

# High Trees, not High Tariff, is Secret of Trade

Canada in 75 Years has Thrown into the Furnace a Forest Empire Eighteen Times the Size of Maritime Provinces

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**I**N the past few months, the newspapers and magazines have contained many columns, conspicuously displayed, of discussion concerning the tariff, but one must hunt long to find as extended references to the necessity of protecting the forests. It would seem to one reading these newspaper discussions, that the fate of the country depended upon the height of the tariff, when as a matter of fact, it is much more dependent upon the height of trees, because the products of the trees of Canada contribute more wealth each year to the country than any other activity of nature or man except the production of agricultural crops.

The quality of a tree, for most commercial purposes, is a function of its height and the height of the trees in our forests is being constantly reduced by forest fires. Every year thousands of acres and in some years, millions of acres of actual or potential timberlands are converted into scrub and bushes — forests of low trees. Here are some of the records for eastern Canada.

## The pillage of fire

Last year 760,000 acres of forest land were burned in Ontario; 640,000 acres, in Quebec, and about 100,000 acres in the maritime provinces. The above figures represent the officially recorded fires in the summer of 1921. Extensive fires in the hinterlands, and sometimes in other places, are either not reported or not recorded, but it will be seen that the officially reported fires covered an area totalling one and a half million acres. One can visualize the enormous extent of the area burned by thinking of it as the equivalent of a strip of land nine miles wide between Ottawa and Toronto, or as

a strip a mile wide between Halifax and Winnipeg. Last year's figures for the west are not at hand but the forests there, on the average, are being burned as severely, if not more so, than those in the east. In fact a single fire in the western mountains has been known to convert a million acres of high trees into a forest of low trees. And moreover, official reports have contained the statement that a larger number of timber trees has been killed by fires in the west than are standing at the present time in the whole length and breadth of the country. Perhaps the seriousness of the forest fire menace may be brought home to the reader by the statement that the area of forests burned in the past three-quarters century is over twice as great as the area of Ontario including the district of Patricia; or over

40% greater than the area of Quebec including the district of Ungava or twenty times greater than the area of the maritime provinces. All this in seventy-five years and it takes that length of time to make a pulpwood stick under average conditions in the forest and twice that length of time to make a saw log. Therefore, for the most part these vast areas are covered with low forests, not with tall forests of commercial trees. The rate of destruction is probably on the increase in spite of the heroic efforts of the men in charge of the fire fighting organizations. With rapid strides, as certainly as the march of man to the grave, we are reducing our forest areas to mere brushlands.

When we become a country of low trees, it will not matter much whether the tariff is high or low for



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