

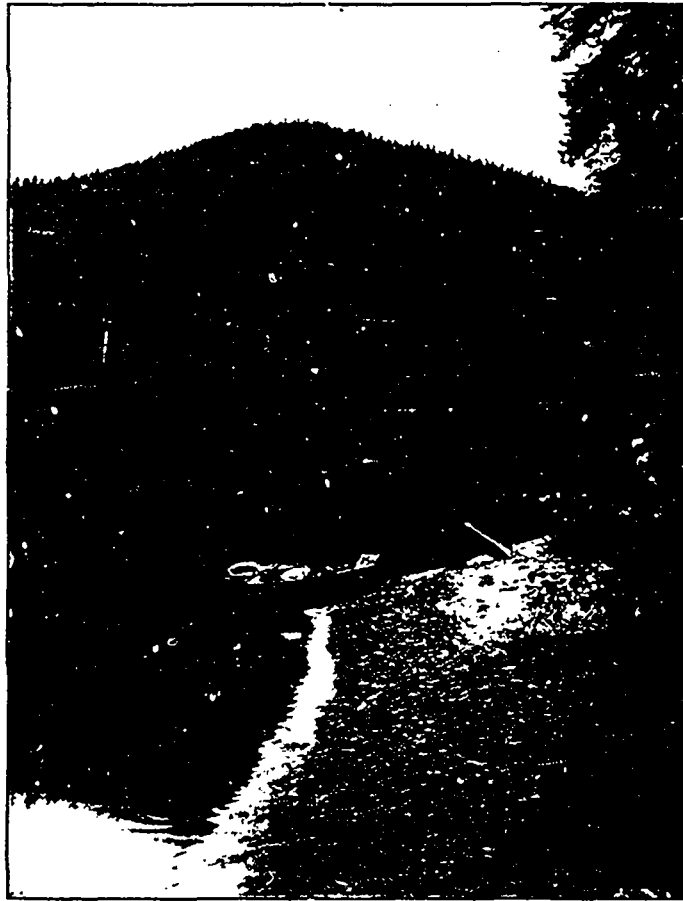
most remarkable under-estimates have been made by even the sellers, who would naturally be expected to err on the other side. The fire worked through a forest that was ready for cutting and only a change in the wind and its final arrest by the rain prevented its sweeping on eastward over limits of mature timber, which probably could not be surpassed anywhere in the present pine regions, and the loss of which would have been an appalling national disaster. When a fire has gained such headway it is simply impossible to stop it by any artificial means, and the smoke from it is also a cloak for other fires which may start even at considerable distances, as has been exemplified in this very case, where the fire rangers went all round a fire which destroyed some 3,000,000 feet of timber and came out and reported that the smoke was caused entirely by the big fire. One firm of lumbermen, who were among the heaviest losers, estimate that on their limits there were twenty-five to thirty million feet of matured pine destroyed, while there was as much more that would have been fit to cut in fifteen or twenty years. Some of this pine may be saved but it will be a small portion, and sixty years is a low estimate of the time it will take to place this tract in anything like the same position again. The pine timber was mostly white pine, probably two-thirds, and \$300,000 would not be an extravagant estimate of its value. While the lumberman would retain a good share of this sum, still he had already paid considerable in bonus or purchase money, fire tax and ground rent, and would have distributed a large proportion in wages and other expenditures, while the Government would directly have obtained in royalty at the rate of \$1.30 per thousand on white pine and of 65 cents on red pine, the sum of \$27,000. And this pleasant operation would have been repeated in fifteen or twenty years, and so the crop would be coming in at intervals *ad infinitum*. And this is land which is, from the information obtainable, entirely unfit for agriculture. But what is the present situation? The land wasted and destroyed, a heavy direct loss to the lumberman and the Government, the prospect of revenue projected into the indefinite future. Is it worth the lumberman's while to pay ground rent on non-productive land, which will be of value only when he has ceased to take an interest in mundane affairs, and which is always in danger of again being devastated? But that is not the full extent of the loss. No account is here taken of other lumber than pine. Other limits

have suffered, though less heavily, and the total loss will be a very large sum, though no definite statements can be given until the reports have been received from the men sent in to make an examination. A much more expensive protection system than that already provided would take a long time to consume as much as one such fire.

Now, has the Province of Quebec money to burn in this way, and has Canada so great wealth that she can permit so much of it to be destroyed with indifference? It seems clear, if the Canadian Forestry Association has any influence, that here is a case where it should be exerted and that the Government should not be permitted to know days of quietness until it has thoroughly investigated this fire and taken the necessary

steps to prevent such occurrences in the future. Any increased expenditure occasioned would be more than offset by the saving that would be the result of the preservation of the forests, great stretches of which are now standing ready for harvesting.

We intend to go more particularly into the question of preventive measures at a future time, but for the present we wish to impress on all those who will soon be using rod or gun in our coniferous forests that in the handling of fire in any way the greatest care should be exercised. Before a fire is lighted a space around the place where it is to be started should be cleared, and it should be thoroughly extinguished when no longer required. Even experienced men have been deceived into believing fires quite dead, which afterwards showed such evident signs of life as to make a quite uncomfortably warm corner for them. Forest fires are not a matter of indifference to the sportsman. Such fires are undoubtedly the direct cause



Devil River, Quebec.

of the destruction of game birds and animals, and to a greater or less extent of fish when the waters are shallow, and this, in addition to the laying waste of the hunting grounds and the property of hunting clubs, is not a result that sportsmen are likely to view with equanimity. And the fire we have been speaking of occurred on hunting grounds that are resorted to every year by many huntsmen and have never failed to furnish such sport with moose and other deer as can only now be found in the wilds of Canada.

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A fire occurred near Thirty Mile Lake, in the Gatineau district, which might have had serious results if the rain had not come opportunely.