

ALGONQUIN PARK.

By Very Rev. *Aneas McDonnell Dawson, F.G., LL.D., Etc.*



It is highly desirable that there should be a public park. There is no other means by which the numerous game birds and animals that are so great a source of wealth to the country can be preserved. No Canadian, surely, would like to see our game animals consigned to the fate of the exterminated buffalo. In regard to this matter, the Government of the United States has set a great example in setting apart on the Yellowstone River, a very large piece of territory as a national park. But, have we not already such a park? viz: the Algonquin Park? True, there is such a park; but it is utterly useless. It certainly cannot serve its purpose of preserving game, if its forests and streams are done away with. And, the woods having been sold to the lumber merchants, these woods and everything connected with them, birds, animals, and streams, are on the highway to destruction. We had intimation in the Owl, some time ago, in an article on the Georgian Bay, that forest rangers were appointed to watch over the preservation of the woods in the Algonquin Park. They are not, however, very available; nor can they be. We learn from the Ottawa "*Evening Journal*," that all the pine on the reserve was sold, and that the owners are cutting it down in so reckless and indiscriminate a manner, as to greatly injure the park. These facts are gathered from the official report for 1893, of Mr. Peter Thomson, the chief ranger, and Mr. James Wilson, the Superintendent of Provincial Parks. The chief ranger says: "During the absence of myself and staff in October, the employees of Messrs. Gilmour & Co., who own the pine timber of this part of the park, built a lumber camp, (doubtless through some misunderstanding) immediately alongside, and

within ten or twelve feet of our headquarters. They also entered the grove and took out the pine, at the same time cutting down a great number of other trees, and marring the beauty of the place which I had hoped to preserve." So all kinds of trees follow the pines to destruction, and a land remarkably beautiful, is turned into a bare and barren wilderness. Superintendent Wilson shows how destructive the lumbermen's operations are: "One cannot proceed far upon park property without encountering some of the many evidences of the presence of the lumberman; and, certainly, at first sight the effect is depressing. All the lands embraced in the park limits are now covered with licenses to cut timber, . . . the south west corner has been under license but two years. . . In all probability 600 men may in the present time be at work lumbering in the park, and the total output, representing this winter's work, will certainly amount to many millions of feet. The felling of every pine tree means the maiming or destruction of several other trees; and the aggregate loss entailed by these operations in the forest wealth of the limits is very large."

Is there no remedy for so great an evil? Surely our lumber merchants who, for the most part, are large minded men, would not object to some arrangement by which the forests of the park could be preserved. Could there not be given to them in exchange for the park *limits*, other equally extensive timber grounds? or, if they preferred it, a money compensation? Failing all this, it would come to be the duty of Parliament to intervene and expropriate the forests of the park, granting adequate compensation. This would be no injustice any more than in the case of railways, in whose favour the recognized power of expropriation is every day exercised. It