

looked by the critics of the Government, viz., that, with the extension of settlement and the construction of pioneer railways, the danger of extensive losses of standing timber by fire was greatly increased. Large regions had in times past been devastated by these visitations. Fire was a far greater cause of destruction than the lumberman's axe. Repeated conflagrations moreover often destroyed the power of the forest to reproduce itself. Wherever settlement was advancing and the land was fit for agriculture, it was the prudent and proper course to realize the value of the timber as quickly as possible. Moreover, the standing timber was subject to natural decay. To attempt to conserve the forest by excluding the lumbermen was simply to allow the maturing crop to go to waste—to permit your "capital" to stand idle, and deteriorate.

As the wave of civilization rolled northward, a region was reached which was not well adapted for agricultural purposes. Large areas were sterile, rough and broken. The land produced timber, and that being destroyed, it was not fitted to produce anything else of value. Plainly an entirely different policy was demanded from that pursued in dealing with agricultural lands. Scientific research had demonstrated the necessity of keeping a certain proportion of the land permanently in timber in order to promote equable rainfall and to thus preserve climatic conditions favourable to agriculture. Great advances had been made of late years in the science of forestry as applicable to the economic conditions prevailing on this continent. But it took some time to popularize the idea. Those who had been accustomed to regard the

forest as an enemy to be overcome and the timber supply as practically without an end, were slow to realize the need of forest preservation. The fact that the region immediately to the north of the settled area was not only comparatively infertile, but was also the source of many streams and rivers pointed to the desirability of maintaining large portions of it as

Permanent Forest Reserves.

The lands being withheld from settlement and protected against fire, will furnish a source from which a supply of timber can be steadily drawn under conditions which will allow of the crop being reproduced. On this question the Government has not been merely abreast of public opinion—they had been a long distance in advance of it. They might fairly be said to have created it. For eighteen years they had been educating the public on the subject. The appropriations necessary to maintain the Bureau of Forestry had been opposed by the very men, including Mr. Whitney, the leader of Opposition, who had protested against timber sales as wasteful and destructive. Their idea of "preserving the capital" of the Province was simply to shut out the lumbermen and leave the trees to mature and decay—or more probably, go up in smoke, and sink down in ashes.

As a result of investigations of the Forestry Bureau, acting in co-operation with practical lumbermen, forest reserves had been established. It was altogether a new departure. The Government had not proceeded rashly or hastily. They had advanced step by step, with due regard to all interests concerned, whether of the public, the settler, or the lumberman. They had begun in 1893 by setting aside Algonquin Park, com-