

at Lac Laronge in Saskatchewan, writes of his territory as follows:

"The whole of this country (about 70,000 square miles, of which 25,000 have been burned over during the last forty years) is or has been timbered with either spruce, poplar, tamarack, jackpine or birch, the only open country being small stretches of muskeg, generally under water during spring and early summer. Where fires have run, there is almost invariably a rapid growth of poplar and jackpine, the exception to this being on rock formation, where fire has been so fierce and the country so dry at the time that all the moss and other decayed vegetation has been consumed, leaving bare rock.

For ten years now the Department of the Interior, through the Forestry Branch, has maintained an organization to prevent and extinguish forest fires on Dominion lands. The extent of the work has been limited only by the money available for its prosecution. The area is so large, comprising, as it does, all the timbered land north of the international boundary between the summit of the Rocky Mountains and Ontario, in addition to about 24,000 square miles along the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia, that it is impossible to cover it thoroughly with a patrol. It has been found that territory along operating railroad lines, new settlements, freighting routes, the main waterways, and construction camps are the most fertile sources of forest fires. Accordingly, close watch is kept of progress in the West, and every year the following season's operations are laid out with special reference to all settlement travel and development work in the timbered country.

The District Rangers.

The territory is divided into districts for convenience in administration, having headquarters in the chief centers of new settlement, on the most important railway lines,

and at those outposts which control travel on the highways through the unsettled timberland. For instance, one district, with headquarters at Edmonton, consists of the territory traversed by the Grand Trunk Pacific between Edmonton and the summit of the Rocky Mountains. So effectively have the location line, the heavily traveled trails, and the construction camps been patrolled by rangers that during the two years of construction no destructive fires have occurred, though the country is covered with timber, or, what is worse, the debris left by old fires.

Another district, that administered from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, comprises large areas of valuable timber limits, many well-traveled waterways; the Lac Laronge rock country, which was for two or three summers the objective of enthusiastic prospectors; and the highly dangerous skirmishing line, which each year advances farther north as the settlers push into the timbered of the lumber companies doing business, clearing their homesteads.

Each district is in charge of a chief fire ranger, a permanent official of the Interior Department. These men are nearly all old-timers; some of them have been all their lives connected with the timber business, and have for years served the government as forest rangers, guarding against trespass on the public timber lands and inspecting the operations of the lumber companies doing business under Federal license. Of these there is John Cameron of Edmonton, for thirty years a Westerner, an old lumberman, and a pioneer on the North Saskatchewan. Another is W. J. Margach of Calgary, a Scotchman, shrewd and slow of speech, who gained his experience on the north shore of Lake Superior in timber surveys and in contracting for bridge and trestle work on the Canadian Northern Railway.

The chief fire rangers determine how many men are necessary for