

FORESTRY IN ONTARIO.

The report of the Director of Forestry for Ontario for 1903, which was delayed on account of the fire having destroyed the printing office in which it was being set up, has recently been published. It contains a resumé of the situation in regard to the tenure of the timber lands of the Province.

The chief way in which timber lands are held by lumbermen in Ontario is by annual license, renewable from year to year. The lumbermen are allowed to remove the timber, paying dues therefor when cut. In the agricultural districts the lumberman has been the precursor of the settler, affording him employment in the winter and a market for the produce raised on his holding in the summer. As settlement advanced the land was turned over to the individual settlers in small holdings. As settlement progressed north, a portion of the country was reached, the lands in which were found to be little suited to farming, although a great many settlers, misled by the high prices received for produce during lumbering operations, were allowed to settle on these lands, finding when too late that the time had been wasted, and that the land was ill-suited for their purposes. Other areas under license were composed of land that was clearly unfit for farming, and on such territory the licenses have been renewed from year to year.

Although it is probable that the Crown possessed and still possesses the legal right to refuse to renew these licenses at any time, certainly at a period when it might reasonably be supposed that the original timber taken into account when the limit was first put under license had been cut off, yet the practice of renewing the license yearly, which had been in vogue for so many years, led to frequent transfers of these limits from one holder to another, and the cancellation or failure to renew the license would mean that the last purchaser of this limit would naturally be out of pocket on his investment. Hence the difficulty of cancelling these licenses except at a stated time, a long period in the future.

In 1896 a Forest Commission was appointed and in its report recommended the establishment of Forest Reserves, and in accordance with this recommendation, the Forest Reserves Act was passed, which authorizes the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to set aside from time to time such areas of land as are unsuited for agricultural settlement, to be kept perpetually in Forest Reserves. Under this Act there have been set apart