

ment of electricity by water powers had revolutionized industry. It was now considered one of the necessities of modern business communities. It was now recognized as a public utility. The Government of the Dominion, and three provinces also, were asserting the right to claim all water powers as public utilities. Through constant agitation and discussion this principle had emerged, and it was now accepted without question. Unlimited franchises were no longer granted, and the Government had exerted the power to control all electrical development throughout the country.

In the Province of Ontario the Government had found it a duty and a necessity to furnish power, through the machinery of government, to parts of the Province heretofore without it. This step was the most progressive yet taken by any Government in the world, save Switzerland, the leading nation in electrical development. Quebec was following this lead. The Dominion House of Commons had also subscribed to the principle, and were exercising great powers over the waterways of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta to furnish power, through the machinery of government, that within four or five years legislation would be embodied in the statute books of every Province and the Dominion itself preventing forever a monopoly of water powers. This was indeed a creditable achievement.

Power Legislation.

During the past session of the House there was an epidemic of power legislation. Many of the bills presented were bad, and it was the duty of the conservation commission to prevent their passage. strenuous objection was made to them. As a result the bad bills were thrown out, and others were so modified as to practically carry out the desires of the commission. That was one of the advantages of criticism, and demonstrated the great usefulness of the commission.

The conservation of forest wealth has another important factor. Much discussion had arisen on that subject of late. The growth of forest fires, with their great destruction of timber wealth, had become serious. It had sent out men to

discover the causes of these fires, and the reports sent in had been most useful in determining the causes. Before touching that feature, Mr. Sifton gave statistics to show the timber wealth of the United States and Canada. There were 2,200 billion feet of timber standing in the United States. The annual consumption amounted to 100 billion feet, with but 30,000,000 feet growing annually. In less than 25 years there would be no timber standing in that country, if the resources of that country were not carefully husbanded. In Canada there were but 500 billion feet of standing timber. This would last the United States but seven years."

No Timber to Give Away.

"We have enough timber standing for our own uses, if properly conserved," declared Mr. Sifton. "We have none to give away to any large customers, particularly to a foreign country. The time is coming fast when the Government of this country will have to prohibit the exportation of one stick of timber. Necessity will demand it, and we will have to submit. That time is fast approaching.

Mr. Sifton further stated that the conservation commission will unalterably oppose any reciprocity negotiations with the United States which look to the free export of Canadian timber to the Americans.

Mr. Sifton gave an interesting account of the number of forest fires during the past year. There were 2,019 recorded last year, all carrying great destruction with them. Of these 22 per cent had been caused by locomotives. It was the purpose of the conservation commission to ask the Government to enact legislation to impose a fine of \$1,000 on every railway causing a fire along its right of way.

"This will effectually prevent forest fires," declared Mr. Sifton. "The Ontario Government own the Temiskaming Railway. They have no fires there, because they own the timber. They cannot afford to lose any, and they effectually prevent loss by fire. The railway companies have no right to destroy this property. If they are fined \$1,000 every time this happens, you can rest assured they will find means of preventing it. It is an easy matter, and, believe me, it will be done."