

way company, the contractors and the forest rangers all worked cordially together to attain the desired object.

With such regulations and with a good fire patrol to supervise their enforcement the danger should be largely obviated. The uncertainties of handling fire are, however, well illustrated by an incident which occurred in the clearing of the right-of-way on the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway north of Prince Albert. The refuse was being burned on the right-of-way and the clearing gang was watching the fire. A small whirlwind came down the right-of-way, lifted the fire and threw it into the bush over the men's heads and, before it could be stopped, nearly a square mile of bush was burned. In dry, windy weather such a danger is always present, and it gives pause to those who are responsible for the administration when the promiscuous use of fire for clearing land after lumbering operations or on other occasions is advocated.

Clearing Right-of-way.

After a railway has been constructed and is in operation there will still be danger if the right-of-way is not kept cleaned up and the Railway Act of the Dominion provides (as do most of the provincial railway acts in almost similar terms) that:

"The Company shall at all times maintain and keep its right-of-way free from dead or dry grass, weeds and other unnecessary combustible matter."

This provision of the Act has, at least in the newer districts, been more honored in the breach than in the observance, and yet it is one of the most critical and important measures in the prevention of forest fires in those newer districts. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, in accordance with representations made by the Department of the Interior, are clearing up the right-of-

way through British Columbia and the Rocky Mountains by contract, and are burning the debris at safe seasons. The failure of the Canadian Northern Railway to respond to similar representations was a contributing cause to the fires which did so much damage along the Prince Albert branch of that railway during the past spring.

The necessities of the case left no choice but an appeal to the Railway Commission to have the provision of the act in this respect enforced. The question was brought to the attention of the Commission, and on the 15th August, 1910, an order was issued by the Board to the desired effect. After quoting the provisions of the Railway Act in regard to clearing the right-of-way of noxious weeds and combustible material, the order continues:

"Complaints continually come to the Board that these sections are not observed by some of the companies, casual observation in some parts of the country shows that Section 297 (in regard to the removal of combustible material) is being entirely overlooked. It is clear that many fires are communicated to adjacent lands by reason of companies not complying with these provisions of the law, entailing enormous loss. The Board deems it to be its duty to see that these sections are enforced, and to that end has given instructions that all railway lands shall be periodically inspected and full reports made of the conditions found to exist.

"This is a matter of vast moment in the preservation of timber lands as well as the protection of property of all kinds along railway lines and steps will be taken to enforce the law unless voluntarily complied with."

The immunity from fire of the forests along the lines of railway in Europe is partly due to their hauling lighter trains and using a better quality of coal, but it is largely due