

Not only is it a great national duty born of necessity—the necessities of the future—that Canada care for her forests, but it will inevitably prove a highly remunerative business proposition.

*Forest Situation in North America.*

North America to-day cuts three-fifths and consumes more than one-half of the total lumber production of the whole world. This prodigious consumption is very rapidly increasing both on account of an increase in the per capita consumption and the consuming population. There can be no manner of doubt but that the present annual cut together with that destroyed by fire vastly exceeds the net annual production by growth. In other words a wood famine in North America is already in sight. I was asked the other day when it was due to strike. I replied that as near as I could interpret the signs of the times, the year 1900 would be about right, and that the pressure of prices was likely to become increasingly burdensome from decade to decade until the famine would be unanimously admitted. I understand that many purchasers of lumber are already admitting it.

*Canada's Advantageous Position.*

Canada will, if she be wise, be more interested in this wood famine as a seller than as a purchaser, and herein lies the possibilities of a great and ever growing revenue from her public forest lands.

The Canadian forests, which form beyond question the world's greatest remaining reserve of coniferous timber, form a band across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific bordering the richest farming and manufacturing area in the whole world. The population of the consuming area tributary to our forests has increased four-fold during the last half century, but its wood consumption has increased ten-fold. This marvellous increase in the use of forest products has already established stumpage prices which put national wood culture on a satisfactory financial basis from the standpoint of revenue alone. It should not be forgotten that the rise in prices which makes forestry a business proposition has come about in the face of an exploitation of the forests on both private and public lands such as was never seen elsewhere in the history of lumbering and cannot be again repeated in North America nor on any other continent.

The territory tributary to our Canadian forests which increased its wood consumption ten-fold during the past half century is to a very large extent merely on the threshold of its industrial development. Nothing is more certain than that