

REGULATIONS REGARDING THE SALE OF TIMBER LIMITS TO
LUMBERMEN.

Under the present system timber limits are put up at auction at an upset price and sold to the highest bidder. The buyer by paying an annual fee thereafter and dues on the timber or logs actually cut, can retain the limit in Ontario so long as he complies with the regulations, and in Quebec until 1889. He can in Ontario cut any size of tree, but in Quebec is limited to those over twelve inches. In both provinces the license gives permission to cut trees of any and all kinds without restriction, except on lots which the Government may subsequently sell, when the license is restricted in Ontario to pine. Even if in Quebec a lumberman cuts timber under the twelve inches, there are no fines imposed beyond the possible forfeiture of the license if the Government choose to enforce it. Now the grave objections of this system are that it subjects the public lands to unrestricted waste for just such length of time as the lumberman finds it profitable, without any regard to the future; and, on the other hand, it places the Government in the position of an owner desirous of making the largest possible immediate return, regardless of the impoverishment of his possessions in the near future.

The principle of leasing the timber limits for an indefinite period of time, and of allowing trees of any size or kind to be cut, is hardly defensible. There should be a limit in girth beyond which alone a tree should be considered merchantable. The forests should also at intervals be allowed a long rest to admit of the young trees growing up, and the Government as the lessee, and not the lumberman with his self-interest always at stake, should be the judge of what that rest should be and when it is required. It may be said that timber limits under the present system afford a means of financing, and further that if mill-owners erect expensive saw-mills they should have some certainty that they will always have a source from which in coming years to obtain their logs. It is, however, on the one hand a question whether timber limits with the great uncertainty attached to them about the kind and