

dressess, by petitions to the Government, they sought to bring the matter to the attention of the public, but the time was not ripe, and the public indifference did not readily yield. "The forests of Canada are inexhaustible" was the stock argument. "Forestry is a fad" was the general opinion. And if any interest was aroused, it was quickly lulled again by the absence of that pressure of necessity which is the greatest incentive to action. "The future may be allowed to look after itself."

Progress was, however, being made. A great forestry convention was held in Montreal in 1882, at which the American Forest Congress was organized. This conference was attended by large numbers from Canada and the United States, and the papers and discussions aroused much attention at the time, and while the effects were to a large extent ephemeral, still from that time may be dated the first effective efforts to deal with forest fires, and to make permanent reservations of timber lands, and these are the two special directions in which Canadian forest policy has made the greatest development.

Fire is the most serious menace to the forest, and protection from it must be at the basis of any system established. At first consideration it might seem preposterous that the vast extent of the Canadian forest could be effectively protected from fire, but when it is reflected that the fires that result from natural causes are comparatively few in number compared with those that originate through the action of man, the matter does not seem to be an utter impossibility. And that it is not so experience has already shown. The Dominion and Provincial Governments, with the exception of British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, have established special fire-ranging services, commencing with that of Ontario in 1885, and these have been effective in proportion to the thoroughness with which they have been worked out. The more that has been spent on the service the greater has been its effectiveness, and the results have been the saving of much valuable timber. The smoke from forest fires which was at one time the usual accompaniment of every summer in the cities of Eastern Canada has given place to almost complete immunity from such an unpleasant state of the atmosphere. A great deal still remains to be done in extending the system and perfecting its operations, but the principle of a fire ranging staff is justified beyond the possibility of hostile criticism. The fire-ranging system is an established and unassailable feature of Canadian forest policy. It is a form of fire insurance for the forest which is both cheap and effective. In the Province of Ontario, which spends the largest amount upon this service, the expenditure was \$31,237 in 1903, and the revenue received from woods and forests was \$2,307,356. Although this revenue was swollen beyond the usual proportions by bonuses