

Forest wealth of Canada.

reservation of water supply—a series of five in Colorado and three in California. Of these, the greatest is the "Sierra Reserve," extending for 200 miles northward, along the high altitudes of the mountains to the southern boundary of the Yosemite National Park. This tract comprises over 4,000,000 acres and its imperial proportions are more evident when one realizes that it is nearly five times as large as Rhode Island, half as large again as Connecticut, and two-thirds as large as New Jersey. And yet this territory, including as it does, magnificent forests of sequoias and the noble King's River Cañon, which John Muir, the explorer, calls "the rival of Yosemite," contains probably not a square mile that ought not to be devoted to reservation purposes. Next to Muir himself, who knows the region by heart, and I think made the original suggestion of this reserve, there was no better authority on the subject than the late Senator George Hearst. I remember how emphatically he spoke to me in favour of such a reserve in 1890, in Washington. I had come to him to solicit his influence in favour of the plan of a Yosemite National Park to surround, but not include the old grant of the valley made to California in 1864. This grant is bounded by a coffin-shaped line running one mile back from the rim of the gorge, and thus does not include the magnificent scenery adjoining and does not even give control over the headwaters of the great Yosemite falls.

Sitting about our camp fire on the upper Tuolumne, in June, 1889, Muir and I determined to revive a former scheme, which had fallen through, to make a large reservation in this region, and it was substantially Muir's plan that was formally adopted by Congress, on October 1st, 1890. The new park thus made is as large as the State of Rhode Island, and twenty times as large as the State grant. When I mentioned the subject to Senator Hearst, he broke out: "Reserve the Tuolumne? Why, I'd favour reserving the whole of the Sierra top from Shasta down. It includes very little agricultural land, the region has been pretty thoroughly prospected, and, of course, mining and other private rights would not be interfered with." It may be imagined that in urging the Yosemite National Park scheme, I did not fail to make use of this pronouncement of the shrewd and far-sighted Californian.

That public sentiment is rapidly coming up abreast of Senator Hearst's opinion, is proved by the favourable reception of the presidential proclamations establishing the reserves, which in all now comprise over 17,000,000 acres, in seventeen tracts, located in Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. This action was particularly well received in California. It was to be expected that a few would cry out against the policy. Owners of sheep who desired to pasture their flocks upon the public domain, to the extraordinary injury of it; hewers of Government timber, willing to fell a giant tree to obtain its seed for foreign sale at \$8 a pound; fraudulent "settlers," who gave picnics to acquaintances for the purpose of "taking up" land which their guests were never again to see—these few barbarians were of course indignant at the interference with their "vested rights," but disinterested people, and the large population in the foothills who saw in the reservation the perpetual source of water supply for which every summer they had been calling upon Hercules, rejoiced with one voice at the salvation of the San Joaquin valley. Without irrigation that valley was merely a poor cattle pasture; to-day the portions reclaimed by irrigation are among the most productive in the world.

Nor has President Cleveland been indifferent to the great advantage of this policy. During his administration but one large reserve has been made, yet it is in point of size the most considerable of all. It is situated in Oregon, on the ridge of the Cascade range, and comprises some 4,500,000 acres, and will do for that State what the Sierra reserve has done for California.

It is greatly to be hoped that the President will see his way clear to establish a third in Northern California, which shall reach from Yosemite to Mt. Shasta, and virtually connect the other two. Thus shall the great valleys of the Pacific slope be secure in a perpetuity of water supply and timber.

The question naturally arises:—Why should not this policy be systematically extended throughout the great west until the headwaters of every important river within national control is the seat of a forest reserve? As we have already seen, the President has the power, and thus far the voice of no intelligent person has been