

While the ditches are open and the wet places drying out is a good time to clear off and burn up all the ends of logs, loose roots and general odds and ends left from the burning and cord-wood operations. Many clearings have been spoilt and their productiveness set back for two or more years by careless or over-burning, and although it is sometimes impossible to avoid it, still by using care and judgment this evil can be minimised.

Handling Big Logs

There will probably be found occasional large fir logs too rotten for cord-wood but too round to be broken up with a mattock. These logs often have layers of sound pitchy wood in them, but not enough to pay to make cord-wood. They often appear to be the most difficult part of the clearing, but they are in reality very easily got rid of. They should be sawn up into six-foot lengths (they were already sawn into twelve-foot lengths when the clearing was branded up) and split into large pieces about ten or twelve inches thick (much larger than cordwood) and laid back on each side of where the log was. When it is all split up, pile it back again in the place where the log originally lay, in six-foot sections, each section to be close up to the adjoining one; pile it carefully and as closely as possible, then start a fire with dry cedar in any of the sections (depending upon the direction of the wind), feed the fire with dry wood until it has caught well, and then let it go. The whole of that log will burn up clean, no matter how wet it is and no matter how bad the weather is. Of course, it is best to start the fire on a dry day, but rain or snowfall, after the fire is once started, will rarely put it out. After the log is once split, however, it should be repiled and burnt at once. Don't let it lie exposed to the rain, as it will not burn so well if the split pieces are allowed to get wet before repiling.

There is always a considerable amount of rotten wood alongside these old fir logs, which is in such small pieces as to be difficult to handle. The heat of the fire will dry these out for three or four feet on each side of the log, and the fire will usually catch and burn up all the rubbish. Very little attention is needed, and very little branding up. These large pieces are heavy to handle, and it is as well to exchange work with a neighbour for a day or two while these logs are being burnt. Always repile the log in the place where it originally lay. The reason for this is, first, that it will then burn up all the rubbish on both sides with the least handling, and secondly, because the log invariably lies in a slight depression caused by its own weight, and as the ground under the fire is sure to be badly burnt, when you come to plough and level off, this burnt spot is naturally covered up.

Log Burning.

The best system for burning the smaller logs and the roots and stumps is somewhat different; in most timbered sections there will probably be one or more gullies, or if not there are sure to be depressions with rising ground on each side. Dig out of the side of the gully about eight or ten feet from the top (or out of the rising ground at the side of the swale, as the case may be) a good sized hole about eighteen feet square with a flat floor, somewhat as if you were going to build a bank root-house. (See Fig. 4.) And in the hole dug out build a pile of logs, old roots, or anything at all that