

# The Status of Railway Fire Protection in Canada

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From the viewpoint of fire protection, the steam railways of Canada, aggregating about 38,624 miles, may be classified under three general heads, according to their legal status:

1. Lines subject to the jurisdiction of the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada.
2. The Government Railways System.
3. Provincially chartered railways.

## *Lines Subject to the Board*

The first class, comprising lines subject to the Railway Commission, totals some 32,389 miles, or nearly 84 per cent of the total. These are primarily lines which hold their charters from the Dominion Government or have been declared works for the general advantage of Canada. Included in this class are such companies or systems as the Canadian Pacific, Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk, Grand Trunk Pacific, Great Northern, Kettle Valley, Algoma Central and Hudson Bay, Atlantic, Quebec and Western, Quebec Oriental, Dominion Atlantic, Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia, Esquimalt and Nanaimo, Halifax and South Western, Temiscouata, and a number of smaller lines too numerous to mention here.†

The Canadian Northern System retains its status as a corporation, and remains subject to the jurisdiction of the Railway Commission, notwithstanding that the ownership

of its stock has been acquired by the Dominion Government. Thus, it is on an entirely different basis from the Canadian Government Railways proper.

The requirements of the Board relative to fire protection, applicable to lines under its jurisdiction, are briefly as follows:

(a) Rights of way must be maintained free from all unnecessary combustible matter.

(b) Efficient spark arrestors and other fire-protective appliances must be maintained on all coal-burning locomotives.

(c) The dumping of fire, live coals and ashes upon the right of way is prohibited, unless extinguished immediately.

(d) The use of lignite as locomotive fuel is prohibited, on account of fire danger from sparks.

(e) In prairie sections, the Chief Fire Inspector prescribes the plowing of fire guards.

(f) Officers of the Fire Inspection Department are authorized to prohibit the burning of debris upon the right of way during exceptionally dry periods.

(g) The Chief Fire Inspector is authorized to prescribe the establishment of special fire patrols by railway companies through forest sections.

(h) Railway companies are required to instruct sectionmen, agents, contractors, trainmen, and other regular employees, relative to the reporting and extinguishing of fires burning upon or near the right of way. The company is made responsible for the extinguishing of all fires occurring within 300 feet of the track, unless proof shall be fur-

†For complete list of these and other lines, revised to 1914, see Forest Protection in Canada, 1913-1914, pp. 10-15, published by the Commission of Conservation.