

Second, the regulations regarding the sale of timber limits to lumbermen.

FOREST FIRES.

No person who has visited the Saguenay District, the Upper Ottawa, the shores of Lake Superior, and the Albany River Country, can be blind to the fact that forest fires have been a source of vast ruin. Many hundreds of square miles have been laid waste by them, and these fires are generally the result of carelessness or wilful criminality. There are Acts of Parliament in both the Provinces of Quebec (Act of 1870) and Ontario (Act of 1878) laying down regulations for their prevention, and imposing fines for neglect of these regulations; but forest fires continue, and no one appears to be punished. Lumbermen and others are ready to blame the Indians for carelessness in regard to their camp fires, but are not white men more frequently blameable, and with their greater knowledge and intelligence more criminally culpable? The statutes, however, are defective. That for Ontario provides that no person shall start any fire on or near a forest, between the first of April and the first of November, except for the purposes of clearing land, cooking, obtaining warmth, or for some industrial purpose, and then in a very indefinite way goes on to require that when clearing land "every reasonable care and precaution" shall be observed. Now, why should it not be made unlawful to start fires in the woods *at any time of the year* except for such purposes?—and even with the object of clearing land, why should this virtually unrestricted permission be given during the midsummer months, when there is most danger from it and least necessity for it? The Quebec Statute goes a step farther and forbids the starting of any fire at any time whatever except for the above recited purposes, and in cases of clearing of land, makes it unlawful between the 1st July and the 1st September. Now this close period might be very safely extended in both provinces to the period between the 15th June and the 15th September, or even the 1st June and 1st October, without interfering in the slightest degree with the necessities of the settler, and thus the heated term would be entirely passed. Both Acts provide in-