

Essential Features of a Successful Fire Protection Organization

MR. CHAIRMAN, ladies and gentlemen : Just prior to my departure for Ottawa, Hon. Mr. Ross, Minister of Lands of the province of British Columbia, asked me to express his great regret to the Commission that he is unable to be present, owing to the fact that the Provincial Legislature opens to-morrow.

Before presenting the paper which I have prepared, I may be permitted to refer to the remarks of Mr. MacTier and a few of the important lessons we have learned in fire protection during exceedingly bad seasons in British Columbia. The first important lesson was: that, during the past season, it would be practically impossible for any organization that could be supported from the money available from any government to have held fire losses down to a reasonable minimum in a country such as that in British Columbia, northern Ontario, northern Quebec, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, unless such organization were founded with the means of controlling the lighting of fires. Where settlers are going in amongst the timber the only way to get control of fires is by some permit system. If settlers are free to go into the country and light fires whenever they think a fire will run best, without regard to timber, there must be danger. With no supervision they certainly will burn the forests, and our only safety this summer in southern British Columbia was the permit system. We had an extremely bad fire situation this summer for two months, and, with one man to every 300,000 acres, the permit system was the only possible safety.

**Permits Must
be Obtained**

Every person wishing to build a fire for any purpose had to get a permit from the Forest Branch. The result was we issued about 12,000 permits, and only 108 fires got away and none of them did any damage. Public sentiment on this question in British Columbia is excellent; everyone realizes that timber districts have the saw-mill on one side and the poor-house on the other. That gives us an excellent sentiment. Agriculture is only possible in many valleys if the saw-mills are kept running. Then we had 40 prosecutions, 37 convictions, six men in jail and fines of \$50 to \$300.