

CONSERVATION IS NOT PARSIMONY

A common popular misconception with regard to conservation is that it consists in merely saving or hoarding natural wealth for the use of future generations. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mere hoarding is not conservative; it is almost as wasteful as reckless destruction. The man who buried his talent in the earth was told that he might at least have put it out at interest even if he were afraid to venture it in business. Wise statesmanship regards our natural resources as so much capital of which the State is the trustee. The community is entitled to the interest, but the principal should be conserved for all time. An exception to this rule must be made in the case of minerals, such as coal, of which there is only a limited supply, that, when once used, can never be restored. But in the case of our forests, our lands, our seas and our wild animal life, the existing supply of timber, of soil fertility, of fish and of fur-bearers, should never diminish, but should rather increase.

To be convinced that this is possible, it is only necessary to glance at Europe. In England, thanks to intensive cultivation, the soil produces better crops than centuries ago; in Germany, the forests are so managed that, in spite of a large output, each year's cut is balanced by the new growth; while the teeming waters of the North Sea have supplied a half-dozen countries with fish from time immemorial. In respect of the threatened extinction of our fur-bearing animals, the new industry of fur-farming may be relied on to obviate this. Conservation may be applied to mineral products in preventing unnecessary waste, and the progress of science is continually unearthing substitutes for the rarer substances. It may indeed be confidently expected that, with wise use of our natural endowments, there is no danger of humanity ever lacking any essential materials.—P.M.B.

Removal of Slashings Along Railway Lines

Strip 200 ft. Wide Outside of Right-of-Way should be kept clear of Inflammable Débris

Provision should be made, by either legislative or administrative action or both, of all the Provincial Governments of Canada, for the enforced removal of inflammable debris on lands adjacent to railway rights of way. This is absolutely essential to a reasonable degree of safety from fire, of forests and other property along railway lines. The Dominion Railway Act requires that railways operating under Dominion charters shall maintain their rights of way free from dead and dry grass, weeds and other combustible matter. The

New Regulations to Protect Forest Reserves

Lines Not under Railway Board must now have Fire Patrols—But elsewhere Provincially Chartered Private and Dominion Government Roads are Not Compelled to take Adequate Precautions.

A new and important requirement in connection with the recent revision of the regulations concerning Dominion forest reserves demands that every railway company, not under the authority of the Board of Railway Commissioners, shall, within a forest reserve, provide a patrol along its line during any period when there is danger of fire. This is to be done in accordance with the instructions of the Minister of the Interior or of any forest officer acting under his instructions. The Minister is given authority to prescribe the number of patrolmen to be employed by the railway company, the frequency of the patrol, and the equipment to be furnished to such patrolmen.

This provision supplements the protection for which provision is made by the fire regulations of the Board of Railway Commissioners, and is necessary because there are some minor railway lines which— as they operate under charters granted by a province—are not subject to the Board's jurisdiction, and because adequate provision for railway fire protection is not made by provincial legislation in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Provincially chartered lines in these provinces, outside the forest reserves, still remain unprotected. Regulations, in substantial accordance with the requirements of the Railway Commission as to lines having Dominion charters, should be enforced on these railways. The enactment of legislation by the provincial parliaments is necessary to this end, and is especially important in Alberta, where there is considerable activity in the construction of railway lines chartered by the Provincial Government.

Railway Commission enforces this provision. It also requires the use of the best fire-protective appliances on the engines and also that the railway companies maintain patrols and take adequate steps in reporting and extinguishing railway fires.

Engines still throw some sparks, however, and fires along railway rights-of-way are started as well by smokers, tramps, and numerous other agencies, either careless or malicious. Unless immediately discovered and extinguished, fires starting on the right-of-way quickly spread to adjacent lands, where, in the case of forest lands, the almost universal presence of large quantities of dead, inflammable material, facilitates the rapid spread of the fire, and renders extinguishing difficult, if not impossible. This situation is especially

in Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, there has been some legislation as to fire protection along provincially chartered railways, but the situation is not adequately covered, and, in particular, there is great need for a better organization of this work in all the three provinces named.

In British Columbia, this situation is admirably provided for by the Provincial Forest Act, and the same is true of Quebec, under the fire regulations of the Public Utilities Commission.

Fire protection along the Government railways is in general less efficient than along privately-owned lines subject to the jurisdiction of the Railway Commissioners, where the requirements are now very strict. Protection along the Intercolonial and National Transcontinental railways has, to a certain extent, been afforded through the regular fire-ranging services of the Provincial Governments of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Along the Transcontinental, the Dominion Government has co-operated with the Provincial Governments concerned, in protecting the railway line from fire, during the construction period, by contributing a share of the cost of the patrols maintained by the Provincial Governments. However, with the completion of the line and its operation by the Government, protection by railway employees is wholly practicable, and is thoroughly desirable as an object-lesson to the other railways. From the point of view of the Provincial Governments, it is also very desirable, since it would relieve them of a heavy burden of expense and thus permit the more intensive protection of forest lands back from the railway lines.—C.L.

bad in the case of the large areas of cut-over lands, which so generally parallel the railway lines in the non-agricultural sections.

If the land or timber owners removed this material on a strip two hundred feet wide outside the right-of-way, on each side of the track, it would enormously increase the efficiency of the measures which the railway companies are required to take, and would without question decrease to a remarkable extent, the destruction from fires along railway lines. Not only would the destruction of much private property be avoided, but large quantities of young forest growth on cut-over lands would be given a chance to reach maturity, instead of being burned over periodically and so being kept in a perpetual state of unproductivity.—C. L.

SAFETY FIRST ON THE GRAND TRUNK

The Grand Trunk railway of Canada has begun a campaign for "Safety First," and has engaged George Bradshaw, formerly of the New York Central, as safety engineer. "Mr. Bradshaw," says the vice-president's circular, "will deliver at all important centres lectures on safety and will illustrate practices responsible for injuries. Notice of the time and place of these lectures will be given, and it is desired that every employee on the system whose duties permit shall attend. No employee who considers the importance of his personal safety can afford to miss the opportunity which these lectures will afford to learn something of practical value for the protection of his life and limbs.

"We hope to reduce the personal injury record to the lowest possible point and to make our system the safest in the country. To accomplish this every officer, agent and employee is requested to give his earnest and active support and co-operation." — *Railway Age Gazette.*

The Future of Fur-farming

Much has been heard respecting the fabulous prices paid for silverfox skins, and, stimulated by the hope of big profits, many companies have gone into the business of farming foxes.

Now, the value of a silver-fox pelt is largely subjective. Its cold-excluding power and its wearing qualities are not any greater than those of an ordinary dog-skin. The fox fur is more beautiful, but beauty alone cannot account for the great difference in price. The high price of the fox is due to its rarity, and its rarity is prized because it pleases the vanity of the wearer to display something that ordinary people cannot afford. At the present time, therefore, fur-farming merely panders to the luxurious tastes of a few rich people. Society as a whole would be little the poorer if every silver-fox ranch went bankrupt to-morrow.

Is this to be the future of the industry? Or will the fur-farmers, once the boom is over, settle down to the prosaic business of providing moderate means for people of moderate means? Not till this comes to pass will fur-farming take rank with other occupations that furnish us with staple articles of clothing. It can never become as important or as fundamental as sheep-raising or cotton-growing, but it should certainly take as high a place in the world's economy as rearing silk-worms. The enterprising breeder of "silvers" is entitled to make all the money he can, but the keeping of animals for fur will be more of a national asset and will be on a more permanent basis when we hear less about \$5,000 foxes and more about \$5 raccoons.—P.M.B.