

the question of prevention of forest fires to be a vital one, but it must not be forgotten that the extent of the country was enormous and the population very scattered, and a proper supervision was consequently a very difficult matter to meet. But the best method, and the one adopted, was the patrol system. A very large number of rangers had been employed and since the system had been in operation there had been no serious fire in the railway belt.

The benefit of the system was to be noticed in the improved condition of the mountain sides which were being re-clothed with trees where fire had ravaged them during construction days. He did not claim that the patrol system was an absolute preventive, but it had the general effect of reaching fires at early stages and snuffing them out before they had a chance to spread. No system could be entirely effective unless it had the support of the people and their co-operation.

One of the most valuable features of the patrol system was its educative influence. The rangers were continually drawing the attention of the settler to the provisions of the "Bush Fires Act." They also showed the best way of fighting a fire at its inception.

#### OTHER FEATURES OF DOMINION FOREST WORK.

The cutting of timber was another matter which was engaging the attention of the Government. There was no reason why this should not be done intelligently and with the end in view of having a permanent source of supply on which to draw. The Department was developing a staff of carefully instructed forestry experts who were destined by the Government to take up this phase of forest preservation.

The Dominion Government was also erecting forest reserves at the sources of streams which would ultimately be used for irrigation purposes. The scheme was to study the forest growth, as to age, process of growth, etc., and to have reliable data upon which to base advice as to the best methods to pursue in cutting the surplus supply.

He was also engaged in examining these reserves with a view to locating the best sites for storage reservoirs. In the provinces to the east of the mountains observations were being made by experts regarding the effect the forests had on the flow of water. The knowledge thus gained would have a direct bearing on the question of irrigation because it would place fairly accurate figures as to flow and volume of water at different periods of the years in the hands of officials administering the water system of the country. It was also hoped, by establishing reservoir systems at the sources of streams, to control the torrential flow of water at the time of the melting of the winter snows and during the spring rains.