

It should be the aim of the ranger to get rid of this lying timber as quickly as possible, and I think some special inducement should be held out to the settler to take this class of timber first, as it goes rapidly to decay. One way would be to make it free of dues and tax the standing timber. With the dead and fallen timber removed, the difficulty in controlling bush fires—especially in forests of deciduous trees—will be largely overcome. The lying timber can only be gathered, excepting with great difficulty, in the fall or early winter, before it becomes covered with snow. Very little of this class of timber has in the past been taken. The drawing of fuel supplies is left off until winter sets in, and then, the fallen timber being under the snow, the standing dry timber is taken, as being easier to obtain. Another source of great danger to the forests from fires is that large numbers of settlers go to the sloughs and lakelets in the woods for their hay, which is found in abundance in some places.

There are some settlers who, as a means of escaping the trouble and expense of clearing lands by hand, have resorted to the use of fire. The fire that occurred at Moose Mountain last summer, previously referred to, is said to have originated from the burning of one of these hay sloughs in the timber. Fires are also started by settlers clearing their lands of timber for cultivation. I have had many proofs of this. Hunters, fishermen and Indians are also responsible for starting many of the fires which have done so much damage to our forests. But a new and greater danger has arisen in the mining prospector. This individual considers it a duty he owes to his calling, to clear by fire all before him, to facilitate his search for minerals. The loss of the timber does not concern him. The effects of this are already only too apparent in our forests. It is estimated that the loss of timber to the Province of Ontario in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake districts attributable to this source alone, is greater already than the value of all the minerals that will ever be taken out. The same thing is happening in British Columbia. This cause of destruction is one of the most difficult of