

through New Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, by way of the Peace river or Pine River Pass, and through British Columbia, reaching its terminus on the North Pacific Coast, probably at Fort Simpson, or Bute Inlet. The road is to be of an excellent modern standard with low grades, long tangents, and heavy rails, all elements of economical working.

It is not a sudden resolution that has been taken by the Grand Trunk authorities, Mr. Hays tells us, to thus extend westward. For a long time they have been convinced of the need of more railways in that growing Great West of ours, for the transportation of grain and merchandise; and not only this, but of the development of foreign trade that will very soon justify connecting lines of ships on the Pacific Ocean for the road when built. The opinion was speedily hazarded, when the above announcement was made, that the Canadian Northern Railway as far as built would be acquired by the Grand Trunk. But this idea is dispelled by the direct statement of Mr. Hays that "we shall be entirely independent of this or any other road; there is lots of room in the North-West Territory for three or even more roads."

In reply to the question when the new line might be expected to be finished, the Grand Trunk general manager says five years from the beginning of the surveys. But the surveys have not been begun, nor has the necessary legislation been obtained for the projected road. The financing of such a work is of no small magnitude, but doubtless it has been considered and not found impracticable, else so confident an announcement would not thus early be made. It is interesting to note the direction of the road at its westernmost half. After leaving Manitoba it will run almost north-west, tapping the rich Battleford and Edmonton country and the districts of Athabasca and Northern British Columbia. There needs no better indication of the richness of that North-West land than this.

OUR FOREST WEALTH AND ITS PRESERVATION.

SECOND ARTICLE.

In the various parts of the Dominion, where an efficient system of ranging has been established, this has been followed by very encouraging results, and the fire rangers have oftentimes been the means of keeping incipient conflagrations within small bounds. But that fire even yet is the cause of many thousand dollars' worth of damage every year needs but little proof. During last year alone the area of forest destroyed in Nova Scotia is estimated at 15,000 acres at the very least. In the eastern section alone of Northumberland County, New Brunswick, no less than 41,900 acres were fire swept. In British Columbia numberless fires took place, while, coming to Ontario, what is known as the great Temiscamingue fire did almost incalculable damage. The loss of one firm alone was something like 25,000,000 feet of lumber, while as much more would have been fit to cut in fifteen or twenty years. Altogether the direct monetary loss may be placed at hundreds of thousands of dollars, while the fire protection service of the whole province costs only \$7,000. Not only this, but the

land's covering of humus, or vegetable mould, has been lost; countless numbers of young trees, the revenue-producers of the future, were destroyed; and, finally, the usefulness of that whole tract of land has gone for a generation or more to come. One trouble is that the person usually to blame for such wholesale destruction of property as this, the prospector, or hunter, or settler, who has little to lose, usually escapes scot free, without being made to pay any penalty. There is a law for such matters, but it is not often enough enforced.

Next in importance to the question of preserving our forests is that of how to start them in places which have them not. In many sections this is an easy matter, or would be so, were the funds forthcoming. Prince Edward Island, for example, has such soil and climatic conditions that reforestation would be a comparatively easy matter, even though the present deplorable absence of tree-growth has already to some extent brought about droughty conditions. Unfortunately, however, the Government will find difficulty in laying aside out of its revenue the small amount of money necessary. Both there and in the comparatively denuded sections of Ontario, the chief remedy will have to be to encourage farmers to preserve and establish good-sized wood lots. This is an easy matter, especially if they will only have the courage to make fences so as to keep out cattle. Even in the North-West and British Columbia, in some parts of which there has been supposed to exist great difficulty in the way of making trees to grow, the trouble is more a matter of choice of variety and of cultivation than anything else. In dry sections, what moisture there is must be scrupulously conserved; therefore, cultivate, and it should be remembered that every success in getting a plantation to grow renders it a little easier, infinitesimally so though it may be, for the next one. With an open eye to local conditions, there should be no insuperable obstacle in the way of farmers having trees around their houses or elsewhere, in any part of the Dominion; and it should never be forgotten that it is a paying investment in very many ways.

The truth of this latter proposition, the thorough profitableness of trees, needs but little demonstration. Leaving out of account for the present the estimates which have been made on good authority as to the enormous value of plantations of certain trees, ten thousand dollars per acre, in some cases, there are so many ways in which the usefulness of timber growth is clearly manifest, that it seems strange that the average farmer has so often neglected the matter. First, there is the question of fuel and fence posts. How often has the new settler been in a feverish state of anxiety to clear from his land almost the last vestige of wood, trusting to chance to supply his certain needs of the future? If he has not in many cases gone to this extreme, he has retained a small wood-lot, but has managed it in a haphazard fashion, has let it run down, owing to lack of a little thinking, or has allowed cattle to run loose to its detriment. His grain fields he understands, he knows that to be profitable they must be looked after and that no waste lands must be found therein; but his wood land is too often just like Topsy; it just grows—or gradually dies out. And