Poplar and white birch seldom reach over 10 inches in diameter without considerable decay, and, since these species form such a large proportion of the young growth, the loss, though it has never been computed, must be very great.

Summary of Losses and Increment.—The annual consumption of standing timber for use amounts to about 2,600,000,000 cubic feet. At a very low estimate, fires destroy annually about 800,000,000 cubic feet of merchantable timber and the young growth on 1,300,000 acres. During the last ten years, the destruction occasioned by the spruce bud-worm has averaged 1,345,000,000 cubic feet per annum, besides the injury from bark-beetles and other insects. The loss due to fungi and windfall is not known but is undoubtedly large. It may be safely estimated that the forests of Canada are being depleted at the rate of upwards of 5,500,000,000 cubic feet per annum. With about 475,000,000 acres of potential forest land, an average annual increment of 11.5 cubic feet per acre would cover this depletion, but in view of the destruction of young growth which occurs and the deterioration of the forests and of the soil, caused by repeated fires, there is little hope that this increment is being produced at the present time throughout Canada, although individual areas are producing greatly in excess of this quantity.

IV.—THE FUR TRADE.

Historical Sketch.—The place which the fur trade held during the French *régime* in Canada, when for a century and a half it was at once the mainspring of discovery and development and the curse of settled industry, is familiar history. Later, the Hudson's Bay Company may be said with truth to have held the West until the Dominion had grown to absorb it, bequeathing to the civilization which came after, a native race accustomed to the white man and an example of organization and discipline that was of lasting influence. The salient facts in the story are as follows:

From the earliest times the Basque and Breton fishermen upon the "banks" had traded for furs. As the French Court demanded more and more furs, adventurers came for the latter trade exclusively. Pont-Gravé and Chauvin built Tadoussac in 1599 as a centre for this trade with the Indians of the Saguenay, and when trade routes were discovered further inland, the founding of Quebec and Montreal followed. The French Government from the first granted monopolies of the fur trade, always on the condition that the company should bring to Canada a stated number of settlers. But settlement and the fur trade could never go together—settlement by driving fur-bearing animals farther afield made trading increasingly expensive, and the great profits of the fur trade, together with its freedom and romance, took all the adventurous from the rational pursuits of a settler. Trade spread west and south by the river routes, convoys bringing the furs yearly to Montreal and Quebec. The de Caen Company, in the seventeenth century, sent yearly to France from 15,000 to 20,000 pelts. "Beaver" was made the Canadian currency.

In the meantime, English navigators had been seeking a Northwest Passage to the Orient. By 1632 their efforts came to an end with little practical result. Hudson bay, however, had been accurately charted, so that when the first English fur-trading ships came some thirty years later, they sailed by charted routes to a safe harbour. The first expedition came at the instigation of Radisson and Groseilliers, two French *coureurs de bois* who had travelled in the rich fur country north of lake Superior. They had sought aid in France, but being repulsed turned to England. The charter of the "Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" was obtained in 1670 by Prince Rupert, who became first governor of the