

their districts, pick out the fire rangers, employ them and superintend their work. When there are serious fires the chief fire rangers take charge of the fire-fighting in person.

But the actual work falls on the fire rangers. They are men of many kinds. Some are old-timers of thirty or forty years' experience in the Western timber, men who came from the Orkneys in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, men who served their apprenticeship on the Carlton Trail, and in freighting and tracking supplies from Winnipeg to Edmonton. Others have been timber cruisers, woods foremen, logging bosses, and surveyors' helpers. An increasing number are settlers who have homesteaded in the wooded country. All are chosen for their knowledge of the country and the people, and their ability to travel by canoe, or horse, or on foot.

The rangers are paid four dollars a day, furnish their own means of conveyance, and pay their own traveling and living expenses. They are kept at work during the dangerous summer season, and during that time are expected to prevent all fires from starting in the district in which they are situated. The districts vary with the accessibility and population of the country, the smallest, of less than 100 square miles, being in the Railway Belt of British Columbia, where the timber is very valuable and liable to damage by fire, and the largest, of several thousand square miles, being in the North, on the Peace, the Athabasca, and Churchill Rivers, where the timber is of less value and where travel is not frequent.

Enforcing the Law.

Within their districts the rangers' duties are many. They must watch carefully the danger points, whether these be railroads, lumber camps, construction camps, canoe routes, toll roads, or settlers' clearing land. As in large districts they can not get over even the chief trails very often,

they endeavor to increase their efficiency by explaining the fire law to travelers and settlers, enlisting their sympathy in the protection of the public timber, and distributing and posting up warning circulars so that none may forget what forest fire means. The rangers also see that the comprehensive fire law is obeyed by every one. Those who disobey are arrested and, if convicted, are fined.

Where railroad construction is going on, a special force is assigned to the work. Though the Grand Trunk Pacific has been building for two summers in the wooded country 200 miles west from Edmonton, the force of rangers on the work has so far prevented destructive fires. So vigilant are the men on this work that when the superintendent was making an inspection trip along the line last fall he was visited in his camp by a ranger and warned against allowing his camp-fire to escape into the surrounding woods.

Sharing the Expense.

In the north country where the Indians are the most common inhabitants, they are lectured each year by missionaries, Indian agents, and treaty money agents against setting fires. To further warn them, fire notices in Cree and Indian syllabic are posted up on the chief routes of travel and at the trading posts.

So far the measures have been preventive. In fact, it is in prevention of fires that protection lies, for when a forest fire gets into heavy timber, or spreads over any area of ground, it is almost impossible to extinguish it, especially in regions of scattered population. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the fire rangers to take the lead in fighting fires. They are empowered by law to impress the services of all settlers in the region, to direct them in the work, and to keep them as it until the danger be past. For such assistance the settlers are paid by the government.

The whole expense of maintaining