

## Fire Protection from the Standpoint of the Railways

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**B**EFORE I proceed to read some of the notes that I have prepared I would like to take the opportunity of endorsing, from the point of view of the Canadian Pacific railway as far as I know it on the eastern lines, the Chairman's remarks with regard to Mr. Leavitt. I do not mean to say for a moment that Mr. Leavitt and I have always seen eye to eye. My memory carries me back to one or two occasions when we did not ; but I will say that Mr. Leavitt has tried, or at least he has been clever enough to give me the impression that he tried to be fair about the propositions, and that, I think, is all the Commission desires of him.

The realization and appreciation of the value of the Canadian forests has brought to our attention the necessity of their conservation, through fire protection. There is also the growing realization that only through proper handling will forests reproduce themselves ; and the vital factor in conservation is the elimination of the causes which result in the enormous damage done by fire. No other agency has affected the growth of Canada's forests as has fire. Various statistics show that the amount of timber destroyed by forest fires has been from two to five times the value of that used for commercial purposes.

### **Railways and Forest Fires**

For many years practically all fires, and the resultant damage, were attributed to the railways.

In the reports showing "causes of fires" railways were always at the top, and led the rest by a wide margin. This analysis was not combatted by the railways, and little attempt was made to show the relative amount of damage done by fires caused by different agencies. Any indifference on the part of railway officials and employees, which may possibly have existed years ago, has been eradicated, and the attitude to-day of those responsible for the management of the Canadian Pacific railway is entirely different.

To enable a proper diagnosis of the railway fire situation to be made, a study was made of the fires which occurred on or within five miles of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's lines during the