

an academic question, nor one to be relegated to the distant future. A little investigation will show that a surprisingly large and increasing number of our streams do great damage by spring freshets, and are rendered of little service for power purposes by the meagreness of the flow in low water.

3. By preserving forest growth which furnishes the best possible reservoir.

Recognition of the above facts, and action upon them, to be useful, should be brought about without undue delay. Enormous development will take place in Canada during the next few years. It should proceed on lines that will conserve, improve and increase the water supply, rather than diminish it.

One of the greatest industrial developments of our time consists in the utilization of water by means of electrically transmitted power. The flowing waters of Canada are, at the moment, apart from the soil, our greatest and most valuable undeveloped natural resource. They are more valuable than all our minerals, because, properly conserved, they will never be exhausted; on the contrary, they can be increased. In great areas of our country they are capable, when fully developed, of supplying our entire urban population with light, heat and power, operating our tramways and railways, and abolishing the present methods with their extravagance, waste and discomfort. The time when this dream will be realized need not be, and probably is not, far distant.

What are to be the conditions under which this development will take place? Is this great national boon to be handled in such a way that the people shall forever continue to pay tribute and interest upon the continually growing unearned increment of value, or is the development to take place under conditions that will ensure due economy, full utilization, reasonable rates and a participation by the people in the profits?

The subject is comparatively new in Canada. Few vested rights exist. The field is, therefore, comparatively an open one for intelligent legislative effort. The old common law of England, the principles of which, in the main, regulate the rights to waters, is largely inapplicable to modern conditions under which water and its uses have become of prime importance. The subject requires to be dealt with by legislation in a fundamental fashion.

In California, where the use of water is a necessity of agriculture, a great body of water-right law has been built up. The people found it necessary to deal with the subject in the public interest, and they have done so. In Canada, the time has arrived when the subject