

Leaky Faucets on Public Treasuries

Every time a Canadian forest burns down, the public treasuries are stripped of a future cash return. Under our system of forest leases, the provincial treasuries of Ontario, Quebec, the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia collect so many dollars for every thousand feet cut by the lumber operator or for every cord of pulpwood cut by the paper maker. This arrangement makes the public a financial partner with the millman. When fire destroys the "limits" of the "X.Y.Z. Company," the latter is of course a heavy loser but the Public also sacrifices the yearly revenues that would have come to the Treasury from the dues on the wood cut.

The public impression that 'limits' represent 'alienated' resources is largely in error for the public treasury is a financial shareholder with the lessee of the limit and in case of fire damage, the penalty is fixed on both.

For example, one of the largest spruce limits in Ontario has been fifty per cent. destroyed by prospectors searching for minerals that were never found. The limit holder lost part of his heavy investment, his payroll was cut down by the fact of the timber being burned, and the province lost one dollar in dues for every one of the million cords that went up in smoke. Forest fires are paid for by the Public every time.

Woodpile 369,000 miles long.

The people of Canada and the United States use enough forest materials in a year to make a pile of logs four feet high and three hundred and sixty thousand miles long, or fifteen times around the earth.

This enormous drain on the forest wealth has so alarmed the public authorities that protective policies unheard of a few years ago are now being brought into force. In Canada,

the Quebec Government has closed all the forests against travellers except on written permit from a fire

ranger or other official. A few years ago this would have been considered drastic but with an annual record of five thousand conflagrations set in this Dominion by campers, fishermen, settlers, and other classes (who are the people who really lose most by what they destroy) the governments have no other option than to save what remains of the forests by stricter measures.

One camp fire in Ontario destroyed fifty-six years' supply of a mammoth Ottawa Valley lumber mill. A band of prospectors in another district burned twenty years' supply of one of Canada's largest paper mills. And none of the enormous areas thus destroyed can be reproduced under 150 years.



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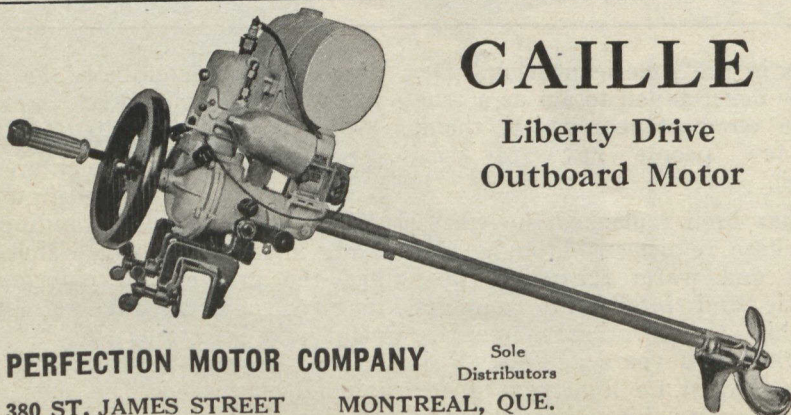
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