

FORESTRY ON DOMINION LANDS.

E. STEWART, DOMINION SUPERINTENDENT OF FORESTRY.

If I know anything of the object of the convener of this great convention in calling you together it was to obtain the views of the people from all parts of the Dominion in order that good practical results might follow your deliberations. If we only meet and indulge in a pleasant academical discussion, without expressing some opinions of what should be done in a practical way, not only to preserve, but to propagate our great forests, this meeting will fall far short of its opportunities. The fact is, the matters inviting our attention in this connection are far more than academical; they are live issues that demand of the people of the country immediate action, and in the few minutes at my disposal I will ask your attention, first, to the extent of the forests under Dominion control; second, to what we are doing at present regarding them; third, what in my opinion should be done; and fourth, make but a very brief reference to afforestation on the plains.

When our north-western possessions are mentioned, the picture generally suggested is that of vast prairies stretching for hundreds of miles on every hand unrelieved by a single tree. Now while this is true of a very large extent of country it represents only a small part of the total land area owned and controlled by the Federal Government.

According to the census returns for 1901, the total *land* area under the control of the Dominion Government is 2,656,200 square miles. Of this, the bare prairie probably occupies 160,000,000 acres, or 250,000 square miles. The barren lands of the far north I have elsewhere estimated at four times that of the prairie, or 640,000,000 acres, or 1,000,000 square miles. These two would make 1,250,000 square miles of treeless land, and subtracting this from the total land area under federal control will give us 1,406,200 square miles, which is more or less wooded. The total land area owned by the provinces aggregates only 963,618 square miles, so that the Dominion timbered lands, according to this estimate, exceed the total land area, both timbered and cleared up of all the old provinces by 442,582 square miles.

But it may be truly said that on a very large proportion of this the forest growth is of little value for commercial purposes.