush labor.

Nearly forty million dollars a year are paid by these companies to