

Forest Fires in British Columbia.

Much Damage Done in the Kootenay District and Around Vancouver.

By far the most serious of British Columbia's forest fires of the past summer have occurred in the Kootenay district. In the immediate vicinity of Nelson a fire started about July 8. It is supposed to have been caused by fishermen. It required the services of a hundred and fifty men for some time. On the fifteenth the fire was burning on the slope back of the town, but was extinguished by a force of men sent out by the government agent.

During the same week occurred a fire at Tahun, which spread from clearing land. A fire at Shore Acres, which started from the same source, kept thirty men busy for some time. Up to July 22 the air in Nelson was heavy with smoke. On that day a brisk fire was in progress at Hall's Siding, a few miles from the town. Most of the fires in that vicinity were by that day reported under control.

Early in the month much loss was reported from a fire at Galena Bay, where the Arrowhead Lumber Co. was reported to have lost considerable timber and some camps and equipment. In one case, a hundred and sixty men were on the ground fighting fire within twenty minutes of the time the alarm was given.

On July 15 there were serious fires to the south of Moyie. The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co. near Moyie was a loser to the extent of \$40,000, three miles of their flume, poles, etc., being destroyed. Two hundred fire-fighters were employed. Rains about a week later finally disposed of the fire.

On July 13 despatches reported that at Kaslo practically the whole mountain side was in flames. The fire had originated from boys smoking. At Whitewater the fire made a clean sweep of the town, even the tree-stumps being burned up. The bridges on the railway for a distance of five miles were burned. All the people of the burned town were removed to Kaslo. At McGuigan all buildings were destroyed, and the Great Northern Railway lost a number of freight cars, bridges, etc. Three hundred miners and their families were left homeless. The loss of timber was given as \$100,000.

The worst disaster of the season occurred at the Lucky Jim mine, where five men lost their lives. One of these, Chas. Norman by name, was apparently overcome while looking for a companion in order to try to save him. Norman had previously warned many miners in their cabins of the impending danger. The buildings of the Rambier mine were also destroyed. Back-firing had finally

to be resorted to. The fire seems to have entered the district by Bear Creek near New Denver.

The town of Scandinavia was in great danger. The flames got within a mile of it but were beaten back. A force of seven hundred fire-fighters was employed at one time. Much timber, many fields of standing crops, and many ranch buildings were destroyed.

At New Michel a fire started back of the Great Northern Railway round-house, supposedly from a workman dropping a lighted cigarette. The fire is said to have gone, in twenty minutes, a distance of a mile. The best piece of timber left in the neighborhood was burned up. The fire subsequently spread to the mountains, and much valuable timber was consumed. This included a million feet of logs piled on the limits of the New Michel sawmill near Phoenix.

A costly fire also occurred at Arrow Park, some valuable timber being destroyed and many ranchers losing everything they owned. Fire at Big Bend, near Revelstoke, did much damage to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and trains were delayed.

Around Fernie the losses were not large, the most serious being the burning of some three million feet of logs skidded at the old site of the East Kootenay Co's mill, a few miles west of Cranbrook. On July 23 heavy rains came and most of the fires were extinguished.

In the vicinity of Vancouver, too, the early part of the month saw many forest fires. On Sunday, July 10, eight fires were known to be burning near the city. Ashes fell in the city streets and there was a great deal of smoke. The most serious fire burned over the Lynn valley, on the north side of Burrard inlet. The Hastings Shingle Mill Co. had its flume demolished and 2,000 cords of shingle bolts destroyed. The North Vancouver waterworks intake buildings were threatened, but two hundred fire-fighters succeeded in controlling the fire.

Fires also occurred at Lake Buntzen and Harrison lake, the latter, however, not being serious. Both were caused by donkey engines. At Lake Buntzen the engine was being moved, when it struck a stump, and the ash box was knocked off. Fire started from the cinders, and, in spite of the efforts of a large corps of men, covered more than two square miles of territory.

The loss from fires throughout the province was put by various estimators at from two million to three million dollars. Chief Ranger W. C. Gladwin, however, reported to Premier McBride that \$357,000 would