

Future Forests gone in Smoke.

Another phase of the Indian fire menace to our northern woods was come across by the writer in the case of the destructive fire which last spring severely damaged the fine stand of timber between Caribou and White-Water Lakes, south of the Ogoki. About 100 square miles are reported to have been fire-swept here with heavy loss of the mature Jack Pine and spruce. The evidence points to this fire having been set by an Indian trapper to drive out a white man who had usurped his trapping rounds. Closer patrol and inspection are surely needed along the Ogoki and Albany Rivers, for besides the valuable oncoming forests, large areas of mature timber yet remain and require protection. It is true that the Ontario Fire Ranging Service is now doing excellent protective work but the Chief Rangers are still greatly hampered in places by lack of telephone lines and by the immense size of their districts.

Another thing emphatically impressed on one is that the watchword of forest fire protection in our north country, where the topography is so uniform and the coniferous forests so inflammable, must be PREVENTION in capital letters. Initial fires in, say, a Jack pine stand, may conceivably be very largely prevented

by an educated public opinion and the agencies at its command, but once let the preventable first fire run through to create a mass of falling debris, and a still more destructive second fire is then practically inevitable. And just here one is tempted to enter a word as to the existing conditions of portions of the C. N. R. rights of way through Northern Ontario. The heavy masses of dry Jack pine debris that one sees stretching for miles, are directly a sinister menace to the valuable contiguous forests and, indirectly, they are exerting a demoralizing effect on public opinion which is even more disquieting.

Red Deer fast Disappearing.

During our ten day trip numbers of moose were seen and also one or two of those exquisitely graceful creatures the red deer, but these are fast being depleted by the wolves and Indians. Apropos of this I may quote here the opinion of Mr. Roy Thompson, who has spent the past two seasons in Patricia land,—“game such as moose, caribou or red deer are much scarcer north of the Albany River than south of it at present, as the Indians simply never allow one to escape if he is seen by them.” No signs of beaver or otter were seen by us and in fact these fur bearers

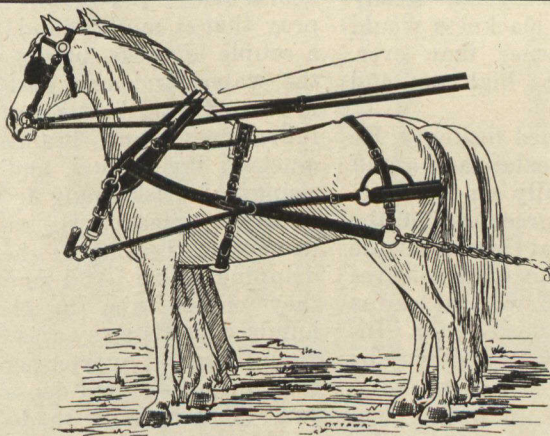
have now become so scarce in Northern Ontario east of Lake Nipigon that many people are anxious to have a five year close season declared. The truth is that we must evolve a general scheme for farming all of our wild fur resources. That this is entirely feasible is shown by the success of Mr. Oliver Belmore at Wabakamachee Lake, where for the past eleven years by carefully protecting, conserving and rotating the fur crop, he has evolved a satisfactory, continuous revenue from a comparatively small trapping district.

One returns from the delight and interest of such a trip, feeling, above all things, the vital need that we Canadians should conserve our renewable resources by carefully and wisely farming and not mining them, whether forests, fish, furs, or game are involved. And for each resource this problem of maintaining a sustained yield seems to resolve itself into a matter of frank, harmonious common sense co-operation along business lines, as between a junior partner or tenant—the individual, company or corporation seeking the privilege of temporary use—and a senior partner or owner—the body politic whether provincial or national which holds the resources itself, in perpetuity.

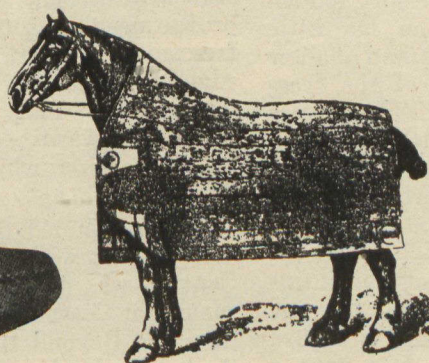
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