

the great rivers that have their sources there. You will create a raging torrent for a few weeks in the spring, and after that a water famine. You will destroy the North and South Saskatchewan, the Athabasca, and the Peace Rivers, and you will make a desert of our new Western Provinces. Your irrigation canals in Alberta will be raging torrents for a short time, and devoid of water when it is required. You will simply bring about a condition of affairs which anyone can see to-day in Southern Europe, in Northern Africa, and in Asia Minor, where large areas of country once fertile are now, owing to the denudation of the timber on the mountain side, practically a desert.

But let us look nearer home. The future of this City of Ottawa, as an industrial centre, depends on the valuable water powers of the Ottawa and Gatineau so near at hand, but unless precautions are early taken to preserve the forests at the head waters of these streams, we will have raging floods for a short time in the spring, followed by great scarcity of water, later on which will render the power so unstable as to be practically worthless.

Again, to say nothing of the evil effects on the fertile lands further south that would follow the destruction of the forests lying north of the provinces which at present form a barrier against the northern air currents, the severe winter of those high northern latitudes would be made almost intolerable by the Arctic winds that would then blow uninterruptedly over the denuded land. The fact is that voices come to us from all quarters calling us to protect our timber areas.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

I shall in a few words try to answer this question, so far as the Dominion lands are concerned, but it must be admitted that our efforts are small indeed compared with what should be done, but nevertheless sufficient to show remarkable results. Fires are the great enemy of our natural forest, and these usually accompany the early opening up of the country. The building of railways, the use of fire in clearing the land by settlers, and the camp fires of travellers are among the agencies that have caused great destruction of timber in the past. Lightning has also contributed, but in a much smaller degree. The latter is uncontrollable, but the destruction from the other causes may be greatly lessened by due precautions and the enforcement of regulations. Not only during the construction of railways through the timber are great precautions necessary, but after the roads are in operation the sparks from the engines are liable to start disastrous fires. This latter is a question that I will not pursue further, but it is worthy of further attention at this meeting.