

# THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

The Star cannot undertake to return unused letters.

## Recover These Timber Limits.

Editor of The Star: An editorial appearing in The Star of Friday, March the 3th, under the heading "Wood Fuel for Ontario," deals in a comprehensive manner with a question of grave importance to the people of the Province. It is indeed a pity that it had to be a great world-tragedy to bring us to a full realization of the necessity of conserving and economizing in the basic essentials to human subsistence (food, fuel, etc.,) and may the lesson that this trying period forces upon us be an everlasting reminder that we must adopt practical plans in the conservation and utilization of our wood fuel resources, that our present needs may be supplied and ample assured for future generations.

Living as I do in Ontario's greatest timber belt, I am somewhat familiar with, and naturally interested in, the woods, and I know that great areas of our forests have been sadly neglected, especially those timber limits from which the pine has been removed by the lumbermen. Here we will find the most flagrant waste. Here was left in the wake of the lumber operations, strewn on every hand, heaps of brush, pine tops and debris, furnishing real, made-to-order material for the starting and spreading of fires, and we never escape an annual visitation of this destructive element. These fires usually get beyond control and an enormous amount of good timber, hardwood, hemlock, cedar, spruce, etc., in fact everything that the pine operators did not want was left behind to fall a prey to the inevitable flames. This leftover timber heretofore was regarded as no account, and likened unto weeds, but now that we are up against an acute fuel shortage, we become suddenly aroused and inter-

ested in the conservation and protection of our forests.

Lying to the north of the town of Thessalon there are 100,000 acres of birch, maple, oak and various other woods of lesser importance which would make first class fuel. Under the old system of lease and license, this land and timber is held indefinitely by former operators, who by the way have cleaned up all the pine and are playing "dog in the manger" with the timber that they hold but have no use for. The Government is getting but an insignificant revenue, just a small acreage ground rent, which by no means is sufficient to even pay the fire rangers, and the people are denied access to these lands and timber. This fact has retarded development of the country and is not alone unfair to the people of Algoma but an injustice to the whole Province.

Now, would it not be a good policy on the part of our Government to reclaim these limits on equitable terms, say a refund of license fees and the actual outlay and expense incurred since the pine has been removed or any just and reasonable procedure by which these limits would revert back to the people. If by (war measure) order-in-Council, or Act of Legislature, this timber is redeemed, then why not introduce a crew of interned aliens to a saw and axe, turn them into the woods under military guard, and the direction of a practical woodsman, to cut and gather the wasting timber? In this way a large amount of fuel could be obtained at a reasonable cost, and would help materially in the solution of the fuel problem in Ontario. Would it not be more reasonable, in place of imposing such penalties on the people as heatless days in January, to conserve the heat waste of forest fires in July and August? The waste in this country in one summer alone through bush fires would heat thousands of homes for the winter, and the annual waste through decay and other agents would heat as many more.

Conservation and reforestation may be an interesting subject to talk on, but after-dinner speeches and political orations on timber husbandry will not save and promote the growth of our forests. The crying need is a consistent and effective organized plan in the protection, propagation and utilization of present areas of established, growing forests. Algoma is a great field for a practical demonstration of economy in this respect: JOHN A. McEACHREN, Thessalon, March 12th.

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